
APPARATCHIK

The sixteenth issue of a more or less bi-weekly fanzine, published by Andy Hooper, member fwa, supporter afal, at The Starliter Building, 4228 Francis Ave. N. # 103, Seattle, WA 98103. This is Drag Bunt Press Production # 193. Publishing this zine is at least as much fun as a barium enema....

Issue # 16, September 1st, 1994.

It's getting harder and harder to overcome my general depression with the response which APAK has received sufficiently to publish yet another issue. Every week, there seems to be another letter, mostly from Britain, but some from the U.S., which accuses me of being criminally incompetent, malicious, and ignorant on the strength of opinions I have either expressed myself or attributed to other people in the pages of APAK. I guess that's fandom for you; every now and then I conveniently forget the rules of the game and allow myself to be surprised when people return the gift of your fanzine (and by far the majority of APAK readers receive it without making any kind of monetary compensation, which is, after all, outside the standard fannish social contract) with expressions of contempt and diatribes against your presumption and idiocy. The standard response to APAK now runs like this: "Gosh, it's impressive that any would try to publish a weekly or bi-weekly fanzine, isn't it? Too bad Andy Hooper is such a useless and ignorant fool."

This week's little letter-bomb arrived in the form of Pam Well's editorial to ATTITUDE # 2, an intelligent and laboriously-crafted zine which she co-edits with Michael Abbot and John Dallman. Pam takes two complete A-4 pages to analyze the contents of APAK # 1 - 10, and naturally, the largest impression they made was the presumption implicit in having a discussion about British attitudes toward TAFF without direct involvement of the people in question. This issue will apparently haunt me to the grave, despite my best efforts to retract and distance myself from everything I ever said on the subject.

Pam takes exception with my statement that I did not observe her having a particularly good time during her trip to the U.S. in 1991, and suggests that my impression is created by the fact that she did not have sex with me. For my part, I cannot remember the issue ever coming up. But one can hardly be said to have arrived in fandom if their sexual practices and attitudes have not been called into question by either Pam or Lucy Huntzinger, and since I have now been humiliated in print by both of them, I guess my status as a trufan is sealed for life.

What I do remember most clearly about Pam's trip to the U.S. was having lunch with her in a terrible little fast food restaurant in the bowels of the Chicon V hotel complex. Pam had a cold, which didn't help her mood at all, and the half-hour was almost entirely occupied with a screed against the convention and committee, American fans who had turned out to be boring and awful, and the cumulative strain of traveling so far from home.

Now, Pam says that she had a great time visiting fans in Madison and Minneapolis both before and after the convention, and that her angst was entirely directed at the Worldcon, which no one else seemed to like very much either. And we ought to accept her word for this, as it was her experience after all.

But I think that it is understandable that the main impression which stayed with me was that created by the feelings she expressed during that lunch. Negative impressions always last longer than favorable ones; perhaps my impression of these negative attitudes on the part of British fans is a result of that psychological mechanism at work. Perhaps I have retained only the negative things said by people with whom I have discussed and from whom I have received comment in regard to TAFF in the past five years, like Pam, Abi Frost, Lillian Edwards, Rob Hansen, Martin Smith, Nigel Richardson, Chuck Connor, Dave Langford, and various others it seems too tedious to list here. Alas, I didn't keep notes on these conversations, nor do I want to wade through the more than 500 letters I have received in that time, to find the specific comments which created this apparent misapprehension. If it's more appealing to you to believe that I made it all up out of my own rampant Anglophobia, no contrary evidence would suffice.

APAK began its life as a very small fanzine, meant to be distributed to a tiny list of fans, people who had established a record of frequent correspondence. I appreciate the efforts which people have made to help me reach a wider audience, but I have to admit it isn't one of my highest priorities. And while I am aware that once you publish a zine, for however small an audience, you cannot control where it eventually ends up, I like to think I would have exercised greater tact had I believed that APAK would reach anything other than a severely limited American readership. It is still that limited American readership that I am principally writing to here; the slow speed of overseas mail alone is sufficient to make me maintain that focus.

