



SOLD DOWN THE RIVER

A TRUE ACCOUNT OF
THE NEW N'APA REGIME



A RAMBLING ARTICLE BY HARNESS

One of the secret joys of being Master of the N'APA is that I get to read the mailing before everyone else does. I have to, in fact, scan the zines somewhat to make a cursory check for unmailable material. One Burnet Toskey, when he was OE of SAPS and SAPS was running very, very large bundles--over 600 pages, in fact, found that reading the magazines in advance and singly spoiled the effect of reading the bundle together. Time will tell if I succumb to this dread malady.

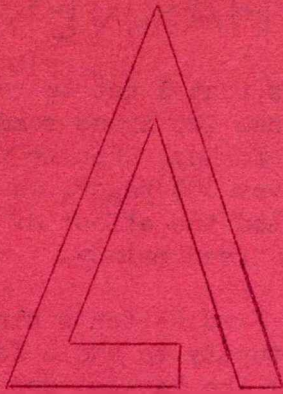
One happy result, however, has been the chance to see Fred Patten's zine and the long review of George Pal's "Atlantis," and the opportunity to add a few comments of my own to round out the review. I'm rather fond of the review, considering that it is just about the one that Arson (me) Rape (Ted Johnstone) and Bloody Murder (Bruce Pelz) gave at LASFS recently. So I'm adding this postscript now rather than wait till next mailing.

Bear in mind that on this one, George Pal was burdened with a pauper's budget. It seems, says Forry Ackerman, who knows enough about movies and moviemakers to have the information, that Pal is continually plagued with difficulty in getting money for his movies, despite the fact that he turns out good quality merchandise. (The fact that Atlantis is a clinker does not change the fact that Pal regularly makes good flicks.) So corners had to be cut again and again, dammit, and the result is one hell of a flop.

Item one: No explanation is given for Princess Antillia's being on a raft. Neither she nor her father nor anyone else even comments on the fact that she was found on a raft. Her father and the Atlantian populace rejoice because they feared she was lost. Even the crew of the sub that takes her off Demetrius's boat say merely, "Welcome aboard, Princess." Now, a minor plot element hinges on the Atlantians' being unable to get ships through the Pillars of Hercules, explore, and return safely; they lose more damn ships that way. It is not explained why any craft that would carry royalty wouldn't have lifeboats. Certainly, a sub wouldn't have wooden rafts. But you quickly forget this problem because the heroine is pretty and can act out everything the plot requires of her. Instead, you worry about the hero, who couldn't act his way out of a paper bag.

Two points that Patten didn't mention, and that did strengthen the believability of the plot, were the fact that Antillia (a) magnetized a piece of metal by honing it on an ax, or something, so that she would have a compass (compass being beyond the technology of the Greeks), and (b) did provision the fishing boat with food for the voyage back to Atlantis. She was very headstrong and you could believe that she had demanded to see what lay beyond the Pillars, even though no one mentions this in the movie.

One curious feature of the film was its relationship to the mores of its time vs. the mores of the movie code. Both hetero- and homosexual love were freer at that time. The villain (it's Zaren, not Zaran, by the way) has the facial expressions and mannerisms of a queer even though he doesn't make any passes at men. For that matter, the only person who makes passes at anyone is Demetrius, who makes a very few passes at Antillia. Zaren, however, is interested in marrying Antillia in order to become the technical, as well as de facto, ruler of Atlantis. The mad scientist running the House of Fear is very flabbily effeminate. I dunno--these two could



on the other hand simply not be acting, and just happen to have this particular set of mannerisms. Considering that very little depth of character was attempted in this flic, the no-holds-barred mores of the time were probably ignored and the unmasculine portrayals were possibly just a ham attempt at portraying an unsympathetic pair of villains.

The symbol to the left is used in the movie as a symbol of Atlantis; you see it often in Atlantis --the soldiers, even, wear it--and it is used in the credits and ads. In fact, very soon you wonder

why Antillia didn't have it hanging from a chain around her neck when she was found by Demetrius. Maybe they didn't think of the gimmick until after that footage had already been shot. The triangular motif is carried out by a triangular hatch on the submarine and the triangular pit in the Ordeal.

The High Priest is a thoroughly sympathetic character, giving an impression of great strength of character burdened by years. If fact, if the plot had been halfway believable, Esar could have been even more majestic. It seems that he used to be a scientist, but turned to religion when he saw Atlantis worshipping their science -- or, to quote Johnstone, he "hedged his bets." You are temporarily stunned when you find him trying to arrange an assignation between Demetrius and Antillia in the temple. And Esar makes a nice foil for a couple of shots showing the emigration of life from Atlantis -- leaves and seeds blowing out to sea and insects climbing aboard the leaves (or were these stock shots from "Leiningen Versus the Ants?")

