
APPARATCHIK

The thirty-ninth issue of a bi-weekly fanzine, published by Andy Hooper, member fwa, supporter afal, at The Starliter Building, 4228 Francis Ave. N. # 103, Seattle, WA 98103, also available at APHooper@aol.com. This is Drag Bunt Press Production # 228. *Apparatchiki*: Randy Byers, Victor Gonzalez, carl juarez & Martin Tudor (British Address: 845 Alum Rock Rd., Ward End, Birmingham B8 2AG UK). A fiery hellride into the depths of shameless pleasure . . .

Issue # 39, July 27th, 1995

AS I RECALL, IT WAS ABOUT THIS TIME last year when APAK skipped a few beats and had something like three late issues in ten weeks time. The summer heat has something to do with this, as does the proliferation of other interests and deadlines to meet in the vicinity of the Worldcon. As it turns out, this issue will mail about 24 hours late, but there were times in the past ten days when I worried I'd be skipping an issue altogether . . .

While I was in Wisconsin, on a supposed working vacation, I developed a bacterial infection which manifested itself in a large, painful abscess in what I have been referring to as "the nethermost region of the body that you can imagine." From Sunday the 15th to Tuesday the 18th it grew from something the size of a lima bean into a mass 3 inches by 6 inches, extending an unfathomable distance into my body. My initial efforts to treat it as a minor skin eruption seem both humorous and insane at this point; by that Tuesday, not only was the abscess enlarged, but other elements of my urogenitive superstructure had been compromised as well, and had swollen to the size of a healthy grapefruit. Needless to say, the flight back to Seattle was like something from a Clive Barker novel. I was also running a fever somewhere around 102 degrees F by that time, and seriously considered going to the emergency room that night.

I managed to hold out until office hours began the next morning; by 10 a.m. I was lying on an examination table that seemed far too small to hold me, covered only by a piece of corrugated plastic sheeting that made me think of the disposable tablecloths which my grandmother used to lay out at Christmas time. The doctor's response on first getting a look at me was "Oh my God!", which I contend is something you never want a physician to say while examining you. Another physician was called in to say "Oh my God!" as well, then a surgeon, the unassuming Doctor Daniel J. Garnett. Any relation to the Confederate Brigadier General, I asked as he approached the afflicted area. "Not that I know of. I'm from Connecticut myself," he replied. He lifted the tablecloth. "Pus!", he exclaimed brightly. "Must be something to do with the full moon. I've had three cases involving some sort of abscess like this in the past two weeks."

There was no time to waste, he insisted; they had to get the abscess opened and draining as quickly as possible. I was #2 in his surgical queue.

I didn't have much interaction with Dr. Garnett from then on; mostly, I dealt with a covey of pre-surgical waiting room nurses and orderlies, and then I was introduced to my anesthesiologist, an affable South African named Calvin Abramowitz. "You are," he confided, "what we anesthesiologists call a challenge." He was concerned with the masses of tissue (some uncharitable people might call this fat, but we've no need to engage in such vulgarity) surrounding the airway in my mouth and throat; if at all possible, he wanted to avoid giving me a general and having to intubate me.

Given the location of the infection, it seemed logical to give me a spinal injection that would immobilize my lower half, what's commonly called a "saddle-block." It took the extra-long needle to make the proper injection, but it worked. After about ten minutes, my lower body seemed like an island glimpsed through a persistent mist. They poked me with paper clips and other office equipment, but I couldn't feel a thing. Also, Dr. Abramowitz had slipped something like valium's big brother from the marine corps into my IV, and none of this really concerned me anymore. Dr. Abramowitz was my friend.

The surgery itself was pretty inconsequential compared to the run-up. I had a few uncomfortable moments when I could hear things being sucked out of me by a plastic hose, and was not real happy to see it's blood-streaked length as the surgeon laid it aside. Unfortunately, his explorations did not reveal a small dwarf or gnome in residence in my peritoneum; cultures would be necessary before the cause of my discomfort could be known. In the meantime, the doctor inserted a rubber drain into the abscess, so that I could drip unoccluded in the future. In addition, a small bottle of augmented amoxicillin bombs was waiting on a little table when I got to the recovery room. These antibiotics were so powerful that you probably should eat some yogurt right now to protect your digestive flora from having read the name of the drug.

The scariest part of the whole thing was when the four people in the operating room struggled to get me from the table to a gurney for the roll-out. Dr.

She totally confused all the passing piranhas

So they climbed a tree in order to become one with the storm . . .

Abramowitz had to lean against the wall and pant for a few seconds after this maneuver was performed. Turns out he enjoys SF; we had a nice talk about Greg Bear, and I made sure to tell him that another sequel to *Eon* was in the stores now.

