
APPARATCHIK

The twenty-first 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. This is Drag Bunt Press Production # 201. Oh ! Oh! Unbelievable! Bring those people back from the parking lot!

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SUITE 708, IN THE HOWLING WIND AND RAIN:

The event which capped the weekend in Niagara Falls for me was early Sunday afternoon, when I went back to my room to pack for the trip home. Ever since about noon on Friday, a strong wind had been blowing off the Niagara River (the famous falls of which were probably only about a quarter mile from my room) and lashed stinging rain against the front of the hotel. The rain seemed to have let up as I entered, and I felt like getting some air into the suite; I had spent about 72 hours surrounded by smokers, and was starting to feel a little like an ashtray. I left the door propped open a crack so that Barnaby Rapoport could stop in a drop off his stuff for a few hours before he had to drive back to Storrs. Then I opened one of the windows in the parlor of the suite.

The cups and ice bucket and empty champagne bottle hitting the floor didn't bother me that much; and the sound of the wind shrieking into the hallway wasn't enough to stop me either. But when the stylized prints on the walls were blown off their hooks and onto the carpet, I decided I had better shut the window.

Of course, the locals were delighted that the weather didn't take a form which required them to dig their way out of the hotel.

The weekend started badly for me, with a terrible back-ache and an equally uncomfortable plane-ride; and seemed slightly more ill-aspected when Lisa Passero, who was kind enough to give me a ride back to the hotel from the Howard Johnson's where we had eaten, accidentally backed her truck into a steel I-beam and did several thousand dollars in damage to the vehicle scaring the bejesus out of both of us. I still feel bad about it, because I think I may have distracted her with my semi-hysterical sleep-deprived yattering. She was nice enough not to blame me, however, and I worked off the nerves by walking around the street of Niagara Falls until 2 in the morning.

I'm sure I didn't see all of Niagara Falls in the process, but what I saw reminded me a lot of Urbana, Illinois, or Marinette, Wisconsin. It was kind of hard to imagine thousands of SF fans milling around in the narrow belt of hotels and tourist sites that cluster around the falls; if the Niagara bid were to win, I expect the convention that resulted would be a lot like Winnipeg's effort of this past summer.

Of course, it would have been a lot easier to imagine all this if I had ever been there during the actual tourist season, when, I was assured, tour groups are not measured in individuals, but in the number of buses in the queue. As it was, we could often see strings of Japanese sight-seers crossing the bridge over the river on their way to Goat and Luna Island overlooks, roped together for safety and wrapped in pale plastic slickers that kept the rain off for all of ten seconds. The fans who drove me to and from the airport (and all over South Buffalo on errands to pick up laundry and thirty-pound housecats that couldn't be left at home for the weekend (which should not be construed as evidence that I was ungrateful for the ride; the same person seemed to be stuck with the job of picking up every one of the many guests of the convention, which seemed like a particularly thankless task)) did their best to assure me that the convention center itself would be more than adequate for the Worldcon's needs; after all, there had been Monster Truck rallies held there, with room to spare.

If the Worldcon is held in Niagara Falls, I hope that the Days Inn Fallsview won't be an official part of the venue, unless some changes that were rumbled about during the weekend come to pass. There was a new catering director, who was trying to make an economic go of a new Italian restaurant, and who had apparently closed the Hotel's regular restaurant and coffee shop to eliminate competition. He should keep his day job. The lack of a restaurant in the hotel before 4:00 PM meant that convention attendees had to hike over to the food court of the Rainbow Outlet Center for breakfast and lunch. Which wasn't all bad; I found some great bargain prices on some game software at Kay Bee Toy and Hobby....

Joe Maraglino claimed that he had a good relationship with the management of the hotel; they were pals of his, they had worked together many times. But when he called down to the front desk at 2:00 in the morning on Saturday night to see if he, the convention chair, could get his check-out time pushed back at all, the night man told him he had to be out at 12:00 noon, come hell or howling wind and rain.

I have to admit, though, it was a beautiful hotel. It was built in 1927 and had a great jazz-age faux-continental decor. I spent a lot of the weekend marveling at the

If the choice was between (name withheld) and a turkey baster, I think she made the wrong decision.

