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# APPARATCHIK

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The twenty-sixth 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, available electronically at A.Hooper@GEnie.Geis.com. This is Drag Bunt Press Production # 209. It's funny how the colors of the real world look really real only when you viddy them on a screen....

**Issue # 26, January 26th, 1995**

SOME SAD NEWS : I logged on to GEnie for the first time last week (A.Hooper@GEnie.Geis.com if you'd like to reach me through e-mail) and was pleased to find that there was a large faanish presence already on-line. One of the first postings I read announced the death of Lee Pelton, who succumbed to complications of pneumonia brought on by AIDS, on the 30th of December, 1994, in Minneapolis. Lee was at one time the co-editor of RUNE, and in the mid-to-late seventies published a very fancy genzine called A PRIVATE HEAT, which I remember mostly for its very impressive covers.

I did not know Lee especially well, and to the extent that I did know him, found him to be an antagonistic and often bitter person. I think I often had the feeling that in looking at Lee I could see a future version of myself, assuming that a few breaks had not gone my way and the more combative elements of my nature were brought to the foreground. On the other hand, we often had good conversations about baseball, which he had played with some success in his youth, and he retained an interest in fanzines and fanzine fandom well beyond his own period of active publishing. I have a number of fanzines in my collection which were originally Lee's; he sold them to me for a buck apiece, which now seems pitifully cheap.

In all the time that I knew him, Lee always seemed to be carrying some serious baggage around with him; I don't know if that arose from the various feuds and difficulties he'd had with other fans, or other, more personal issues. A number of people were more than willing to volunteer their versions of his fannish career, but as I recall, I declined to listen. Some would observe that such reticence was out of character for me, but there was something about Lee that made me feel I would just as soon take him as he presented himself. I had the impression that when he met people in fandom he was always prepared to deal with negative pre-conceptions based on those past

conflicts, and I didn't want to be one of those people; for one thing, there seemed to be plenty of reasons to be less than enchanted with him in the present.

Despite all of this social strife, I found Lee Pelton to be a figure I could never completely dismiss. During the stormy months that I was a member of APA-69, I often turned to Lee's writing first (well, I'll be honest and admit that I really read Velma Bowen's stuff first, but who can blame me?) to see what trenchant opinion he had to offer on the latest intra-apa feud. He was an intelligent and expressive writer, and he seemed utterly fearless, equally willing to dispute with friend and foe alike. It's odd to admit it now, but of all the people in the core-group of that apa, Lee seems to have been one of the most honest and reliable, though communal opinion often seemed to hold otherwise at the time.

I can't say that the news of his death affected me much emotionally; I had heard he was suffering from AIDS almost a year before, and had been prepared for the announcement of his departure ever since. What does depress me about his dying is that it further diminishes him to the status of an answer to a future trivia question: Who was the first North American fanzine fan to die of AIDS? That's something which no one deserves.

As I sit here now, my eye strays to a piece of fan art I have pinned to my wall. It was executed by Giovanna Fregni, Lee's longtime partner, whom he married in November of last year. Giovanna drew the picture as a cover for The National Pastime, an apa devoted to baseball which I briefly edited in 1989. I call it "Adoration of the Fallen Dawson," and it portrays Rick Sutcliffe, Ryne Sandberg and other members of the Chicago Cubs offering lamentations as they bear the recently-beaned form of slugger Andre Dawson to the ground. In the air above the Cubs, little angels bearing bats and gloves hover with looks of concern and grief on their faces.

**Sin? What's all this about sin?**

I remember the day I went to pick the piece up from Giovanna. Lee was as proud of it, if not more so, than Giovanna. He had helped out by offering baseball cards from his collection as models, and the portraits of the players were unmistakable. It was one of the few occasions on which I can remember Lee exhibited completely unalloyed pleasure at something. Of course, this led to a prolonged debate on the strength of that season's Cubs (who went on to win their division title, but were swept out of the play-offs by the San Francisco Giants), punctuated by his strange assertion that Steve Lombardozi, a journeyman second-sacker for the Twins, was as good an athlete as future hall-of-famer Ryne Sandberg. I said that this seemed to have no basis in reality, and as they often did, our conversation ended in nervous laughter and strained pleasantries.