The next few days were not much fun. I awoke with a fever over 102 on Thursday morning, and spent most of the day lapsing in and out of consciousness. The drain worked very well. Quite a volume of material seeped out of me for the next week. It was uncomfortable to sit, stand, walk or limbo; most of the time I sprawled in an untidy heap, trying to concentrate on any given thing for more than three minutes at a time. Victor Gonzalez and Lesley Reece came over to say hi, and I had to cant myself over at a 45 degree angle for most of the time they were here, to avoid the worst effects of the headache. I had these synthetic codeine and acetaminophen pills the hospital had given me for the pain, and I took one or two of them a day for the first three days -- and all they succeeded in doing was to blunt the pain and fever. No buzz or disorientation whatsoever -- it was at that point that it struck me just how sick I had been.

But it was just a matter of time before I began to feel better. On Tuesday of this week I had the drain removed, and the lab work indicated that I had some kind of strep infection -prosaic in the face of the things that go through a persons' mind when his gonads have begun to resemble a water-logged cricket ball. And, come deadline time, here I am back in the chair. This won't be any kind of block-buster issue, but I'm just happy to be able to write anything at all.

Oh, I forgot -- I also had to go out to a business meeting on Monday afternoon, which seems to have borne a new book project for the near future -- and was fortunately able to sit on a very squishy and comfortable couch for the duration. But I wonder if the man with whom I met wondered why I kept leaning off to the right for the length of the meeting . . .

VICTOR GONZALEZ, Tacoma News-Tribune reporter, is too busy covering the disappearance of a three-year-old child in Tacoma to get anything to Apak this time. As soon as Victor has time to do us a column, you'll see it here in Apparatchik.

ALSO, the lack of production time available means that there is no time to involve carl juarez in proofreading the zine as is our usual practice. So blame the typos in this issue on me.

FLASH: British fan Simon Ounsley is said to be visiting the Seattle area between July 28th and August 7th, and will attempt to appear at the August 5th Vanguard party. If he does manage to make it, it would be nice if those people in Seattle who know who the hell he is were to show up for the event . . .

I ALSO RECEIVED an aerogramme emblazoned with VERY BOLD type exhorting us to attend a post Worldcon party with UK apparatchik Martin Tudor and former

TAFF candidate Tony Berry. Since the venue has changed, I run the copy of this invite verbatim, and leave it to the reader to decide if they are invited or not:

"Tony Berry & Martin Tudor cordially invite you to the Post Worldcon, Hangover Cure Party, at 55 Seymour Rd., Oldbury, Warley, West Midlands, B69 4EP on Saturday 2nd September 1995 from 7:30 pm until late. (Early arrivals will be expected to work!)

"Please bring: booze; music; your own peculiar food if needed (Messrs Ford and Cox, Ms Predota - this means you!); more booze; sleeping bag(s); more booze; soft drinks (if you're that way inclined); great American delicacies such as Oreos and Twinkies (and a copy of the "rules" for Twinkie Tossing if you can!); alcoholic Australian lemonade; birthday cards/pressies for Bernie Evans, Steve Lawson and Pam Wells (if you want to receive their undying gratitude - and shut them up!); oh, and don't forget to bring some booze.

"R.S.V.P. to Martin Tudor by post at 845 Alum Rock Road, Ward End, Birmingham, B8 2AG, England or phone/fax Tony Berry on 0121-552-6333."

My only observation on this is that I'm sorry we'll have been back in the states for a day by the time this party is held, and that there are no official "rules" for twinkie-tossing. One merely cuts holes out of a piece of suitably-decorated cardboard, assigns a point value to each hole, and allows people to heave twinkies through the holes. They can be arrayed as individual competitors or in teams that break down along rough geographical or fan-political lines; the winner gets to strut around until they realize how ridiculous they look. Remember to keep the twinkies in their plastic wrappers, or this turns from a pastime that is merely stupid to one that verges on being an environmental hazard.

LOCAL NOTES: Seattle fans should be aware of Mike & Susan Glicksohn's trip from August 19th to an unspecified departure date. Janice Murray and Alan Rosenthal will act as their message center, and can be reached at 524-1206. A barbecue is planned for Saturday the 19th; call Janice or Alan for details. Also, they tentatively plan to attend the Seattle/Boston baseball game on Sunday the 20th, and stop at the Hart brewing company thereafter. Perhaps someone can call The Hartfordpark Hotel on their cel-phone during the event . . .

SHRIMP BROTHER cards are still available, in extremely limited quantities. Small cash gifts to TAFF, DUFF, the Mexican Hat, the afal and The Society to Put an End to "Widower's" Limericks might all be rewarded by entrance into the Langostino League, the brotherhood of the shellfish, hard-working souls bringing crustacean mastication to the nation. This is not just an exercise in fan-goof; membership carries responsibility to seek out shrimp-life and shrimp-civilizations, to keep national stocks of cocktail sauce and lemon-wedges high, and to stamp out those skimpy shrimp cocktails with the glass full of ice and one or two little tails wedged in at the top. Apply if you are equal to the task.