A whole world existed in which men did up the backs of women's dresses at four o'clock in the afternoon.

intricate work of the ceilings, which appeared to be in immaculately preserved condition.

The convention itself...seemed very small, especially for a con with about ten advertised guests. I understand that a number of British Horror writers, like Kim Newman and Brian Lumley, were added at the last minute, when it was determined that they would be tooling around the country for a few weeks after the World Fantasy con in New Orleans. The small attendance made things pretty pleasant over the weekend; only in the con suite was I ever conscious of any crowding.

I thought they treated me very well. My reading was at 9 PM Friday night, and I probably could have convinced the two guys who showed up to let me leave if not for the arrival of Mark Richards and Velma Bowen, but it was fun anyway. The other programs I participated in were very well-attended, and the audiences seemed quite enthusiastic, willing to ask questions and participate in the process. The dealer's room was a real treat, with at least four very interesting booksellers who hardly duplicated one another's stock at all. The generous per diem the convention offered me (which I had managed to forget all about, somehow) allowed me to spend a large amount of money on books, which is often all I require to consider a convention a rousing success. They had a pretty fabulous dance on Saturday night (to which Vijay Bowen wore that flesh-colored leotard and a see-through skirt again; eat your hearts out), which was pretty well-attended.

My trivia quiz went very well; people showed up and played, there was a large audience, and we worked around the lack of resources with extra fan power. People were able to answer a majority of the questions, which always leads me to a great sigh of relief.

One treat was meeting the aforementioned Messrs. Lumley and Newman. I told the latter gentleman of my affection for his novel The Night Mayor and his short fiction in Interzone; he seemed pleased to have something other than Anno Dracula praised. We had mutual raptures over Howard Waldrop, and he refuted the idea that Steampunk was an essentially American genre, (depending as it does on a London of the imagination) and pointed out Moorcock's contribution to it's nascence in The Warlord of the Air, et al., thus embracing beliefs held by all right-thinking people and earning my undying affection. Mr. Lumley was a different sort altogether; a career soldier and former Sergeant-Major in the Royal Military Police, who wrote all of his copious work up to 1988 as a hobby. He certainly had a remarkable Sa'nt Majah's voice; he could read the Niagara Falls visitor's guide in that Durham rumble and hold an audience spellbound.

Aside from that car accident, the only really unpleasant moment all weekend occurred at the lovely dinner held for the various guests on Saturday night. I enjoyed the meal itself very much, but had the misfortune to be seated across the table from Darrell Schweitzer, who attended the quasi-formal function in a sweatshirt that

proclaimed "Property of Alcatraz Psycho Ward" on the front. The Great Dero proceeded to read chapter and verse on the criminal incompetence and malicious evil of the "ConFiasco" committee for about an hour and fifteen minutes, with Mike Resnick (famed in song and story as a friend of fandom) offering counterpoint and harmony throughout. I'm sure Darrell and Mr. Resnick were certain that everyone at the table were in complete agreement with them, but I thought I could detect signs that others were as uncomfortable with this as I was. When Mike told a happy little story about how he bullied the unfortunate chair of Nolacon II into coming across with his per diem by refusing at the last minute to go out and MC the Hugo awards until the money was brought to him, I almost left the table (Not that I think the chair should have been able to get away with failing to come up with the money, but how does it profit anyone to gleefully recount the story six years later?). But Lisa Passero, returned from the body shop, was also sitting by me and drew me into conversation about little, human things; how her mother used to cook, what Carrie was probably doing right then (debugging code, I figured), where to go for Thai food in Niagara Falls. She redeemed the meal for me, and salvaged my darkening mood. A nice person.

I could say the same for Linda Michaels, whom it was my pleasure to converse with for a while later that evening. She's a lot of fun; I can't imagine anyone not liking her. It was also my pleasure to meet and discuss, briefly, elephants with Joy Moreau, who showed absolutely no sign of impending residence in a nursing home. I can also tell you from listening to her discourse on sundry skiffy subjects while she ran the registration desk on Saturday afternoon, that she is definitely a fan.