Almost immediately after I began publication, requests that bordered on demands for copies of their own began to arrive from fans all over the U.S.; and in the weeks since Corflu, they've been coming from England as well. APPARATCHIK is typically produced in a single afternoon, from composition to application of mailing labels and stamps. Sometimes I get the people who bowl with me on Thursdays to help out, but generally speaking, each issue is produced in an unholy rush, with barely

...you seem to have been sprinkled with the same supersaturated fannish fairy dust..

Shelter is a privilege of the sane and competent

enough time to run the spell-checker program. If I had to prepare another batch to be sent to England, and incur the additional expense and effort involved, I simply couldn't go on publishing, certainly not as frequently as I have been. and that, really, is the whole point behind the zine in the first place, it's temporality. As demands for more fact-checking and the removal of typos mount, APAK slips more and more away from the immediacy which is the only thing which makes it any different from a thousand other perzines clogging up the mail.

I certainly don't count myself as receiving any especially intense castigation in these areas; they are simply a fact of life in fandom, and a good explanation for the failure of almost anyone who undertakes such a project to sustain them beyond a few issues. But I would like to go on record as saying that I do sometimes make mistakes here, and that if this renders APAK beneath your interest, please inform me, so I can remove you from the mailing list.

All of this, by the way, should go some further distance toward explaining why even if I felt like I wanted to win, it would be out of the question for me to stand for TAFF in 1995. I don't have very many friends in the U.K., even less than I once believed, and it is going to take me some number of years to reverse the negative impression of myself which this controversy has created. Even though APAK went to only about a dozen people in Britain, the belief that I am anti-Britfan and a TAFF heretic has been diffused through a wide cross-section of the people I would most count on for any overseas support. No one person is responsible for this; it is that mechanism I spoke of earlier, that accentuates the negative in any person or event. No matter what I have done in the past which might stand to my credit, my indiscretion in attempting to question Britfandom's commitment to TAFF will be the sole impression which the vast majority of fans there have of me. Considering the treatment which this is likely to elicit from them, I must work hard to build bridges for the next year to get to the point where I feel I can merely attend The Scottish Convention, let alone do so as a representative of American fandom.

Despite these considerations, requests that I reconsider my decision and stand for TAFF continue to arrive, some from unexpected quarters. Here's a letter from GREG PICKERSGILL (3 Bethany Row, Narberth Road, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire SA61 2XG):

"Briefly, I think you should reconsider your decision to withdraw your TAFF candidacy. Especially if it was prompted in whole or in part by your reaction to my comments. Quite apart from anything else I don't think I - or any other fan - either can or should have the power to cause that kind of reaction. And it certainly was not what I either intended or envisioned. You ought to bear in mind perhaps that my clear advocacy of Dan Steffan and juxtaposed critical comments apropos yourself clearly indicates that you are a worthwhile candidate of a sort who might be reasonably put up strong competition even to someone with Steffan's admittedly extraordinary accomplishments and record. If I

hadn't perceived you as a threat, I wouldn't have mentioned you at all. I mean, let's face it, Joe who?

"And good lord, you certainly do have the right profile for a worthwhile candidate, and the fact that you're obviously thinking seriously about the whole business shows to me at any rate that you're the kind of person who ought to be in the frame. (Remember, too, that several substantial fans have tried more than once before winning...Roberts and Weston from our side (and let's not think about four-time loser Terry Jeeves for the moment...)). And while I still have criticism about the way you handled the discussion of TAFF in APAK, I do accept it shows you take the whole business seriously, and that's what is needed today. I certainly do think TAFF is in poor psychological shape if nothing else, and an amount of working-together is going to be necessary if it is either to be carried with us into the next century or laid down soon, with dignity, and left behind in it's own time.

"So believe me, I really think you should get back on the ballot, make a decent run of the whole thing. It would be good for you, TAFF, and the rest of us."