AND NOW, YOUR LETTERS:

[APH: It's difficult to know what to do when I have part of a reader's letter still pending from the previous issue, as well as a new letter from the same person. In general, when confronted with this problem, I am likely to choose to print the newest material. Thus, this lettercol leads off with some words from A.P. MCQUIDDY (824 NE 45th St., Suite 26, Seattle, WA 98105), but not the rest of the letter excerpted last time. This new message from A.P. allows me to obliquely note the arrival of another fine sf-writer to Seattle:]

"So, you gonna go teach them limeys how the game's played, eh? (re: Martin Smith's Precursor baseball challenge.) Really, no offense, folks over the pond: this is just my blatant ploy to lead into a bitch-n-moan . . . Eric, the book guy @ *the Stranger* (local infotainment freebie tabloid weekly) asked me to spritz off a quick 100 words to promote Nicola Griffith's *Slow River* signing tomorrow @ UBks. I wrote a very nice, compact mini-review-plug w/just a hint of humor -- 'UNIVERSITY BOOKSTORE: Nicola Griffith, our newest Seattleite, signs her second sf novel, *Slow River*. Who are you when you have nothing left? *Slow River* addresses the question when Lore Van Oesterling, daughter of wealth and power, is kidnapped and abused, then thrust into the underworld of a future too close to our present. Two timelines are woven together via first- and third-person narrative, as Lore searches for the ultimate meaning of 'self.' An 'alien of exceptional ability' (according to the INS), the British author's first novel, *Ammonite*, won both the Lambda literary and Tiptree awards. Saturday, 7/15, 3pm.'

"Now, I know *the Stranger* likes to think of itself as irreverent, but I find the additions Eric made unjustifiable. The title of the boxed announcement read 'Lesbian Limey Sci-Fi.' I like alliteration (love it, even) but not when it's derogatory -- unless well-deserved, and Nicola Griffith's done nothing to offend Eric or *the Stranger*. And 'Sci-fi' -- grrrr. I hate that! Then, he goes on to repeat the insult by changing my first line to 'Nicola Griffith, a limey who recently moved to Seattle.' *Sheesh*

"I know, I know, I'm overreacting . . .

"But I'd planned to show this announcement to her when I meet her (for the first time) tomorrow, and now it's been turned into a rude put-down. Welcome to the Big Leagues, eh? I'm sure I'll laugh over it, later.

"Gee. This is an APAK loc, isn't it? Maybe I should, like, comment on ish 38, instead of venting spleen about something in which you had no role, eh?

"Yeah, you're right about separating single fans from the herd . . . In order to recruit new fanzine fans, you've got to stick your neck out some. Look for the carp-like look in the eyes -- those are proly the ones who are thinking the same thing you are, and are frightened by the 'stampede' before them, that threatens to crush and maim at any moment.

"Aha -- that's why Randy was referring to Victor as 'Spartacus' at the Crowley party. The Good Stuff is a fine li'l capsulation of Byers' character. Once again, the opening and closing lines are quite telling -- first the heaping of masochistic blame upon himself, then the raising of the bird toward authority. Nicely told, with more emphasis on his own POV than I would normally expect. What surprised me most was Victor's quick capitulation to the security jerk. I guess one could blame the first bowl for that, but still . . .

"Thanks for pointing out the error in Denys' slam towards me. I often made those 'lengthy forays' into the wilds of non-smoking country in days past, and while I admit that I rarely do so presently, the general impression I receive remains the same: the people I find interesting in the NS section are so few and far between, socializing becomes too much like work. Curmudgeon that I am, I'd rather sit my lazy ass down among the Smokies & increase the odds. By the way, Denys, I 'like Rosemary Clooney and (the) Butthole Surfers.'

"As for Jane's cmnt (via Luke) that the S/NS dichotomy has much in common, conversationally -- speaking strictly of Vanguard -- I beg to differ. If I found the same character, topics, and attitude in NS conversations that I find in the S conversations, I would indeed circulate more often. But I don't.

"Back to Luke: I agree w/you both that the trade pbk form Vintage made famous is an ideal compromise between hc and the more affordable mass pbk for those of us who appreciate the package as well as the content. However, I wish I had held on to the nearly-complete set of Black Lizard cheap-o paperbacks -- they were remaindered when Vintage bought them out a few years back, and the shop I worked in got three or four of each title. But, alas, they were sold. Those guys sorely needed an art director! You ever see a Black Lizard book in its original package? <Shudder> That's proly why I ditched 'em."

[APH: Well, I'm, glad to see this is still the preferred venue for reporting incidents of Anglophobia. If this is representative of the Stranger's general attitude toward writers and their work, it's unlikely they'll ever gain much of a reputation as a place to look for local literary news. Recent letters to the editor seem to indicate that your opinion of the paper is shared by several others.

As for our desire to squat in dank basements and have marvelous conversations with other incipient lung-cancer patients, I doubt that we are really missed much in the clean, well-lit environs favored by the non-smoking crowd. Nor do I get an impression that people are weeping in their beer because I spend a certain amount of my convention time cloistered in sidebars. If we could just find a way to give them better ventilation, I suspect many people (those who are not allergic or hysterically opposed to smoking on some socio-political grounds) would be more willing to give smoking rooms of all sorts a chance.