Joe Maraglino was always willing to make time to talk with me, no matter how harried he was at the moment. My observation on his approach (which everyone in fandom seems to be bound to comment on) is that among all of the fans in his group, he struck me as the only one (with the partial exception of Linda M. and Paul Ganley, who seem to know about fandom at large but feel perfectly happy living in their corner of it) with a real vision of the shape of fandom beyond the Buffalo/Rochester/Toronto area. He has a vision for what he would like to see the Niagara Falls bid accomplish win or lose; and while he is quick to claim that he is doing it all for the dreams of others, it is very clear that he has invested a great deal of devotion to the process, which someone ought to tell him will only make people respect him more.

He seemed torn from time to time between dismissing the potential of Contradiction and struggling powerfully to make it as good a convention as he can. In this regard, he seems locked in the love/hate relationship with fandom which most mature fans eventually develop. I hope that whatever happens with their bid for the Worldcon, that Joe won't gaffiate thereafter. I think he is a

person with very strong opinions and the perspicacity to express them well, when he feels like doing so.

It was quite a weekend. I thank them for inviting me and treating me so well. It was quite worth enduring the air travel in order to get there and back, and it hardly seemed like they asked for anything of me as a GoH that I wouldn't have done as a regular attendee anyway.

On the flight home, the movie was "I Love Trouble," which was partly filmed in Madison; one scene has the front of Hank Luttrell's store, "20th Century Books" in the background!

ONE CAN SEE THE SIGNS OF DISASTER EVERYWHERE: Unemployment is down, the index of leading economic indicators is up, the deficit, if not shrinking swiftly, seems at least to have stopped growing for the moment, the balance of trade is improving, inflation has hardly elicited a squeak from anyone but the brainiacs at the Federal Reserve, the country has a slightly improved image abroad for having failed to initiate a blood bath in either Haiti or (this time) Kuwait, crime has actually gone down in some urban areas, and McDonalds has brought back its two Big Macs for two bucks promotion. Naturally, the response of the American voter is to say that it isn't good enough: We want change! We want career leaders and statesmen turned out into the street, hopefully to be shaved with a dull draw knife and driven bleating into an Oklahoma prison, replaced with a collection of oily business tycoons, under-talented character actors, convicted perjurers, ex-jocks and Christian ideologues. We'll teach those quivering liberal panty-waists to take our machine guns away! Step right up folks, enter the bully pulpit of the American polling place, and embrace the business-of-America-is-business-God-invoking-Libertarian ethic: ME FIRST AND FUCK EVERYBODY ELSE.

The recurring image that runs through my mind in the wake of last week's elections is that of Bullwinkle the Moose, proclaiming "Nuttin' up my sleeve...presto!" and then pulling the head of a rabid rhinoceros out of his overturned topper. This is what the voters have done; they have tried to find a fuzzy little bunny down there in the bottom of the hat and instead placed a 92-year-old man in charge of the Armed Services committee. Senator Strom is already gearing up for his first big challenge; forcing the U.S. Army to finally adopt the rifled musket as its official infantry longarm. Memories of how the British outranged the American regulars at Lundy's Lane are still fresh in his memory....

That is a satiric exaggeration offered in the interest of comic relief, and is hopefully in no way legally actionable, for those who are offended by my backward and probably drug-induced political beliefs. All the same, I doubt that most of the people who voted to throw the bums out last Tuesday were aware that the median term of service (in Congress, of course; the experience of those who were in Ramses' host at Qadesh have not had that service factored in to the mean) of the Senators and

Congressmen who were about to assume the real power in the American government at the head of various important committees is about 22 years. I regret to say that I doubt this will actually lead to change and an end to business as usual.

On a related note, I find myself wondering why Newt Gingrich reminds me of Adolf Hitler. Plenty of politicians engage in slander of their ideological opposites, and I don't think of them as particularly fascistic. Gingrich is obviously a lot smarter than Hitler was; it's difficult to imagine Hitler delivering lectures at any law school, even Liberty college. Not even Gingrich seems likely to resort to wholesale extermination to solve what he perceives as the ills of society, unless he happened to be sure he could get away with it. I can imagine him deporting a lot of people, though....