It's certainly hard to resist this kind of polite entreaty, especially since I know it must be an effort for Greg to deal with me in such a patient and forgiving manner after my broadly sarcastic comments about him in APAK # 13. But I don't think it's good for TAFF or anyone's nerves to have me emulate Ross Perot and step back into the race after expressing my intention not to run.

I agree that it would be fortuitous for a person with more of an international reputation to step into the race and provide Dan with real competition -- sorry, I lost my train of thought there for a moment...I just noticed that the copy of Driftglass on the shelf next to my desk has Chip Delany's name mis-spelled on the spine -- but it would be fundamentally dishonest for me to return after having said what I have about both the fund and my desire for Dan to win the race. One thing I really don't like to see in fan fundery are candidates who stand just because they feel that there needs to be someone else in the race. What happens when they end up winning anyway and are unable to devote the kind of time and effort needed to administer the fund?

More importantly, I want to go on public record as saying that I did not drop out of the race because of the things which Greg or any other fan has said about or to me. I honestly did not want to run against Dan. This doesn't stop me from feeling frustrated in the knowledge that whatever chance I would have had to beat Dan has been swamped in this sea of indictment, but I would have stepped down even if the news of my candidacy had been met with a chorus of hosannas and delight. It just feels like it would be wrong to run without wanting to win.

So, I hope this is really the final comment I make on this subject: I am sorry if anyone anywhere feels that I have made an unfair characterization of their attitudes or opinions in regard to any issue connected with any fan fund. It was not my intention to present such an inaccurate picture, and I am grateful to those who have taken such

pains to correct my faulty impressions.

But I'm still not going to start sending dozens of free copies of this fanzine overseas.

As long as I'm vamping on the subject of troublesome mail and other discontents of fandom, let's move to a letter from TED WHITE (1014 N. Tuckahoe St., Falls Church, VA. 22046) that considers the topic of response to fanzines (and response to that response):

"You misread me if you think I 'reject' your definition of KTF fmz reviewing. (And, gee, there seem to be a lot of typos and missing words in the version of my letter you printed.) I pointed out, in a portion of the letter you did not print, that I'd mislaid # 13, despite my desire to comment upon it. Thus, I did not -- and do not -- have your definitions to hand to either accept or reject, or even to discuss. One of these days....

Nonetheless, and going purely on vague memory here, it does seem to me that KTF has evolved in meaning and definition, even as 'sercon' has (and leaving out the latter's drug connotations). 'Sercon' was once a complete pejorative, spoken with a sneer, but has evolved into a value-neutral descriptive term, all the sarcasm of 'Serious & Constructive' gone. KTF seemed to have moved in the opposite direction, from a semi-humorous meaning to invective, mostly, I think, after-the-fact. (I mean, was anyone calling them 'KTF' reviews when they were appearing in NABU?) Obviously, I shall have to dig up and reread Joseph's reviews." [As should I -- I have to admit I was going purely on memory when I tossed them into that category, and I'm sure Joseph would have very different opinion of them than we would. --aph]

"Moving right along, you surprise me with your comments on 'New Fandom,' to which you seem to be playing with this sort of nonsense.

"I coined 'New Fandom' not as pejorative title, but as a descriptive one, and in the context of a satire. But I think it works outside that satire, and I use it largely to describe a specific mindset -- not to describe 'anyone who disagrees with' my 'methods.'

Specifically, I am referring to people like Tom Sadler, with whom I have never had any contact, but who nevertheless has embarked upon an agenda against me that has manifested itself in his avowal never to send me his fanzine, and his complaint (to Bill Donaho) when he heard I would be reviewing fanzines for HABAKKUK before any of my reviews had appeared. Sadler and people like him are people who reject me, my fanac, and my community in fandom, out of ignorance and foolishness. In an earlier day they would be called fuggheads.