As long as we are dealing with the subject of unpleasant characterizations of British people and places, it seems appropriate to run a letter from MICHAEL ABBOTT (102 William Smith Close, Cambridge, CB1 3QF, U.K.) next:]

"I guess first off I should say thanks for sending me APAK over the last several months. You should have an easier time now that Martin Tudor has taken on your UK distribution, but I appreciate the effort it must have taken (quite aside from the work in the fortnightly turnaround, a thing that passeth all my understanding). I figure that I owe you some kind of contribution in return for past and future issues. I'll try to force money and/or effeminate beers into your hands at Precursor. Or maybe I'll write you this letter instead.

"(As well as the frequency, the quality and interest value of APAK are impressive. You're right that it isn't a newszine, but calling it a letterzine fails to capture its immediacy. Is there a term 'conversationzine'?)

"What I actually meant to write to you about was the remarks about a North/South divide in British fandom, and anti-Scottish prejudice hurting Intersection. Well, if there is a north/south divide in British fandom, with London south and Glasgow north, you probably ought to put Cambridge in the north and Leeds in the south. But that's rather irrelevant, because Intersection isn't really a Scottish convention anyway. If you look at the current board, as listed in PR 6, you'll find that the board of fifteen people includes two Scots, ten other European fans and three Americans. Admittedly one of the Americans (T R Smith) is on the board in the first place because he's head of USA affairs, but on the other hand Vince Docherty, one of the two Scots, was resident in London when the bid committee were getting together.

"Yet no-one's daft enough to claim that Intersection's an American Worldcon, despite them outnumbering the Scots. The same pattern repeats lower down the staff hierarchy: no more Scottish fans involved than you'd expect in, say, a random Eastercon. Furthermore, when the bid committee was starting, their stated intention was to run a British Worldcon; there was no particular reason why they chose a site in Glasgow rather than, say, Birmingham or Brighton. All the Scottishness came later.

"In other words, Intersection is about as Scottish as Christopher Lambert in *Highlander*, and the remarks about its excessive Scottishness are not anti-Scot, they're anti-fake, in the same way as many Brits support their heritage but dislike the Heritage Industry.

"I could say a lot more about Intersection, but it would probably be unfair of me, and Don's right about the bottom line: it should be possible to have fun there. But the doubting isn't any kind of racism or nationalism at all."

[APH: This discourse is quite illuminating for those of us who were concerned about the structural integrity of the Worldcon, about which I personally have never had any doubts. Other readers are more concerned about the very principle of divisions in British fandom along geographical

lines, or, more properly, my belief in the existence of such a schism. Some, like SIMON OUNSLY (25 Villa Park Court, Leeds, LS8 1EB U.K.) become quite animated in their efforts to discredit that possibility:]

"Aagh! Stop it! The latest of your (overall splendid) *Apparatchiks* to hit my doormat is talking about 'the enmity (such as it is) between Northern and Southern British Fandom' and the way things are going I don't think it will be very much longer before you're leaving out the 'such as it is.' It should really be a Scottish fan writing to tell you this but in case one doesn't this will have to suffice. Are you ready? Right. There is no enmity between English and Scottish fandom. This was pure speculation by one of your correspondents (Don Fitch, was it?) a few issues ago but it already (without any kind of factual back-up whatever) seems to have achieved the status of almost-fact in your pages. If this trend carries on, I fear that you will soon be bringing such enmity into being."

[APH: Now, I ask you, is that a threat? Or is it merely a syllogism? One tends to read closely when it is asserted that an off-hand comment can bring feud and war into being where naught but harmony persisted before. One recalls Borges, yes? Ah, but now read on:]

"Look - the long-standing criticisms of Intersection are based not on racism but on a few intrinsic shortcomings which a large number of fans (rightly or wrongly) have ascribed to it:

"1) There is the feeling that it is taking place too soon after Conspiracy and that British fandom cannot provide the person power to run such a massive event without falling apart (as happened to some extent after Conspiracy 87 and Seacon 79).

"2) There are certain geographical shortcomings to Intersection in that most of the hotels being used are a long way from the Scottish Exhibition Centre, leading to obvious transport problems. This, in my opinion, is the most valid of the criticisms and the situation is not going to be helped by the long-standing problem with the rail link which seem unlikely to be solved before the convention. I suggest everyone brings stout walking shoes or a good book to read in the taxi queue.

"3) Many key Intersection committee members seem to have had such an obsession with computers that their colleagues without access to e-mail have found themselves left out of discussions altogether.

"There may be other objections I've forgotten about but those will do to be going on with. On top of which, I believe it is true that the prime instigators of the convention (generally held to be the villains of the piece) have been English rather than Scottish and that Scottish fans are in a minority on the committee. If this is a cock-up, it is an English cock-up - not a Scottish one.

"Notwithstanding the above, a number of genuine Scottish fans seem to have come forward in recent times to try and help the English fans out of the mess. This is certainly true in the fannish programming, where out of

the six people doing the organizing, three of them are Scottish - at a guess, I'd say this was probably the highest proportion of 'natives' in any area of the convention. Of the other three, two are English and one is from Northern Ireland (though even of these, two are resident in Scotland). But these are not the people the English fans are complaining about. These are people who are trying to salvage a decent convention out of the wreckage of the early days - and by all accounts they are doing an excellent job. There are three separate fannish programmes (morning, afternoon, and evening), each of them organized by a different duo of Enthusiastic fans and all-in-all Intersection looks like being the most heavily fan-programmed event in the history of British conventions. (Whether anyone will actually be able to hear any of it, given the locations of the programme rooms, is a different matter, but let us not quibble.)