Another small quibble: the Greek should have been named Demetrios, because "os" would have been the appropriate Greek ending of the name. But everyone pronounces it like the Roman name ending in "us".

Another big quibble: the Atlantian Navy hasn't been able to invade the Mediterranean area because their ships are all lost in the uncharted waters of the Inner Sea. So Demetrius helps them out by making an accurate contour map of the entire Inner Sea, complete with the boot of Italy and so forth. Humble Greek fisherman, we bow to your geography lessons! Gag-retch-barf-choke! Zaren asks a scientist about how accurate the map is. The scientist replies that of course, no one ever came back from there with maps, "but chance favors this arrangement." Merciful Zotz! Then they test the map by calling in another slave (all the slaves have taken torture and death rather than furnish maps, you see), which happens, by sheerest co-incidence, to be the old man that Demetrius saved on the ~~trip~~ trip to the mines. Said old man takes one look at the map and spits in Demetrius's face with a cry of "Traitor!" and is dragged off for the animal-man treatment. After this bit of stupidity, you don't really mind that Demetrius kills the same guard two days running. Wotthehell, he's an arrogant lout anyway.

To give praise where it is due, I cite the scene where Demetrius has slain the jailor and has to fight off another guard. He throws the keys at the locked door and says, "Free yourselves." Follows an agonized scene where the slaves find the keys just out of reach! In the ensuing fighting, Demetrius accidentally kicks the keys off to the side, apparently out of reach also. But apart from these minor flashes of brilliance, characterization is hopeless. But then, Pal always did pretty good with wooden puppets.

SOLD DOWN THE RIVER, 1, edited by Jack Harness for the 9th Mailing of N'APA.

GERTRUDE CARR VS FAPA



This is going to seem a little strange, perhaps, in that I am going to reprint a large section of the Official Organ of FAPA, the Fantasy Amateur. G.M. Carr, in Gemzine 4/29 made several statements concerning FAPA and both of this year's TAFF candidates, which I would like to refute by quoting from the FA. First, the gist of G.C.'s arguments:

"Although I knew nothing of it at the time, RonEllik's announcement in FANAC ((that she was out of FAPA)) to that effect, must have been Orders from Headquarters, because, (although I had in the meantime taken care of my pending balance plus an additional year's dues) 3 days after it came out, Evans wrote me that he "had no alternative" but send my money back and declare me "delinquent in dues."!!! When I wrote and asked how this could possibly be, inasmuch as I had paid duplicate dues the previous year and the money had been in the treasury ever since January 1960, the entire FAPA Officialdom (excluding MZB who had no say in the matter) went into a huddle. Out of this dither, Evans, Economou, and Eney (egged on by Ellik) managed a truly Orwellian rewrite of FAPA history--shattering FAPA custom, tradition, and precedent like clay pigeons at a skeet shoot--and came up with: (A) FAPA does not now and never did have any provision for prepayment of dues, or (B) if they did, it was only because the Treasurer allowed it, and (C) Anyway, Ellik had warned me.

"Well, that latter part is undoubtedly true. When I paid duplicate dues in Jan. 1960, Ellik DID send me a postcard informing me that although the dues were \$2 per year at the moment, they would go up to \$3 the following August and I had better get that additional dollar in before the November deadline if I expected to remain in FAPA. It certainly sounded enough like a warning that I suppose I should have paid some attention to it, but I didn't. Always before, there had been membership continuity enough to carry over the gap between the \$2 on hand and the \$1 owing." She finishes by a remark that these people have a philosophy that the end justifies the means, and so Gemzine is now a N'APAZine

Dramatis Personae of the above: Ron Ellik, Secretary-Treasurer of FAPA back when G.C. had sent in her \$2 dues plus \$2 extra. Officers of FAPA later on were Phyllis Economou, President; Richard Eney, V.P.; Lill Evans, Sec-Treas. The discussion in FAPA's O ran almost 4 pages on the expulsion. This is unusual, because the usual bit is just a list of who dropped and who got in, at the end of the membership roster. But G.C. is a noisy bitching individual and very well-known, and much inclined toward elusive argument and pyrotechnics, so.... maybe it's just as well they did.

