

NO PLACE #1

No Place #1, intended for the 5th or June '60 mailing of N'APA, will (with luck-- both sets of dues are in the mail, anyway) be the first appearance therein of F M Busby, 2852 14th Avenue West, Seattle 99, Washington.

Through the courtesy of Wally Weber, I've seen the first four mailings and have read #2 and #4 thoroughly, while only skimming #1 and #3 due to hurried circumstances. It looks like a good deal, so here (I hope) I am.

Scanning the roster of the 4th OO, I see that I've met the first 11 thereon, plus #13 (he would be), Ronel. Oops, begya podden: Eva and I have not met; 'only' corresponded and SAPS'd back and forth. Technically, Steve and Ernie probably belong on the list, too, since I recall shaking hands with a lot of people when Elinor and I first met Bjo at South Gate, but I'll bet that they can't quite place it, either. Of the other 20 on the list, we (in this zine, "we" is not the editorial variety; it stands for "Elinor and I") have had some sort of personal or semi-personal correspondence (as, with CRY) with about 12. Like, it appears that I'm not exactly in a strange place here, after all.

Still and all, for a new group (even with some of the Same Old People) it's probably just/well to lead off with a thumb-nail sketch of vital statistics and such. OK. Since N'APA seems as little given to age-chauvinism as any such group I've seen, it's probably safe to mention that I no longer look forward to my 39th birthday (shouldn't have bothered, anyway-- it was a pretty quiet affair). I run to about 5'7" vertically and about 150 pounds sideways. Have been buying most or all of the prozines since the summer of 1939 and was reading them standing up at the drugstore, now and then, for several years before that time. Ran into local clubfanning and fmz-contributing in 1950, but steered clear of any entanglement with publishing, proper, until the March '55 CRY. Since then, the scene has been essentially one of snowballing activity-- hard to keep up with, but fun, mostly.

That March '55 CRY, by the way, led off with a remark that "our editorial policy is apt to be that this zine will be just one big fat sloppy editorial". That zine wasn't, but I think that this one will be. Why? Because Elinor said I had no business joining another apa right now, what with unanswered correspondence and all sorts of work to be done on the house and yard. So we made a deal: I get to apply for membership in N'APA if I hold the output down to 6 pages per mailing. Now maybe some people can do full Mailing Comments in 6 pages, but not me. So for now, at least, I won't attempt MCs as such; later, maybe (consider, that once the precedent of full MCs is set, it is very difficult to break, short of gafia)-- instead, let's slant this zine toward general discussion of the various issues current in Mlg#4, with reference, of course, to the zines carrying them. OK?

But first, a word on personal policy. What with the recent GMC-Buz exchange in FAPA, and the circumstance that I couldn't very well pass up the ploy of applying to join N3F on the FAPA-distributed form stamped "Sponsored by GMCarr", some might draw the conclusion that I'm only horning in here to fight with GM. This is not the case at all; GM had her say and I had mine (though not to her entire mailing list, of course-- and sorry, I'm out of extra copies). But having had my say right out in print, I'm no longer particularly bugged and in fact am willing to leave past hassles to die in peace unless they are revived by GM and/or others. So with any luck at all, No Place will deal with current and future matters exclusively.

I guess the title should be explained: "No Place" is the name of a Skidroad joint here in town, devoted to jazz (progressive) and draft beer. There's quite a boom in this sort of place, the past year or two. "Pete's Poopdeck" was the first, and now there are about five of them. Elinor and I drop in down there once in a while, and enjoy it. Jim Webbert made the actual title-suggestion, last night.