"One more clarification: the references to the 'Scottish Convention' popularised in Ansible are not intended as a slight on all things Scottish but simply as a humorous reference to the 'Scottish Play' Macbeth, which cannot be mentioned by name for fear of dire consequences. This is a joke which goes back to the early days of Intersection's genesis when it was generally believed that the whole thing would be an unmitigated disaster. As it is, I think a lot of people have worked very hard to try to pull the thing together. I'm still anticipating some organizational difficulties but then Conspiracy 87 wasn't exactly trouble-free, was it, and I had a great time there. I expect to have a similarly great time at Intersection."

[APH: Indeed, as do I. I'm glad you took the time to point out the theatrical connection; I figured it was pretty well-known, and didn't want to spend time explaining it, but I did have my doubts.

I guess we have to blame Don Fitch for creating this current association of Intersection with historical friction between Britain's north and south, but his was only the most recent and most lucidly framed comment to that effect. There has been a certain amount of contention in regard to Intersection, most of it having to do with the relative inability of British fandom as a whole to survive another Worldcon. You support this yourself; all that you can say in regard to this is that debate didn't break down along regional lines. That's actually rather immaterial to fandom at large; the substance of the debate is far more significant to most fans than whether or not a party of disenfranchised Jacobites made one side of the controversy. And anyway, I thought that it was clear that I was speaking of historical divisions of British fandom with my little joke about SuperMancon; another example of how Americans have no sense of irony (or humor) about these things, apparently.

Besides, every fan group, even if it only involves two people, develops some kind of controversy or debate; trying to deny that it exists seems ludicrous. Every little club or committee or cell has people who don't get along perfectly, and the least particle of fanac can become a fit subject for a

feud or rancorous set-to. If there was no friction whatever between English and Scottish fans (such as they are), this would actually be a topic worth spending this many inches of text.

But quite honestly, who really gives a fuck anyway? My opinion is my opinion, nothing more. I don't feel that I have to offer a lengthy series of supporting arguments and footnotes for every opinion I care to express. If there are people on this mailing list who genuinely cannot distinguish between statements that are primarily the result of my own wool-gathering on a subject, and things which are presented as fact, with circles and arrows and numbers on the back, let me know, and all such dilemmas which APAK presents will shortly cease to bother you any more.

And what is all this about referring to the Scots as a different "race?" Is that simply vernacular, or do people honestly consider the Scots to be a different race? I'm Scottish enough to be a little offended by that . . . a real Scot would probably have banjoed someone by now, and I'm not sure I won't pit the heid on yon John Abbott when I see him anyway . . .

Your third point, about the obsession with electronic communication is well-taken. To whatever extent that there is a permanent middle-management bund surrounding the contemporary Worldcon, they do communicate largely by computer. It's hard to criticize this given the greater efficiency of e-mail, but like every other endeavor fans undertake, it can be used as a means for division and disenfranchisement as well as expedition of critical business.

I find it remarkable that almost every person who expresses an opinion on the event mutters about the overall toll that Worldcon takes on its organizers, yet I am unaware of any directed effort ever being made to reform the convention, in a manner which does not chew up and burn out the people involved. Does it really have to be this way? Can't the race that is meant to rule the sevagram distribute sufficiently competent human resources to prevent individual workers from fleeing toward gafiation, and department chairs and committee heads from spending their fannish capitol in flights of megalomania and writer-baiting?

Back to Simon's letter!]

"As I was saying to John Berry in the e-mail I sent him (my first-ever as it happens, though I cheated by composing it on my word-processor the night before) I have found Apparatchik astonishingly impressive. To produce a fanzine on such a regular basis over such a long period of time is no mean feat, and to produce one like yours which is always readable and occasionally brilliant is verging on superhuman. And I feel rather ashamed that my only contribution to it until now has been the rather peevish letter I sent you early on complaining about the lack of consultation with British fans over TAFF. I'm very glad that you kept on going through those early criticisms and that Apparatchik has flowered in the way that it has. And though there's probably no need to say this, I do want to make it belatedly clear (in case no one has) that British fans did

"Moff nephufarugma."

not think you were anglophobic or hated you for what you said about TAFF or anything like that at all. It's just that we felt unfairly left out and we thought you should know about it.

"I think you were right, though, when you speculated in a later issue that one of the principal reasons for our annoyance may have been that this was one of the few occasions in recent years when a US fanzine had actually bothered to talk about UK fandom, and it was therefore doubly irritating that you didn't bother to send us the damn thing. Apparatchik is indeed one of the few US zines to which I feel connected - and I think this is because of your frequent references to British fandom. This is the first time since Pong that something like this has happened - thanks for bringing us back into the party. Another reason for my feeling of connectedness may be the frequency of the fanzine, so that there is really a chance to get to know - or any rate feel familiar with - you and your regular correspondents through the printed page - something which is much less likely to happen through a single big fat genzine once a year.