In no way do these oh-so-PC, bland New Fandomites overlap those people in fandom 'Who Don't Like Me' and have made that point obvious over the years. Nor, for that matter, does one's tenure in fandom determine whether or not one is part of New Fandom. (I think Ned Brooks qualifies; he's been around for more than thirty years now.) There are lots of people in New Fandom, like, oh, say, Jeanne Mealy, who have never expressed, in print, any opinion of my work (that I am aware of.) New Fandom is made up, largely, of 'nice' people who simply harbor too

mundane an attitude to really 'get' what fandom has traditionally been all about. They like the artwork in AQ. Hell, they probably like AQ better than most fanzines. To them, fandom is little different from the PTA. I see this as a basic difference of attitude about fandom, and it exercises me no more than does the domination of Worldcons by mundanish media fen. I just accept it as a state of affairs. But don't tell me I have to applaud it."

[No, no, no, I doubt anyone would say that you had to, Ted. And this is a lot more detailed explanation of what you are talking about in regard to this "New Fandom" than the throwaway reference you made in your last letter. There are certainly a lot of people in fandom right now whose greatest aspiration is for things to be "nice," to whom the idea of having any critical standards or indeed any standards at all are just an invitation to unpleasantness and conflict. On the other hand, I don't see anything particularly "New" about them; people have been running campaigns to clean up fandom for a long time, after all....

You want to know what sets me off? It's these references to "PC." When people start to go on about political correctness, I hear the same kind of whining that people used to do about how blacks and women should shut up and stop trying to rise above their place, how those ungrateful kids demonstrating against the war should all be shipped off to Russia, etc., etc.

I know we've gone around about this in the past, and I admit there are excesses being committed in the name of social so-called justice in America today that seem ludicrous. Still, I wish you could point to exactly what you are talking about when you use the shorthand 'PC,' so that I could fight back this powerful urge to lump you into the same group as Ross Pavlac and Newt Gingrich, slander which I am sure is utterly unjustifiable. -- aph.]

"As for my review of CHALLENGER, I am happy with it. It is an honest reaction to a dishonest fanzine. I don't think it's a KTF review, just a negative one. I suspect New Fandom can't tell the difference. [To New Fandom, there is no difference. Both promote disharmony. -- aph] But of course I am not automatically putting Guy Himself in New Fandom (that's his choice). Of course he hated to see his own ox being gored -- who wouldn't? But his response belittled him more than I could.

For that matter, no one has in fact accused me of writing KTF reviews (that I am aware of), although Chuck Connor's response to my review of CHALLENGER was itself startlingly Over The Top (I came out of it labeled a southern bigot!). Is Chuck in New Fandom? Hard to be sure, really. He vacillates between PC blandness and total outrageousness, but doesn't seem to understand the concept of "fannishness." I was anticipating the New Fandom response ('At this point, I am certain that someone out there in New Fandom will chime up....') not 'laboriously constructing some ideological school to explain the reaction to' my 'review of CHALLENGER.' Those 'People Who Don't Like Me' have never attacked me for writing KTF reviews; they have grander axes to grind, like how I was the worst prozine editor of all time (see any recent issue of

"I'll play at midnight, if that's what TV wants" -- Paul "Bear" Bryant

FOSFAX for Schweitzer's latest on that front), or just plain 'evil' (Harry Harrison to Sol Cohen, when Cohen hired me). I was anticipating the response of a Tom Sadler, in fact. I don't think Sadler dislikes me. I think he just sees me as some sort of two-dimensional ogre, who hasn't yet stamped him flat only because he's careful to keep out of my way. (Frankly, knowing as little about him as I do -- one piece in AQ -- I have no opinion at all of Sadler, although I infer ignorance on his part where I am concerned.)

"Enough of that. I too would rather see more opinions on the place of critical thought in fandom. I will just remark that there has been a place for critical thought in fandom for at least the last fifty years. And where is SKY HOOK when we really need it?