Now Lee is gone, Ryne Sandberg retired before his time, and Steve Lombardozi might attempt to return to the major leagues as a "replacement player." Even though I won't watch any of the games he plays in, I hope he does come back; Lee would certainly appreciate the irony. It might even make up for the fact that the strike and the virus combined to deprive Lee of the opportunity to see one more World Series.

Which strikes me as something worth feeling a little grief over.

WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT of death and baseball, I'll mention that Carrie and I went to see Ron Shelton's latest film, Cobb. This isn't a baseball film in the traditional mold; there are only about three minutes of actual play in the whole movie. Cobb is really a kind of twisted "buddy picture," in which the dying Ty Cobb, rated by many purists as the greatest baseball player of all time, drags a sportswriter around the country with him on the pretense of dictating his autobiography. Cobb's real motive is to avoid dying alone and universally reviled, which fate he richly deserves. If there is a flaw to the image of Ty Cobb presented by this film, it is that it does not go far enough in illustrating what a truly hateful, abusive, bigoted, brutal and self-obsessed man he was. Even so, Roger Ebert characterized the film as being "like taking a three-day bus trip sitting next to Hunter S. Thompson," which is both an apt description and a good guide to whether or not you would enjoy it. I, having once laid out \$15.00 dollars to hear Hunter Thompson mumble about football for an hour and a half, thought it was a great film.

Tommy Lee Jones gives a great performance as Cobb, but we really ought to expect that from him; he has made a career out of being a magnificent bad man, and this is simply an older and somewhat more despairing version of that recurring character. But I don't think there's anyone else working in movies right now who could communicate the right mixture of pain and menace; when the cancer consuming Cobb's guts drives him to shoot morphine directly into his stomach, the gesture is made with both desperation and rage, as though he is trying to punish his own body for its betrayal. It made the hair on the back of my neck stand up.

And there's a superb touch at the end of the film, after Cobb has expired and the writer has tried to put some sort of closure on his story. The screen shows a montage of Cobb playing baseball, although there's very little play in his approach, running the bases, colliding with and pushing away opposing fielders, spikes slashing as he slides, and finally crashing into a catcher at home plate, impaling him with one vicious kick that allows him to score and cripples his opponent in one motion. As these scenes pass, the music crests in a wave of industrial noise (the credits reveal it to be a piece entitled "Visit to the wreckage," from the soundtrack of Alien 3), which combine with the visual carnage to drown the writer's platitudes, creating an impression of eternal animal rage, forces unchecked by human restraint carrying away everything that cannot meet it on terms equally violent and savage. When he makes that flying kick into home, his foot lands squarely on the catcher's groin, and there can be no question that it was in any way accidental.

In our conversation after the movie, Carrie and I wondered about what kind of name you could put on Cobb's disordered personality. Carrie said she thought he was psychotic, which is a term that others have used to describe the man. I wasn't quite so willing to characterize him as "crazy," however sociopathic his behavior may have been. Off the baseball field, I think Cobb had a firm grip on what society expects of people, and was perfectly capable of using those strictures to his advantage when he wanted to. He simply knew what he wanted, and was willing to break whatever rules were necessary to get it. Plenty of people do the same thing, make perfectly informed choices that turn toward evil, and there isn't necessarily anything defective about their reasoning ability. To the casual observer, there is no contrast between Cobb as the gladiatorial athlete and

the man whose impulse toward everyone and everything off the field was just as rapacious.

But I think there was a big difference to Cobb himself. On the field, his enmity toward his opponents was matched by their hatred of him; the rule of spike or be spiked was well-founded in reality. Outside of baseball, there was no such implacable danger to be met, yet Cobb behaved all his life as if he believed there was. I do not believe he was simply mad and could not tell the difference between stealing bases and marriage, between punching an opponent who bloodied his nose with a hard tag and beating the people who tried to love him. People unfortunate enough to be unable to know the difference are really quite rare; the vast majority of us have no excuse at all for our petty tyrannies and major crimes, and such was the case with Ty Cobb. At the end of the movie, after the screen has faded to darkness, Tommy Lee Jones' voice echoes in the empty theater one more time, quoting Cobb from the biography which Al Stump eventually wrote for him: "Baseball was every part of me." That, I think, was a calculated choice on his part.