"One of your references to British fandom was a reprint of the 'Razorbill review' of my fanzine Still Life 3 and I was meaning to write you about this . . . and ... the whole thing seems to be building up inside me into a longer piece about Ted White's Challenger review. The article will probably surface eventually in Lagoon 8 (the one after next) and can be seen as my own attempt to get a bit of cross-fertilization going on across the Atlantic, I suppose. (Does that last sentence make sense? Gardening is not my strong subject, I'm afraid.)

"(Meanwhile, Lagoon 7 is already being electro-stencilled and is scheduled for release at Intersection.)

"A bit of response to Judith Hanna (issue 36) before I sign off: we have a bit of the 'traffic-calming' she talks about on a road near me. There's a whole series of islands half way across the road - first on one side and then on the other - each with its own 'give-way' sign to stop the traffic - and I have to say that it's very annoying from the motorist's point of view. Fair enough - I guess that's the point, and after all it's time that we suffered for a change, isn't it? Only fair. But I often think about the effect it must be having on the local residents, and far from providing public 'open space, as much for kids to play in and neighbours to chat as for access' as Judith describes it, it seems to me to be producing a dreadful environment of cars braking, then revving their engines in impatience and finally accelerating noisily away again; all in all noisy and fume-filled and rather worse, I'd have thought, than simply allowing the traffic to whizz by quickly at 60 mph. And what about the increased fuel consumption involved?

"I'm not arguing that something shouldn't be done, you understand - just that I'm not sure this is the answer. What we should really do is stop pussy-footing about and get ourselves a decent public transport system - but

of course, putting daft islands and lumps across the road is cheaper."

[APH: I think the real hope of the traffic engineers who put those lumps in the road is that the street in question will eventually be used less and less as drivers learn that driving on it is more trouble than it is worth. This has no effect on people who are from a different area and simply trying to get from place to place, and they are probably much more likely to drive poorly and/or have accidents in the face of the obstacles before them.

Your comments on APAK and the degree to which it contributes to links between American and U.K. fandom were extremely welcome and much-appreciated. Now, if I can just bring some Australian fen , and maybe even some other European fans, into the conversation, we'll really have something here. Looking forward to that next Lagoon very much; I imagine it will help to put you over the top for some more award hardware in November.

And just think, I'll surpass Pong's run in only three more issues . . .

Now, another note on Precursor from JOHN HARVEY (e-mail at jharveya@cix.compulink.co.uk) who assures us that things are still ticking along:

"Thanks for the Apaks and the plugs for Precursor. I've airtailed you a PR & hotel form. But to speed things up a bit here's the text of the PR."

[APH: It seems just slightly late in the day to run all of this PR, especially the stuff about "why have a party a week before worldcon?" Below is a list of the current attendees, plus directions on how to get to the con and the hotel terms. Many of you will be leaving the country before the next APAK can reach you, so if you don't have a real copy of the PR, you might want to bring this ish along.]

"PRECURSOR

"A Worldcon Warmup Weekend

"PROGRESS REPORT

"18th to 20th August 1995

Hertfordpark Hotel, Stevenage, Hertfordshire

Hotel Room Rates:

Twin/double £20.50 per person per night

Single £23.50 per person per night"

[APH: Apparently, the only way to contact the hotel is by mail. The address is: Hertfordpark Hotel, Danestrete, Stevenage, Herts SG1 1E], UK. If you don't have a hotel form, send a letter stating that you want to register as a member of Precursor, what sort of room you want, the dates (18th to 20th) you'll be there, any special requirements (such as a non-smoking room) you may have and include a statement that you agree that you are responsible for your own bill. Make sure to sign this. NO DEPOSIT is required.]

"Membership:

"£15 or US \$20 made payable to Rob Hansen. If you haven't paid already please send a cheque and the form with this PR as soon as possible.

"The Best of the Blues Magoos?" And they filled a whole CD that way?

"Membership List as of 7/13/95

"(S) denotes supporting. This gives you the right to pay (more) money and join the convention."

Eve Harvey	Abigail Frost	Mike Abbott
John Harvey	Bridget Wilkinson (S)	Jill Armstrong-Bridges
Rob Hansen	Keith Oborn	Keith Armstrong-Bridges
Avedon Carol	Dan Steffan	Rafe Culpin
Martin Smith	Lynn Steffan	Bridget Hardcastle
Pam Wells	Chuck Harris	Andy Hooper
Austin Benson	Janet Wilkins	Carol Root
Nina Watson	Justin Ackroyd (S)	Geri Sullivan
Mike Ford	Alun Harries	Patrick Nielsen Hayden
Caroline Mullen	Ted White (S)	Teresa Nielsen Hayden
Brian Amerigen	Lynda White (S)	

"How to find Stevenage and the Hertfordpark Hotel:

"By Road:

"Stevenage is on the A1(M), so look on your Road Atlas of Britain to find out how to get to the A1 and either drive north or south depending on where you are coming from.