No, I think the real reason I think of Hitler and Newt in the same light (aside from the bad haircuts) is that both entered the stage of national power as outsiders, invoking values and traditions of a class and era that would have held them in contempt, and which they secretly despised themselves; and both embraced a paradigm of power that promised dreadful consequences should they ever allow it to be wrested from their hands. I fear that it may take applying a hot match head to Mr. Gingrich to get him to release his jaws from the haunch of the body politic....

Actually, the real reason I'm thinking of Hitler is that I had a documentary about him playing on the Discovery channel while I worked on my Contradiction report. As I sat watching a scene of Goebbels speaking to a crowd of rather worn-looking Germans in 1944, I found myself wondering; what on earth was he talking about? Why do they never provide us with a translation of these speeches or even some clue as to what they were all shouting about? I understand why we feel powerful abhorrence in the face of such madness, but expunging their words from the earth and elevating their actions and ideas to the status of an evil that almost transcends humanity will have the opposite effect from educating future generations on the tragedy of the holocaust.

I guess I sometimes have that response to modern demagogues like Newt. It's hard for me to listen to them, to read what they have to say. It makes me feel this sick, churning, miserable rage, a desire to see the whole species wiped out by a cometary impact so that such men cannot go on living. I guess I'm not a very tolerant guy. Things would go better for me if I was willing to take an insurgent approach (not in a fannish sense, Arnie), join the Republican party, act as the taint in the blood, the worm at the root, the thorn in the foot. If the Democrats have really cashed their check, we should begin working to radicalize the Republican party. After all, who freed the slaves? Who led the country out of regionalism and parochial economic tyrannies in the 1860s and 70s? It sure as hell wasn't the Green Party, boyo....

It is difficult to know how people will react when they see an ichthyosaur.

Screw Woodstock. The time is ripe for Altamont '94.

AND NOW, A LETTER:

[I've got a large stack of letters in hand again, but the press of other deadlines simply won't allow me to print a bunch of them this time around. I have a lengthy note here from DAN STEFFAN (3804 S. 9th St., Arlington, VA 22204) which was inspired by Kate Schaefer's comments on early-eighties fanzine fandom in issue, um, 18? 19? Whichever issue it was, I felt like I ought to run Dan's reply as soon as possible, so he will get the bulk of the letter column this time out:]

"Well, it was bound to happen. Mention my name often enough and I'll awaken from my normal stupor long enough to respond in some fashion. In this case my response takes the form of a dandy letter of comment; another time it might be a turd in a box or maybe an early morning visit from my left coast "people" (you know, the ones with an affinity for black shirts & white ties). One never knows, do one?

"Well, anyway, after months of successfully dodging my APAK responsibilities I now, thanks to Kate Schaefer, find myself poised to comment. Kate's letter really made me stop and think; forcing me to try and come to some kind of reasonable assessment of *Pong's* role in the fannish fanzine revival in the fannish fanzine revival of 1980. It is never easy to come up with a historical perspective on an event when you are also an integral part of the story - though it is a lot of help when it comes down to the facts of what *really* was happening - but here goes.

"Kate is both right and wrong in her recollections about fanzine fandom circa 1980. It is my opinion that *Pong* had a much greater role in that decade's fanzine revival than she thinks and I hope to give some specific examples to support my opinion. But first, I want to mention that I would never have had the confidence - unlike my ol' buddy and co-editor - to proclaim *Pong* solely responsible for that same revival. I'm not saying Ted is wrong in making such a remark, I'm just not comfortable agreeing with it 100% - as I made a point of mentioning to him after reading his letter in your last ish.

"Having said that, I do believe that *Pong* was responsible for gathering and refocusing the spirit and energy of fannish fanzine fandom, circa 1980, in a way that eluded the fine fanzines that Kate has chosen to support her comments. If for no other reason, *Pong* was influential because of its frequency. Ted and I published forty regular issues in less than two years; none of her examples came anywhere close to that record. *Pong* became part of the lives of our readers. Most fanzines never have the opportunity to develop that kind of familiarity that our zippy little fmz had in spades - we were like a favorite chair or a comfy pair of slippers.