ALL OF THIS started me on a dark path of memory and misery, thinking of people and places long gone. It's embarrassing when I start to feel that way; I am still a relatively young man, and it sometimes seems to me that I have somehow acquired the wistful nostalgia and despair appropriate to someone at least a generation removed. Sitting on the concrete stoop of my back porch, the January sun streaming down, the new green shoots of chive plants in the herb garden in front of me, my surroundings seem impossibly removed from everything I used to know.

The midwest just feels different. It isn't merely the fact that the ground isn't frozen and buried under three feet of snow; things smell different here, the sky is a different shade of blue. But as I have said before, the home I am pining for no longer exists. The times to which I am trying to apply an idealized sheen of memory were merely the dreary seventies, wide lapels, Foghat albums and co-op cookies with that whole grain goodness that hurt your teeth when you chewed them. Long drives into the country; in memory, they seem like idyllic interludes of bucolic pleasure, picnics by the Sugar river, the Black river, the Wisconsin river, the Yahara river. In reality, they were stifling, boring torture, stuck in a VW camper, smelling that VW camper smell, annoying my two sisters and being annoyed

back, driving our parents right out of their minds. Why doesn't everyone run amuck with a garden hoe, cutting the offending ganglia out at the root?

Oh, there were some perfect days. The late afternoon we all drove into the arboretum and then hiked down onto the ice of Lake Wingra near the springs, watching the long orange light slanting down over the marsh in the west, handsome, clean, intelligent and worthy of love, worthy of the forbearance that let us all survive those interminable choking summers, the sloppy schools and liberal bullies, the brittle threats and muzzy alcoholic mornings, professional politics and thwarted desires, adolescent narcissism and home-grown perversions. Some part of me is still there on the ice, crunching through the pulpy snow and grinning, squinting in the bright and dying winter light. I know everything I have ever done wrong, but there on the ice they forgive me and for one blissful second I forgive myself and it is almost enough to make me weep. But not quite yet. Not just now. The green of the chives, the blue of the sky, the smell of the rain that is surely coming, has an appeal of its own. I hold out my hand to the sad, smart little family on the ice and invite them to try some nostalgia for the present. It is/was a beautiful day.

SPRING IS SURELY COMING. Two weeks ago when I went out to drop the bundle of APAKs into the mailbox, I stepped over a brown-and-black-speckled slug that had to be at least 5 inches long. A sure sign that we have turned the corner out of winter one more time.

THE MATERIAL ON THE NEXT PAGE is entirely the work of Victor Gonzalez, who, as I mentioned last time, has applied to be APAK's first columnist. Victor was concerned that my invitation to other writers would lead to a deluge of sub-standard material (as if there could be such a thing involving this fanzine) which would lead APAK to become slow and large and ponderous (like Spent Brass, he cruelly noted). Well, I don't really think it's much worth worrying about, but to make Victor relax, I'll note that I haven't promised to publish whatever is sent to me. I'll give it a fair reading, but APAK is going to remain a frequent fanzine or I will fold it; so nothing too long, please, and don't be surprised if I have to say no.

ONE MORE THING: Deadline madness led to forget to list Barnaby Rapoport's full address with his letter last issue. If you don't know it by now, he can be reached at P.O. Box 565, Storrs, CT, 06268

**You are returning to Funtington Airbase.**

[HED] The 40th Parallel  
[DECK] ANALYSIS

by Victor M. Gonzalez  
Staff Writer

For the first time in sixteen years, the heart of Fabulous Seattle Fandom skipped a beat.

Actually, that's something of a false lead.

Research, the leads culled from obscure stories told in dim, smoke-filled basements, reveals that it wasn't really the first irregularity in Vanguard's monthly schedule.

But it was the first unscheduled eccentricity, according to usually accurate sources.

Although Vanguard -- founded by an influx of socially unsatisfied iguanas -- has been combined with other parties set for the same day or one adjacent, all Vanguards announced since 1979 -- about 190 -- have commenced on the day and in the place intended.