"Car parking:

"There is an NCP car park next door to the hotel. If you are staying in the hotel there is a voucher scheme to make it cheap. If you are not staying in the hotel then parking is going to cost ya! So day trippers might be better off on the train.

"By Rail:

"Stevenage is well served by BR as it's on the main London King's Cross/Edinburgh line. (Journey time from London about 30-45 minutes). Once at Stevenage the hotel is only a 5 minute walk away. Leave the station on the upper level which takes you over a foot bridge over a dual carriageway. The bridge leads you through a Leisure Centre before you find a set of steps leading down to the ground level. From this point look to your left and the hotel can be seen near Tesco.

"By Bus:

"There is a 'bus station' but it is not served by many national routes and is more of a collection of bus stops. You may find you have to change at Luton and get a local service or an Airport Bus running from Luton to Stansted.

"The Guilty Ones:

"Rob Hansen, John Harvey and Martin Smith are responsible for Precursor."

Contact: PRECURSOR, 144 Plashet Grove, East Ham, London E6 1AB

e-mail: avedon@cix.compulink.co.uk

[APH: I'm looking forward to the event very much; if any Americans that are going to be in the country are still deliberating about going, I hope you will choose to attend Precursor and see various members of British fandom in their natural habitat, i.e., a bar.

Now, the first note in some time from DAVE RIKE (P.O. Box 11, Crockett, CA 94525), who begins:]

"Apak #37 is at hand. First, while the font menu on your computer display might say that it's Times Roman to me it doesn't look that way. I make no claim at being an expert of any sort at graphic design or typography but over the past 30 or 40 years I have become

accustomed to Stanley Morrison's design of Times New Roman (TNR) as made by Monotype Corp. since it's the text face used in most of the Penguin/Pelican pb.s published. The Olaf Stapeldon novels that came out in 1972, for example, all use TNR. But, you might say, I'm not using a Monotype font set so how can it be the same? A peculiarity of US intellectual property rights does not allow one to copyright one's typeface design but merely the name. This causes many similar fonts to have different names. Thus this is not Helvetica on my unit, rather it is called 'Swiss.' "

[APH: Dave offers about half again as many words on this topic, which I omit at least in part because I cannot be certain of simulating the changes of face in his text. I assemble this poor effort with the use of Word for Windows 2.0, and the font menus included therewith, and their relationship to classic type faces is rather beyond my ken. I am trying to keep it down to three or four basic fonts per issue now, having recovered from the euphoria that a new dtp system engenders. I use what I use because at least at some point in the publishing process I thought it looked good. And that's all I can really say about it. Back to Dave:]

"Condolences to Victor on the loss of his mother. It's tragic but true that automobiles appear to be the weapon of choice here in the US, be it with deliberate homicidal intent, by those on a suicidal bent, or merely by 'accident.' I don't know what can be done, all cars have to be registered and all drivers licensed and still people die. Do you think the government should ban the import of 'assault-cars,' those that are involved in the most accidents and cause the most deaths? I believe I read somewhere that red sports cars figure high in that category. Would urging wider spread and more efficient public transit be the answer? Or will we have to await teleport booths?

"There's a reason why used book stores are loaded up with dreck like that: it's because that is what is sold at chain book stores and thru book clubs. Check out the intro offerings the SF Book club make to prospective members and browse through any Crown, B Dalton, Walden or Barnes and Noble to see what I mean. Since that's the case, you might as well get around to checking the thrift stores in your area. I find all sorts of interesting stuff there from time to time. The thing to remember is that you shouldn't expect all that much since what is there, at either a thrift shop or a used book store, is what the previous customers didn't want to buy; they may have left five minutes before you came in taking all the Good Stuff with them.

"Factoid to remember when you go to Glasgow: Scotland and Northern Ireland have a higher murder rate (per 100,000) than the US. Have a fun trip nonetheless."

[APH: I'll do what I can Dave, and thanks for the advice. Boy it's amazing how much less 8 pages is than 10, isn't it? I have many more letters pending, and as always, I'll do my best to get to them next ish.]

FANZINE COUNTDOWN, JULY 11th to 27th

#1) Lhyfe Thyme, A tribute to Roger Weddall, edited by Jane Tisell; Best bet for getting copies in this country would be to write to Janice Murray, P.O. Box 75684, Seattle, WA 98125-0684, and enclose ten dollars, which I understand will apply to DUFF. You could also write to Jane Tisell at P.O. Box 12435 A'Beckett St., Melbourne, Victoria, Australia 3000. This has been out for quite a while, but it so happens that Janice got me a copy this past week, and as such, must be counted the best fanzine I received this fortnight. It's not just a memorial; some of these stories are really very funny, and they do a lot to illustrate what kind of a person Roger was. There's material by Alan Stewart, Bruce Gillespie, Cath Ortlieb, Yvonne Rosseau and others, all of whom seem to be writing at the peak of their ability here. I had a little pang of missing Roger again when I read it, but by and large, this is a joyous piece of fanac, one which I think Roger would really have liked.