"Before I continue this fannish flashback, I need to straighten out another problem: Kate's somewhat skewed fanzine revival timeline. Despite her best intentions I don't think she actually looked up any of the dates of the fanzines she offered as examples and I think it will help this discussion to get the real sequence of events down on paper, so we are all speaking the same language.

"Kate is quite correct to say that Alan Bostick's *Fast & Loose* was probably the zine that first started to get the proto-*Pong* juices flowing. Alan published *F & L* from November 1979 until June, 1980. Ted and I were both regular contributors to Alan's zine and, I think, influenced (along with P & T & Gary) the general personality of the zine. Sadly, Alan had a lot of trouble keeping to his

publishing schedule (a situation that brought about the fake issue of *F & L* that Kate mentioned) and quickly started losing steam. Because of that, Ted and I began planning the publication of *Pong*, in early 1980.

"We were both working in NYC at *Heavy Metal* at the time and had hatched up an elaborate scheme to publish our zine on the office Xerox machine and mail it using the office postage machine (Machines are our friends!). It would have worked out great if Ted hadn't gotten the boot that summer (I left at the same time out of solidarity). Because of that, our plans were delayed until that fall, after our return to Falls Church. If Alan hadn't had so much trouble pubbing his ish, our little bundle of fannish joy probably would have remained stillborn. But he did, so we did; which makes *Fast & Loose* the father of a bouncing baby *Pong*. (And considering that Alan never published another fanzine - that I know of - I'm glad we went ahead with our plans.) Nevertheless, despite this acknowledged parentage, *F & L* petered out pretty quickly and never had a chance to gain the momentum and gestalt that we were fortunate enough to create a short time later.

"There is no arguing that the Nielsen Haydens were also influential at about this same time, but I think it is safe to say that their star had not yet risen to the lofty heights it occupied a few years later. The first issue of *Telos* was published in February 1980, but it was not the same zippy little fmz format that Alan had used and that Ted and I were going to use. It was a small genzine with 28 pages, and was, I believe, perceived by many outside P & T's Seattle fan circle as a tentative effort that was still trying to get its sea-legs after a four-year layoff from publishing.

"The second issue, published in June, was 42 pages long and much more accomplished. We were all beginning to become friends and feeling our way along - I had a bunch of cartoons in that issue - but I can't honestly say that *Telos* was ever an influence on *Pong*. Their third issue came out at the same time as our first issue and was a huge (76 pages) genzine. Then *Telos* disappeared for 9 months; upon its return *Pong's* influence was quite evident. The remaining 2 issues were smaller and chattier."

[This point may be entirely valid, Dan, but you offer nothing more than circumstantial evidence through the sequential relationship of the titles in question. I'd like to ask P&T if they felt that *Pong* had an influence on their decision to begin publishing more frequently and in smaller proportions; my sense of those zines, arrived at entirely by reading them, was that this was a direction in which they had wanted to take their fanac for some time. In fact, my feeling on the phenomenon as a whole is that a move toward more frequent, often letter-dominated fanzines, is a natural consequence of increasing contact and correspondence between groups of active fans. Which is to say that I suspect that sometimes the fannish gestalt creates the focal point fanzine, rather than the other way around. Which ought to take nothing away from you and Ted and PONG; even if there was some proto-stellar material whirling around in space before you began publishing, you were still the ones who did the work and provided the catalytic gravitation that ignited the star. -APH]

"*Izzard*, however, is another matter entirely. *Izzard* was definitely a post-*Pong* fanzine. In fact, it was designed as such and was considered the natural successor to *Pong* - there was much talk about P&T picking up the gauntlet that we had thrown down. The first issue was published in September 1982 (about a month after our last issue). Unfortunately they couldn't lick the frequency problem,

either and managed to publish only seven issues in their first year of publication. The Nielsen Haydens were at the peak of their form by the time they published that seventh issue, which they did while visiting Ted and me after the 1983 Worldcon, but soon Teresa's health and other Real World interferences forced them to severely limit their fanac. The final two issues were published in 1984 and 1987 respectively.