AND NOW, DIRECT FROM THE PAGES OF THE FANTASY AMATEUR FOR FEB., 1961, WE READ:

"THE MATTER OF G. M. CARR. In the November ~~1960~~ FA, the listing after G.M. Carr's name read NOV 0\$, and also showed a (\$2 credit). ((Meaning, her membership year ended with November mailings, and that she owed no pages for the next year, but that her dues were due as of the mailing deadline and that she had a \$2.00 credit. In FAPA, the Sec-Treas has to send his report to the OE in plenty of time to arrive before the deadline, and so a person might pay dues, * and be credited with payment, and still have a notice that he owed dues as far as the S-T report goes. Fapans understand this..(*at the last minute))) I had expected to receive her additional \$1 before, or at least shortly after the mailing date, and accordingly held off dropping her for a couple of weeks, to allow for the slow delivery around that time. (I've had letters from home take two weeks.) No communication was received by the time I left on my vacation, so I intended to refund her \$2.00 credit when I got home and had some time. I assumed that, as I'd received no notice or complaint from her, that she was letting her membership lapse. ((Bill Evans is writing; he lives near Washington, D.C.))

"While spending an evening in Berkeley with...Ellik...etc, I mentioned that "GMCarr is apparently dropping FA A, as she hasn't paid her dues." This later appeared in Fanac... on Dec 22, I found time to send the dues refund.

"When I got back to the East, I found the following letter from GMC awaiting me, dated Dec 22:

Dear Bill,

I just got around to opening the FAPA mailing and see by the FA I owe a dollar on my dues. So here it is. I thought I was paid up through November '61., but with all the fluctuating on the price we've been doing lately, it just doesn't pay to pay up in advance I guess....

PS: I'm making the check out for \$4--might as well pay for next year while I'm at it.

In a letter dated the 13th of Jan, which arrived just after I got back...she wrote:

I received your Dec 22 letter (enc \$2 check) which crossed in the mails with my letter (enc \$4 check) of the same date. I have been waiting to reply to it until you should have had ample time to return my check in case the matter were closed. [Apparently, she didn't notice that my letter was from Oregon, or to consider that I might not have had a chance to answer her letter.] However, inasmuch as you have not done so, I would appreciate a reply as soon as possible in order that I can know what to do about my next Gemzine.

Naturally, I have no way of knowing why it was that the previous Treasurer chose to refuse my renewal of January, 1960, as such and instead entered it as a "\$2 credit". But, quite obviously, if I believed my dues to be paid up to and including November 1961---subject, of course, to subsequent fluctuations in rate---there would be no reason for me to submit a formal request for renewal on or before the mid-November, 1961, deadline.

Furthermore, inasmuch as the FAPA Treasury already had money on hand as earnest of renewal--two-thirds of the annual rate at the last quotation --there would be a very good probability (100% accurate, as it turned out) that I would wait to check the Dec mailing before sending in the balance.

In fact, from where I sit, it looks as though someone has carefully engineered a nice loophole whereby FAPA at last has an opportunity to rid itself of GMC. And the only unsolved point is this: Do you intend to take advantage of it? If so, I should appreciate a prompt dismissal, or a re-affirmation of membership so I will know where I am. ...GMC.

On the 18th of January, I replied as follows, in part:Yesterday, your second letter arrived. On reading both of them, I believe I can see why all the confusion has arisen; apparently, you have forgotten--or overlooked--the fact that FAPA dues are not on a calendar year, but are due on or before the anniversary date of the membership. The evidence? I've gone back through the file...and find the following:

The August 1957 FA showed you as owing dues by Nov 9, 1957. At that time, dues were \$2.50. On Aug 24, 1957, your dues were recorded in. Then, on Dec 20 of the same year, you sent in another \$2.50, which was recorded as a credit. Thus, when your dues were again due, as shown in the August 1958 FA, a credit of \$2.50 was indicated. Dues by that time had gone up to \$3.00. You did not pay by the Nov mailing deadline, and the Nov 1958 FA showed you owing 50¢. We were generous, and carried you for a while, in violation of the constitution. The same was true of the May FA. Then, on July 28, 1959, you paid \$2.50, which covered your balance from the preceding year, and the \$2.00 dues for the year Nov 1959-60.