#2) Wild Heirs #7 & 7.5, edited by the Toner Hall Gang, available as always for the usual, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107; I don't know if I can possibly hope to comment in anything approaching an objective manner on these zines, seeing as how often my name appears in them, and given the fact that 7.5 is largely consumed by a fan-fiction which has me at its heart (even though the picture on the front cover looks more like Bruce Pelz than it does me). I don't want to sound like a broken record, but #7 & 7.5 are another piece of evidence that Las Vegas is the most active and energetic publishing fandom active today, and this fanzine continues to exert an irresistible effect on many of the best writers working in fandom. This time, though, I think some of the best stuff comes right from Vegas; Tom Springer's efforts to remember what happened at Corflu Vegas are extremely entertaining, even the parts which don't have me in them. I liked Belle Augusta's piece too, a kind of ground-level view of events. Naturally, Tom's fan-fiction on my efforts to enslave all fandom through the International Brotherhood of Shrimp Gobblers was well-received, but I think Arnie's story "The Insurgent Elevator" was even a little better. And that was obliquely about me too. I have to say, it's nice to have a frequent fanzine that I can look forward to receiving every month. Wonder how long it takes 23 editors to burn out . . .

#3) Zina #1, Barnaby Rapoport; available for the usual, or a dollar, or certain issues of *Shade, the Changing Man*, from Barnaby at P.O. Box 565, Storrs, CT 06268. Again, how can I be unbiased about a zine that spends 6 of 14 pages reviewing Apak and examining opinions I expounded therein? It's about the best review I ever got. To his credit, Barnaby also spends some effort considering how this zine and the material in it relates to the state of fandom as a whole, and creates a new cartoon caricature of me in the process. Some nice art by Linda Michaels, and pocket-size Esperanto lessons are

included, plus Barnaby's opinions of a whole bunch of summer movies. That trademark Rapoport verve inhabits every page; you can tell he really likes pubbing his ish. I look forward to #2, and finding out whose 'zine is next.

#4) Rant # 2, John Wesley Hardin, available for the usual from 1733 Yellow Rose, Las Vegas, NV 89108. In addition to providing major services in regard to Corflu, and doing the easy part in regard to the birth of his and Karla's first child, JoHn managed to produce another issue of this fine 'zine, another in the Las Vegas "relaxed Genzine" school. These Vegas zines aren't laid out that well, the repro leaves something to be desired, and the type certainly doesn't have to be that big, but one just starts reading and forgets all about such petty details. JoHn offers some consideration on the vagaries of turning 30, talks about some of his favorite authors and accepts the fact that he is no longer cool. Better to make these judgments about yourself than to have them thrust upon you, I suppose. Plus, neat article by Karla on the modern mother's fear that their daughters will really like pink better than other colors, a good piece by Kunkel and Yates on how their home was infested by bees (wasn't that mentioned in "I think we're all Bozos on this bus?"), Aileen Forman's mediation on the nature of secrets, and Arnie's take on the brief vogue and departure from Vegas Fandom of David Whitman, author of the immortal line, "This is the year of the Corflu." Believe me, folks, Arnie was as nice as anyone could be . . . A really solid effort, more evidence that all these writers in Vegas have too much time on their hands.

#5) Flaming Tantric Toasters (FTT #17), Judith Hanna and Joseph Nicholas, available for the usual from 15 Jansons Road, South Tottenham, London N15 4JU, UK. The highlight of this issue for me is Judith's memoirs of the her life and state of Oz fandom when she first met Joseph. A great piece of work. And the letter column, as usual, is amazing. Haven't had time to read it all as it just arrived today, but I am savoring it.

ALSO RECEIVED: Thyme # 103, Alan Stewart for All Australia; The Space Cadet Gazette #3, R. Graeme Cameron; Cube #59, Hope Kiefer for SF3; World Domination Review #16, Bruce Taylor; The Reluctant Famulus #34 - 39, Tom Sadler; MSfire Vol. 1, #3, produced by unidentified members of Milwaukee Fandom; The Knarley Knews #52, Henry & Letha Welch; It Goes on the Shelf # 14, Ned Brooks; Baryon # 59, Barry Hunter; De Profundis #279, Tim Merrigan for the LASFS. Thanks as always for your many efforts, folks.

APPARATCHIK is the Felix Fermin of fandom, unable to field, hit or run very well, but still, it's what we have to work with. It's still available for the usual, or you can get APPARATCHIK for \$3.00 for a three month supply, or a year's worth for \$12.00 or a life-time subscription for \$19.73, or in exchange for a process guaranteed to make Barnaby Rapoport write more often. Lifetime subscribers include Tom Becker, Judy Bemis and Tony Parker, Richard Brandt and Michelle Lyons, Don Fitch, Lucy Huntzinger, Robert Lichtman, Luke McGuff, Janice Murray, Greg Pickersgill, Alan Rosenthal, Anita Rowland, Karen Schaffer, Geri Sullivan, Steve Swartz, Michael Waite, and Art Widner. The break-even point is only \$500,000, right?