"Nor were they solely responsible for prodding Richard Bergeron back into action. Nosiree, that's something Ted and I must share some of the blame for, too. You see, we were both corresponding regularly with Bergeron by the summer of 1979 (or earlier) and had been encouraging him to get the Willis issue of *Warhoon* out of the way so he could start publishing "real" issues again, instead of a fat reprint anthology. When the Willis reprint collection did finally come out, dick even hand delivered Ted's copy to him at *Heavy Metal*.

"At the same time P & T were also writing reams of letters to him, encouraging him in much the same fashion and even got him to write a revival version of his sixties "Fangdom" column for the second issue of *Telos*. I doubt any one of us was responsible for the big way that Dick returned to fandom and fanzines, but probably cumulative effect of having all of our attentions focused him, after so many years of gafia, gave him the goose he needed all along. However, I don't think any of us - singularly or as a group - would care to take any responsibility for his subsequent decline and madness. (Damn, it is so depressing to find out that your heroes have feet of clay - or, in Dick's case, a brain of clay.)

"I have no doubt at all that Patrick and Teresa energized Seattle fandom during their stay there and that they should be given a lot of credit for inspiring folks like Linda Blanchard and Victor Gonzalez to publish their issues. But again Kate's timeline is faulty. Strictly speaking, Linda's fanzine *Some Luck/ Egoboodle/ The Moving Paper Fantasy* is also a post-*Pong* fanzine. It started its life in late 1982 or early 1983 (I'm not certain which date is correct because my collection starts with the second issue, dated March 1983) and lasted at least seven issues. However, having said that, I believe it is true that *Pong* had little or nothing to do with her need to publish. I doubt very much that she even saw any issues of our zine until well after the fact. But the date is still significant, I think.

"Victor's fanzine career is harder for me to pin down at the moment because I can't find my file of his personalzine, but I feel pretty safe in putting most of his activity in the post-*Pong* period. I know that the fanzine he did with Jerry Kaufman, *Instant Gratification* (published in 1984 and 1985) was definitely influenced by *Pong* because Victor says precisely that in his opening editorial comments in the first issue - as he did in personal correspondence at the time.

"So where does that leave us? *Fast & Loose* definitely pre-dated and inspired the creation of *Pong*. The Willis issue of *Warhoon* and the first two issues of *Telos* definitely predated *Pong*, but they didn't really have any influence on our decision to publish - though it is fair to say that having their publishers in our audience was a real incentive. All of the rest of Kate's examples came after *Pong* and, in most cases, were influenced by it.

"Having said all of that, I don't think these facts really supply a complete picture of what we accomplished while publishing those issues of *Pong*. Kate's point of view seems to be, understandably, focused on the activities of

Seattle fandom around 1980, and the impact that region had on fanzine fandom. This makes a lot of sense - Seattle had been growing as a fannish power base since the mid-70's when faneds like John D. Berry, Jerry & Suzle (and later Patrick & Teresa & Gary, etc.) started moving there - but is, on closer inspection, really too regional a view of things.

"One of the major reasons that *Pong* was so influential was its international appeal. *Pong* developed an intense and loyal following in Britain. Our frequency (again) allowed U.K. fandom to begin reconnecting with fanzine fandom in the U.S. Many Brits will tell you this is true. Prior to *Pong*'s appearance, relations were very strained between our two fandoms. In *Pong*'s pages, British fandom discovered there were a lot of interesting, funny and strange Americans that they could sympathize with. Prior to this, Terry Hughes' *Mota* was one of the few fanzines that they could relate to - and it ceased publication (for all extents and purposes) just before Terry made his 1979 TAFF trip to Brighton.

"The gulf between the two fandoms is the reason why Greg Pickersgill - arguably the best fan writer/fan editor in 70's British fandom - never bothered to send copies of his fanzines to U.S. fans. He saw no point in it. (Okay, this isn't quite true. He did send copies to the aforementioned Mr. Hughes, Mike Glicksohn and Rich Coad, but that's it) After *Pong*, even Greg changed his policy - though he only really published one general circulation fanzine in the 80s - and so did a lot of others.

