

after six months

M.E. Still Rabid, Still Growing

by Norene McCann

THE MYSTERIOUS EAST: an independent Atlantic magazine

"My client is thinking of suing" -a lawyer whose client didn't

"New Brunswick can't take much more of your kind of help" -an anonymous letter

"...Balanced...Comprehensive and leavened by a sense of humour" -Time Magazine

"If they have something to offer we wish them well" -Saint John Telegraph Journal

"I'd like to know what goes on inside your head" -anonymous letter

In November of 1969, a handful of disgruntled Fredericton academics burst into the stagnantly established Maritime journalism scene with the first issue of the Mysterious East.

In their first issue the editors said, "It can't be that there's nothing to write about, the rest of Canada is bored silly by pronouncements that Maritime conditions are a national disgrace and it can't be that there aren't any readers...No. What has happened is that all our periodicals have drifted into the hands of local or regional monopolies and they have become fat, lazy and scared of their masters.

Since then, there have been nine informative issues discussing important Maritime issues, such as pollution, the press, police and the people, drugs, landlords, as well as articles on the Maritimes' very interesting people.

Don Cameron, a UNB English professor and contributing editor, speaks for the Mysterious East: "We want some Canadian journalism which is hard-nosed, skeptical, ironic and playful."

"If any of us had had more than the faintest notion how to put a magazine together when we started," says Robert Campbell, a graduate student at the University of New Brunswick, "we'd have given it up as impossible. The traditional magazine has to raise thousands of dollars and get commitments from hundreds of advertisers. It has to have an expensive staff, an office, equipment. It has to have a slick cover, too, and an extensive advertising campaign. We didn't know all that was necessary, so we just went ahead without it."

"One of the results of this," points out Russell Hunt, another editor, who teaches English at Saint Thomas University "is that the magazine is unique. We started at the beginning and solved all the problems our way, so that it's just not like any other magazine. In format, for instance, it's printed on newsprint, but it's bound like the usual news-magazine. Its audience is unique, too: no one else interested in the intelligent and informed reader has aimed at the ones who are living in any one region of the country, much less this one. And in editorial posture, too. We'll all skeptics, so we'll print nearly anything, as long as it's well-written and reasonably responsible. We don't think we have the answers to

Maritime problems, but we are beginning to think we've got a line on some of the questions."

"We wouldn't do a magazine if we didn't think Maritime problems could be solved," says Donald Cameron.

"Maybe the problems can't be solved in central Canada and the States, but here we've got a chance to pull back and refuse the kind of development that would turn the Maritimes into another Detroit or Hamilton. Hell, nobody wants to live in the original Detroit and Hamilton any more."

Despite forewarnings of bankruptcy within 6 months the editor claims their circulation on the increase and in examination of the feedback, the Mysterious East is arousing strong reactions from widely diverse groups.

The 32 page periodical shall be increased by eight pages before the new year and September's issue sports a sturdier splashier cover. It looks as though the Mysterious East is here to stay for Bob Campbell says that there will be no need for it if journalism in the Maritimes improves.

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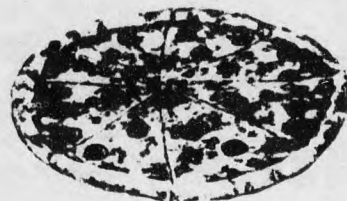
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