[ANDY: this sentence STET] Those granted the responsibility for the first cancellation, on the first Saturday in January, 1995, shall remain nameless. They were not called for "their side of it" -- this is not a news story -- and this reporter didn't want to cause a ruckus in an environment where he or she is already considered a social risk -- so the reader will have to find out who it was on his or her own.

Not the most difficult of assessments.

The sign on the door of the advertised residence read (one reporter was said to have remembered) (names and genders have been changed to protect the obviously guilty yet not formally charged):

**John Smith and Jane Doe are too sick to host Vanguard.**

**Mea culpa!**

**Mea culpa maxima!**

(In the interest of full disclosure, APAK would like you to note that this reporter's imprecision of recall of the above quotation may tend toward an incorrect number of exclamation points.

(There may also be flaws in the line breaks and capitalization, those of the reporter and everyone in the vast editorial chain above he or she.)

It was rumored the cancellation -- first reported due to "intestinal flu" but later to "food poisoning" because "they got better so fast" -- was announced to the rest of the world at "about 6:30" p.m. Saturday -- 90 minutes before the "linchpin" of Seattle fandom, as many fans have described it, is traditionally scheduled to begin.

"Well, being really ill can make you stupid," said a well-placed but forgiving source, putting emphasis on the qualifying verb

One reporter not contacted by land-based telephone in a series of calls placed by a concerned fan

was instead informed by a hastily scrawled sign upon arriving at the supposed event site at Hip Standard Seattle Fannish Party Time (about 9 p.m.) with his bottle opener and two glass gourds of commendably aged Rioja, ready for several hours of convivial bullshit, sly invective and tottering dizziness, who -- and the reporter thinks of them as people, perhaps even women -- were forced to languish in the well in front of the reporter's passenger seat, as did he in a bar, alone with a somnambulent cellphone.

Sixteen doesn't seem that old. But, according to an expert frequently quoted and reviled by leading analytical fanzines, in a world that includes New York fandom, its cardiac resuscitator always close at hand, its literary will pumped by tubes into websites -- or a number of other fandoms eroded by the years -- Seattle's plight is not unusual.

Sixteen is close to retirement in fan years, the expert added.

"Seattle fandom does need a good kick in the rear," said a source who has been familiar with Fabulous Seattle Fandom for over a decade, and whose request for anonymity was implicit.

"Chicks who aspire to be old women from the time they're twenty bug me," the source, who added that she or he didn't want his or her gender revealed, added. "They'll get there soon enough."

"What are you doing?" asked another constant wit recently portrayed by a major actress. "Picking wallflowers?"

But the question of why fandom went so long unalerted remains in the hands of Rick Schweinhart, the King County medical examiner. He will announce the results of his "necropsy" -- coroner jargon for a dissection of something that is not human -- next Monday.

Those disillusioned by the lack of the familiar fannish conjunction -- as regular, said prominent fannish stargazers, as the moon over the Olympic mountains and as important to the health of fandom as a fast and loose fanzine -- will skeptically consider any explanation.

"What a whiner," said unnamed source number two, in reference to the excuse of the individuals who will not be named for legal reasons.

The couple could have gone somewhere else and let a responsible friend host the party, added the source. "Did (he or she) have the vapors?"

Forgetfulness, breathing problems, hebephrenia, genzines and death were potential symptoms of social aging singled out as emblematic by the research team.

[VICTOR: cut this. not really necessary to the story:]

The intestinal flu is a potentially debilitating viral infection that can incapacitate people for up to two days. Doctors recommend bed rest. The afflicted have been known to perish.

## AND NOW, YOUR LETTERS:

[It seems as though the readers of APPARATCHIK are still in the doldrums brought on by the holidays and the change of the year; either that or the last few issues have been too dull to comment on. So, just a few short notes this time, starting with the well-meaning ALGERNON D'AMMASSA (323 Dodge St., East Providence, RI 02914), who quite correctly observes:]

"No doubt you are already feeling the effects of the Post Office's 10% raise most acutely. You are kind indeed to offer up your fanzine for free anyway - provided, of course, that we keep up the correspondence. I have not been holding up my end of the bargain lately, for which reason I feel a little guilty every time APAK arrives.