"Our letter column's were always full of letters from Brits - including gafiates like Peter Roberts and Walt Willis and John Brosnan and Vince Clarke and Leroy Kettle. At the same time we managed to bring a lot of old US fans out of the woodwork too - like Gregg Calkins and Calvin Demmon and Robert Lichtman and Lee Hoffman and Ray Nelson and Bob Bloch. *Pong* very quickly became the place for fanzine fans to hang out and have a good time. For example, look at the lettercol in *Pong* 33/34 (a double issue): Greg Benford, Harry Andruschack, Bruce Arthurs, Alexis Gilliland, Bob Shaw, Ian Maule, Joseph Nicholas, Rob Hansen, D. West, Avedon Carol, Jeanne Gomoll, Terry Carr, Lee Hoffman, Harry Warner Jr., Dave Rike and Jim Meadows III. If that isn't a cross-section of fanzine fandom of the time, I don't know what is.

"*Pong* became a focal point for most of fannish fanzine fandom. It was by no means the only nifty fanzine out there, but for some reason, it was the fanzine that many, many fans chose as their favorite. Ted and I used all of our talent and skill to produce a mag that would appeal to a broad spectrum of trufans and succeeded, somehow, in creating an attractive playground for fans - attractive enough to entice old and tired fans out of their retirement and good enough to inspire new fans to try pubbing their ish. *Pong* just seemed to get a lot of people's juices flowing. It was a joy to behold.

"Despite all that, our appeal wasn't universal. A few fans like Brian Earl Brown and Martin Morse Wooster and the *Rune* boys - Eric Mayer's troubles happened after *Pong* had folded; during the fanzine's life he was an enthusiastic member of the gang - felt left out of the fun or didn't get the joke or something and did their best to act like party poopers. They seemed to perceive an agenda where there was none and balked at our notion of what a fanzine should be. But all things considered, most of our readership enjoyed the fanzine and we never let those who insisted on having a bad time stand in our way. We just kept plugging away and tried to have as much fun as possible.

Wingback set vs. Okie 5-2 - no defensive adjustment so it is open to the run.

"Pong inspired a lot of fanzines, like Avedon's *Blatant*, John D. Berry's *Wing Window*, Lenny Bailes' *Whistlestar*, the previously mentioned *Izzard* and *Instant Gratification*, Steven Bieler's *On Company Time*, and even Bergeron's *Wiz*. More recently the zine has provided after-the-fact incentive to Barnaby Rapoport's *Snarkin Safari* and, of course, your own *Spent Brass*. And that's just some examples off the top of my head, I'm sure there others that I've forgotten.

"Of course, once again, I don't think we were the only game in town; there were interesting fannish fanzines coming out in 1979 and 80, like *Mainstream*, *Raffles*, *Genre Plat*, *Space Junk* and my own *Boonfark*, to name a few. But most of these had a regional flavor to them - Jerry and Suzle in Seattle, Stu and Larry in New York, Rich and Allyn in the Bay Area, and me in Virginia. After *Pong* there was a lot more cross-pollination - especially with British fandom - which resulted in some great zines, like Malcom Edwards' *Tappen*, the revived *Epsilon* from Rob Hansen, Herr Lichtman's *Trap Door*, Terry Hill's *Microwave*, Harry Bell & Kev Williams' *Out of the Blue*, Simon Ounsley's *Still it Moves* and many others."

"If nothing else, *Pong* was majorly responsible for reuniting American and British fanzine fandoms. Before *Pong* the Brits probably wouldn't have sent most of their zines over here to the colonies. We helped to get the dialog going again - not unlike the interplay that was so much a part of fanzine fandom in the 50s - and it hasn't stopped yet, despite the ravages of Topic A and the - er - mundanization of sf conventions.

"For that, if nothing else, the Pong Boys are eternally proud. Which is, I guess, what motivated Ted to make the statement quoted in Kate's letter in the first place and has moved me to blow my own horn for the past six pages.