⌋⌋ Why had FAPA dues gone down to \$2.00? Because the Treasury was riding at the \$150.00 level and this was felt to be needlessly high, so dues were dropped for a one year period, to slim off about \$50.00. It was announced more than once that this was to be for one year only. ⌋⌋ Then on Jan 26, 1960, you sent Ellik, the new S-T, \$2.00, saying, and I quote: "I see by the 00 that renewal dues are still two bucks--so here is my check for 1960's dues." This indicates that you were assuming the FAPA dues were for a calendar year, and not for the period of your membership. ⌋⌋ FAPA records, gentle reader, are extremely well kept, as you can see by the above. With 65 members plus an endless waiting list, they have to be.⌋⌋

Ron tells me that he mentioned this to you earlier in the year, warning you that your dues would be due before the Nov deadline. Your credit was shown as \$2, with a renewal date of Nov, in the Feb and May FA's; in the Aug issue, the symbol "D" was added; in the text above this was shown as "dues (\$3) due now, to be paid by 12 November." The Nov FA shows the same indication, together with the "\$" sign. This is explained as "Dues overdue; if not received by 12 November, you are reading your last member mailing for a long time." ⌋⌋ These symbols, plus a few others, are the standard indicators, and are used for the entire membership listing, as dues payment and page credit demands, for each member.⌋⌋

I had deliberately left a loop-hole, very legitimate, by dating the report as of the 1st of November (I had to, to get it to MZB, the Official Editor, on time), so that if your dues came in by the deadline or even after, I could still accept them. I waited until I left for the West Coast...feeling that you would catch the notice and write post haste. Apparently you only checked the FA after the mention in the Dec 19 Fanac....this makes me wonder how seriously you wanted to be in FAPA, if you waited a month or more before opening the mailing....

I had felt that I had been more than lenient in leaning over backwards to help you; thus the blast in your last paragraph seems to be a deliberate slap in the face. No one "engineered a nice loophole" to get you out of FAPA. Had you but read, carefully, the....listing of members, paying attention to the symbols after your name, any time up to 3 weeks after the mailing date, you would have been safe.

The Constitution makes no provision for partial payment of dues....((and after repeating the several notices she had had via Ron's letter and the FA listings, he reviewed the three routes open to her to retain membership, all of which, as a FAPA member of long standing, she would already know: (1) secure the signature of 22 members to retain membership; (2) appeal Bill's decision to the V-P, as a question of interpretation of the Constitution; (3) appeal to the President, as a matter not covered by the Constitution. He said the last was, he felt, the true state of affairs, and forwarded her letters, plus carbons of his own, to the President. When you consider that FAPA had at the time about 50 waiting listers, you can see why FAPA likes to notify Wlers of membership openings as soon as possible.))

((This ended Bill's reply to GMC, but the other officers were heard from, as follows: Phyllis Economou, the President, ruled on 25 January, "I am not going to make any decision at this time because I'm not convinced that the matter is out of our Vice-President's jurisdiction--and he should not be bypassed. The Constitution seems quite explicit on the subject of dues and its terms should apply to all members equally..." She reviewed methods (1) and (2) for staying on, and set a deadline for reply, and cited the fact that Phyllis's own listing showed a \$3 credit, even though it was perfectly obviously intended for dues.))

((Eney then ruled that no "pussyfooting around the Treasury is admissable" and said as follows:)) GM's objection is this--I omit passages about Railroading and Eney's Personal Grudge which you can easily imagine--that the requirement that dues be paid in full on the due date has never actually been applied before. "In the past when members sent in money for dues in advance, only to have the rates change subsequently, the member was credited with paid up dues...and was expected to pay up the additional amount at the first reasonable opportunity. If that did not occur for 6 months--so what? So long as the member did eventually pay it in good faith, who bothered about it? However, I grant you that was before the Anti-GMC Campaign; no member of FAPA Officialdom had a private 'Ostracize GMC' axe to grind, and nobody stood ready to make an issue of it in FANAC [FANAC has mentioned the matter twice, I believe -- R.E.] nor to stampede a well-meaning but weak-willed Official into taking action by publishing, 3 days in advance, the action they hoped to pressure him into taking as having already been accomplished."

Unhappily, this is factually untrue; I've had exactly this experience (of making an advance deposit and having the dues raised on me) and been summoned to pay the balance on the deadline. I did which is why I'm still a member of this noble and serene body. GM Didn't; that's why she's not.

So there you have it. I submit that a FAPA official is not a telepathic mutant who should be expected to know that a member who doesn't express much interest in the organization still wants in even though they don't pay their dues. GC had over 6 months time to pay up, and her weird double-think that she could chisle out of \$1.00 in dues by pretending that FAPA dues were going to continue at the special \$2.00 rate, which all knew was to be for one membership-year only...well, Elik politely informed her that she'd have to pay up like everyone else. Hell, what do you want, Gertie -- the Whole Earth With A Gold Ring Around It? And I note that you didn't bother sending around a petition for the necessary number of signatures; after all, there aren't 22 FAPA members who would want to keep you in!