"On strictly fannish issues, I generally have little to say; and my opinions on everything else seem to be woefully eccentric or just contrary to people's orientation about life. That in itself should be no problem, but it is. One out of every three LoCs I write begins a stupid argument, usually because someone isn't reading what I wrote. No matter how whimsical or respectful I try to sound, I just haven't found a way to speak clearly, without upsetting someone or having to argue about the interpretation of my words. Nothing I have to say is worth the trouble. So I've been keeping my tongue in my head, where it won't confuse anybody, and my locking has dropped right off.

"If the expense of APAK obliges you to release me from the covenant between APAK and its readers, in favor of a more talkative and more conventional fan, I will understand but in the meantime I still enjoy APAK, even when you have to 'vamp.'"

[It's certainly true that the recent postal increase was the last thing I needed in my effort to keep the cost of my fanac down. It's to the point now where each issue costs about \$45.00 to put out to American correspondents alone, but I still consider it to be reasonably cheap entertainment, and much healthier than a serious crack habit. And as you suggest, it helps a great deal when the people on the other end of the line offer something in trade, even if only the occasional postcard. It's nice when people are willing to send money, though a lifetime sub won't even pay for a full issue at this point, because it shows an unusual degree of consideration in exchange for what they could get for free. But I appreciate letters even more, and not just from the standpoint of fannish tradition. I feel as though whatever value APAK has arises from the interactive nature of the dialogue between its readers. If all I wanted to do was get my words out in front of other people, I'd send my work to other people to publish and avoid the expense of publishing completely.

That consideration completely aside, I encourage you not to hold your figurative tongue, Algernon. People have always struggled to communicate their ideas, and it isn't only in fandom where you will find people failing to interpret your intentions correctly. One person's stupid

argument is another's stimulating debate. I hope that you can eventually find something to say that you feel is worth the trouble; in the meantime, I give you full marks for trying, and APAK will keep dropping into your mailbox every two months, until you move without sending me forwarding CoA again.

Now, a few general observations from our Speaker-to-NESFA, GEORGE FLYNN (P.O. Box 1069, Kendall Square Station, Cambridge, MA 02142):]

"Hmm, I don't think I've seen a TSFI since shortly after the purge (about which I knew just enough to be firmly on Pat's side, though I'd be hard put to recall the details today). As it happens, I have recently had occasion to give a close reading to Evelyn Leeper's report on *this* year's Worldcon, printed in its entirety in the latest *Proper Boskonian*. Since I am merely the copyeditor/proofreader, it would be inappropriate for me to say more (except to guarantee that it was grammatical as published). Mind you, I had a 'laundry-list of minutiae' of my own in the December *SF Chronicle*: but of course, I *did* get paid for it. (On the cover I am subsumed under 'MIKE RESNICK And Others'; Mike's report is better written, but I think mine is better journalism.)

"Well, I heeded your exhortation and just filled out my TAFF ballot. I think Joseph [Nicholas] misperceives the current race as a 'straight fight between a fanzine fan and a convention fan': Samanda Jude's fanac is sufficiently specialized that I'd guess most convention fans (outside the South, anyway) aren't familiar with her either. Meanwhile, the con-runners continue to cross the pond without the assistance of TAFF. I understand there's going to be an Intersection committee meeting at Boskone . . ."

[Ah, it could have been my name trodden underfoot by the titanic Resnick by-line, if only I had been willing to go to the convention. I got a message to call Andy Porter just a few days before the con (which is just about the time I would expect him to set up his coverage of the event), without any note of what his call was in regard to. But having covered ConFrancisco for him (at near Leeper-ish length, I must admit) the previous fall, I figured he wanted me to do a similar job on Winnipeg. I left a message on his machine, saying that I wouldn't be able to make the convention, and have never heard another word. Of course, it could simply be that he was calling up to wash his head at me about being left off the APAK mailing list.

Glad to hear you voted; If I could just get everyone who reads this fanzine to send in a ballot, I would feel like all of the thud and blunder of last year was well worth it. I think Joseph's comments can be partly explained by noting that the division between "fanzine fans" and "con-runners" is considered the primary dichotomy in contemporary British fandom. One could as easily use the words "us" and "them" with equal precision, although I reckon Joseph wouldn't be in that great a hurry to characterize himself as being one of "us."