"I have no doubt that Kate was sincere in her comments and don't question her motives at all. Having met Kate for the first time, I think, in Madison, I was greatly impressed by her wit and humor and have no interest in creating any conflict between us. I just thought it was proper to give some historical building blocks for us all to use as a foundation for any further conversation we might have on the subject. I have checked all my dates - at last, all those months of bagging and alphabetizing finally pays off - and now throw it back out to your readers:

"Did *Pong* create an environment that inspired many others to publish? Did *Pong* open the line of communication between British and US fandom? Is there any fandom around today that is doing what *Pong* did in

1980? Would fanzine fandom like to have a modern equivalent of *Pong*? Etc.

"I would love to hear the answers to these questions.

I would love to get feedback about *Pong*'s REAL historical significance. Have I overstated our influence? Have I slighted Patrick and Teresa? Have I gone on and on and on and on?"

[Well, yes, but no more than many who came before you. I think, as you suggest, it is in the communication you fostered between British and American fandom that PONG has had its most lasting impact. There have been a lot of focal point fanzines over the years, which lay at the center of some movement or social conglomeration within fandom, but very few have been able to create a community that spanned the ocean, and brought together members of different fannish generations in the process. Kate's assertions are partial evidence of the contributions which fans from all over the country made in the gestalt of early 80's fanzine fandom; and you clearly support that part of her theory with that long list of correspondents. But every person is the protagonist of their own story and it's inevitable that everyone who lived through the period will have their own interpretation of its achievements and central characters. To whatever degree that there is a "truth" in regard to these matters, it is best found by reading the fanzines of the era, and seeing what was said and done by the fans of the time at the time. I have enjoyed reading a lot of the fanzines published between 1979 and 1982, and to some degree, they all present a picture of issues and ideas foremost in the minds of fans at the time. But the 40 issues of PONG provide a more complete picture of the things that were going on - and what fans thought about them - than any of the other fanzines of the period. In part, this is because of the frequency of the zine. And frequency alone is not enough to draw people into dialogue. You have to give them something they feel like talking about. Through PONG, you guys always had this amazing ability to consider things in a fundamentally humorous light and foster serious discussion about them at the same time. If SPENT BRASS has succeeded in following in PONG's footsteps to any degree, I hope it is in that regard.

Of course, there are probably more than a few people, even on this mailing list, who have fairly different memories of PONG and your methods in writing and publishing it. We might hear from them in the wake of your letter. But I thank you for taking the time to write and giving me the opportunity to use more italics than in the previous 32 years of my life combined.

I'm afraid that's all I have time for. I'll be back into two weeks with a big issue, and we'll have more letters than -aph]

She agreed not to wear the offending T-shirt, or a pair of tights with the word "bitch" spelled out on them.

APPARATCHIK IS the Nikola Tesla of fandom, Croatia's bravest son, tormented in life by sparks and static, now immortal and bronzed twice life-size in a great chair above the falls of the Niagara, with a copy of the Weekly World News spread out in his lap. 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 in exchange for three more days on one of these damn tyrannical deadlines that rule me now. Genuine lifetime subscribers to date: Don Fitch, Lucy Huntzinger, Luke McGuff, Janice Murray, Alan Rosenthal, Karen Schaeffer, Geri Sullivan

and Art Widner. Fanzines and things received since last issue: Ansible # 88, Dave Langford; Brodie # 2, Tom Springer; Egotrip # 1.5, Luke McGuff (a very neat collection of Luke's writing that I'll spend a whole line and a half to recommend); File 770 #106, Mike Glyer; The Knarley Knews # 48, Henry & Letha Welch; Machination # 19, The Seattle Cacophony Society; Mobius Strip Vol. II, #9, ed. by Donna J. Aranda for the El Paso SFFA; Nine Lines Each # 7 & 8, Ken Forman, John Hardin & Ken Springer; Rastus Johnson's Cakewalk # 7, Greg Pickersgill. Set the Controls for the Heart....

To this end, the ZWICKER has attended Operation Sail '80 in Boston, Operation Sail '86...