"I just called up Dan and read him parts of the above letter and he reminded me that we have had a curious sort of contact with Sadler. We sent him BLAT! #3, of course, and therein Dan queried (in the lettercol) the readership for a copy of a piece Dr. Schack said he'd written about Harlan. It apparently appeared in a RELUCTANT FAMULUS, and Dan got a note from Sadler saying he'd try to dig it up, and then a little later a Xerox of Harry's piece (underwhelming) from Sadler, but, says Dan, at no time did Sadler acknowledge that he himself had published it, nor has Dan ever seen a copy of his fanzine. (Dan didn't realize the connection until I pointed it out to him; Sadler's name was not familiar to him.)"

It's comforting to hear from someone who doesn't think that the theory I advanced in my last article for BLAT!, about people trying to separate themselves from criticism, was totally insane. I don't think you can have a career of any length in fandom without having to deal with the little bumps and bruises I talked about opening of this issue. The ironic thing about "New Fandom" is that in their zeal to avoid unhappy words and deeds, they would isolate and ostracize people far more thoroughly than any KTF review could ever achieve.

Of course, New Fandom (as I see it, anyway) is

not an organized entity with a coherent and defined agenda. It's a diffuse knot of dead wood, muddling along in response to fear and prejudice, reacting to things which scare and upset them, without any real understanding of why they have those responses, or what they mean to the social fabric of fandom in the long run. I disagree with you in one regard, Ted; I see it as a much more damaging phenomenon than the primacy of media fen in Worldcon programming, who at least have some idea of why they do what they do.

Criticism is a fact of life in fandom, especially if you have the temerity to publish fanzines, and so, I suppose, is whining about that criticism after the fact. There's nothing in what Pam Wells said about APAK that was really below the belt except for that stuff about my assuming she had a lousy time because she didn't "shag" me (what a picturesque turn of phrase, no?), and I reckon that speaks worse of her than it does of me. I should have known what kind of fallout there would be for suggesting that TAFF could use some modification, without taking steps to involve British fans in the discussion. And...well, there must be some way that I can reverse the negative picture of me which this has created in the minds of Britfans. Perhaps substantial cash payments would do the trick....

I didn't mean to spend the entire issue mumbling about this kind of thing, but the deadline draws nigh, and the last issue was a week late, so...I guess you guys must be used to my complaining by now, but I'll try to keep it down below one issue in three in the future. My one fear in all of this is that I'll somehow inhibit people from writing to correct my spelling, my references to fan historical events, and a host of other issues. Without your guidance, I'm doomed to remain the same ignorant neofan for the rest of my fannish life. Of course, by this time next week, I'll have lost another Hugo award, so there will be other things for me to get exercised about. We'll reconvene here on the 15th of September....

...Then Captain Max Burry from Glovertown, Newfoundland fished her until 1968...

APPARATCHIK IS a very, very naughty and presumptuous fanzine, full of typos and distortions and misquotes, and evidence that its editor is a very bad and unworthy person who hates everyone in Britain and most of the rest of the world as well. Will no one rid us of this troublesome fan editor? You can get APPARATCHIK for \$3.00 for a three-month supply, or a year's worth for \$12.00 or a life time supply for \$19.73, or possibly in exchange for confirmed instances of KTF criticism in the fanzines of any fandom except Sweden, although it's hard to imagine why anyone would want to receive it. Poor, duped lifetime subscribers to date: Don Fitch, Janice Murray, Alan Rosenthal, Geri Sullivan and Art Widner, and one wonders when they take legal action to recover their money. Fanzines received since last issue: Attitude # 2, Michael Abbott, John Dallman & Pam Wells; The Bleary Eyes Vol. 3: Nor the Years Condemn, by John Berry & reprinted by Ken Cheslin; File 770 # 103 & 105, Mike Glyer; Jomp, Jr. # 13, Richard Dengrove; The Olaf Alternative # 7, b/w Outhouse # 11, Ken Cheslin; Xenon v.1, # 3, Monet; and the contents of the August FAPA mailing.