Another neatly encapsulated opinion on fan fund etiquette comes from DAVID THAYER (701 Regency Dr., Hurst, TX 76054-2307), who sees speculation on the motives of fan fund candidates as more than merely bad form:]

"Criticizing the motives of fan fund candidates because they do not match your concepts does not seem to be a 'good idea.' You have the potential of stirring sympathy support from those who do not find those motives unacceptable. Better to tout your own favorite candidate(s) and promote your own concept of the fund(s)."

[I agree with this notion to the extent that it seems counter-productive to speculate on people's motives on the basis of their social circle or their choice of nominators, and other collateral issues. But in the case of the current TAFF race, the debate was sparked by statements made in the candidates own platforms, which seem to me to be fair subjects for our consideration. It might be much "nicer" to avoid saying negative things about one candidate in favor of saying positive things about another, but we all know that isn't how people's brains work. Most people have a distressing tendency to define themselves by defining the "other," by observing the ways that another individual or group have different ideas and attributes from the person offering the definition. You may regard this as a regrettable practice, but people are unlikely to stop doing it; if it inevitably leads the galvanization of opposition, I suppose "we," whoever and whatever "we" may be, are in a lot of trouble.

Wrapped around a tasteful little check was this note from TOM BECKER (10270 N. Foothill Blvd. Apt. C-14, Cupertino, CA 95014):]

"I've been meaning to send you this for a while, but now Spike's got me going to the PO to send you a measly COA pocsarcd, and the guilt's getting to be too much. Enclosed you should find a check for \$19.93. You can figure out for yourself what the extra 20 cents are for. Please keep those APAK's coming. When one of the darn things shows up, I've got to read it, if only to see how much deeper you've managed to dig the hole you're in (the people shoveling dirt on your head are trying to help). Anyway, I appreciate what you're trying to do, if not always how you do it. APAK is the commuter ferry of fandom, and I like ferries a lot more than cruise ships. On a ferry you can smell the salt, hear the seals, see the islands close up. Taking the ferry every day, you get a feel for the rhythm of the bay, the changes in the light as the seasons go around. And you get to know the other passengers. On the other hand, I don't want to overload this ferry with metaphors. It might sink."

[I try to avoid printing little congratulatory notes like that, but Tom's characterization of APAK as "the commuter ferry of fandom" seemed too good to pass up. I hasten to point out that APAK is incapable of carrying even one automobile, and has never been steered into the dock pilings at too high a speed by a drunken pilot, which is what has happened to a number of ferries in this region, but I suppose it's the thought that counts. And on that note, I'll close for another fortnight. See you on Feb. 9th!]

**Even in SAN QUENTIM I never seed nobody eat a RAW CHITLIN!**

APPARATCHIK is the Darcy Wakaluk of fandom, toiling at a winter pastime in a city of eternal summer, taking that waist-high slapshot from the point without flinching, making the pad save and smothering the rebound. 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 Stonewall Jackson or Hamilton Bee card from the DIXIE collection.

New lifetime subscribers as of this issue are Tom Becker and Anita Rowland, joining the generous Don Fitch, Lucy Huntzinger, Luke McGuff, Janice Murray, Alan Rosenthal, Karen Schaffer, Geri Sullivan and Art Widner. All of these deserve a hearty handclasp, and it is especially gratifying to

get such an endorsement from Tom, whose interest in fanzine fandom might best be described as intermittent. I also want to draw your attentions to Ms. Rowland, a member of the North Seattle Mob's Thursday-night bowling bund, and publisher of Machinations, the organ of the Seattle Cacophony society. Anita's address is 1732 15th Ave. E. #5, Seattle, WA 98122, and I think she'd be a great addition to anyone's mailing list. Fanzines and things received since last issue: Ansible # 89&1/2, & 90, Dave (for it is he) Langford; Bobbytes, dated 12/28/94, Bob Altzer; Cube # 56, Edited by Hope Kiefer for SF3; De Profundis # 273, edited by Tim Merrigan for the LASFS; FOSFAX # 173, edited by Timothy Lane for FOSFA; Space Cadet # 1, R. Graeme Cameron.

**... aimed fire is also notable because Ziska was blind.**