N o P l a c e f o r G o o f i n g O f f

Or, let's talk about current issues in N'APA. The most current appears to be a postmailed zine by Alan J Lewis (to the 3rd mailing) and the responses thereto. Then-OE GuyT, and Art Hayes, seem to have the most comprehensive responses to this deal of Friendly(?) Al's, and their responses are considerably different. (Although Alan changed his stands markedly with his letter in the OO, I think that comment on the reactions to his original blast are still germane.) So here we go:

N'APA is in an enviable position just now. After 4 mailings, it is well under way (running well ahead of pre-existing apas at the same stage, I believe, though this statement is made without checking) and in good shape, but is still unhampered by weight of tradition-- like, this group is still in the experimental stage and in healthy condition to boot-- a rare thing. Right now, let's get it straight that I am not out to see N'APA molded into the image of any pre-existing apa. Each of the other apas has good features (SAPS is "my personal favorite", per Churchy), but none has a monopoly and there are still plenty of good ideas not yet in use by any existing apa. Guy adopted what I consider to be the most constructive ideas used by SAPS, already: the "in any two consecutive mailings" activity requirement, which insures that all members are heard-from at least twice a year-- the "something-in-your-first-mailing" requirement, which purges deadwood in a hurry, and the business that a Waiting Lister (they'll be with us soon, now) must be interested enough to respond to the OO quickly and regularly.

The By-Laws of N'APA look a little strange in comparison to those of other apas, but there's a legitimate reason: N'APA's by-laws are concerned every bit as much with the relationship of the apa to the parent organization as with the conduct of the apa itself. In the original version, the latter aspect was hardly given attention at all, but the situation has improved with this recent vote. Still, tho, there are great gaps in the "How to Manage an apa" sections. Well, that's all right; Guy set a fine precedent by assuming that in the absence of a detailed By-Law the OE may make a ruling and act upon it until the ruling is changed by a membership vote or Directorate action. (Only thing, Guy-- once you make a ruling, it would have helped if you had listed it, following the By-Laws in the OO... a minor gripe, only). Belle can also be expected to be action-minded rather than foot-dragging, and I am on the applause-meter if so. Belle, I hope you'll spell out rulings on some of the items omitted from the by-laws, such as amount and due-date of dues, firming-up and (probably, according to opinion in Illg#4) eventual replacement of that 50¢ fine for activity-default, with the more fair and logical penalty.

Now back to this deal (which I have not seen, by the way) from Friendly Al Lewis (as distinguished from Tyrannical Al Lewis with the Marsh Eyes):

Guy's comments: a little rough, but while I haven't seen the target, I do know that these are the words of a very straightforward Guy-- he may not always give an entire picture, but I've never seen him give a distorted one, of the parts he hits. And (shifting into the 2nd-person) your remarks in defence of your own actions in the conduct of N'APA, Guy, are wholly convincing, to me, anyway. Like, nothing succeeds like success, and I'm pretty sure that SAPS was ⁱⁿ its 3rd year before the 200-page mark was broken. Of course, circumstances are better these days, but it's still a very fine record you've run up.

Art Hayes seems to have taken an entirely different interpretation of Friendly Al's apparently-unfriendly remarks. Art, you seem to take it that Al is hitting you over the head with SAPS, used as a club in the most primitive sense of the word. This bugs you, and you repeat now and then that "SAPS is not ghod".

Well, you may be right, and surely I would not go so far as to say that you are wrong, but still at the same time (this sequence stolen from "Jurgen!") I think maybe you have your head on backwards again, here.

The late senator Robert Taft was noted among his senatorial colleagues for "always being Right on the second or third try". Now there is nothing wrong with this if you ever make a 2nd or 3rd try, J Arthur Taft. But still it seems to me...

The foregoing refers to this statement of yours, Art: "Just because SAPS invited this little faned to its main table, does not mean that SAPS is now to be OUR GHOD. Others were invited and refused to attend the clique table." I don't know how that reads to the Assembled Multitudes, but to me it reads like a pretty snotty response to Toskey's spontaneous friendly effort to give SAPS members (and waiting-listers) who wished to do so, the chance to fraternize and gab during the Detention banquet. If you thought this was a "clique" deal, you seem to be the only invitee who did; all others who "refused" (as you put it) to join the SAPS table were at the speakers' table or with their families, Tosk says. Anyhow, I don't see your purpose in putting on that phony humility ("this little faned") and presenting a distorted picture of what was a perfectly natural gesture of group good-feeling on the part of Tosk and his fellow-organizers of the "SAPS table"-- particularly when you have waited several months and let 2 SAPSmailings go by without mentioning this beef of yours. I already have my zine in for the next SAPSmailing, Art, but if I do a supplement, I'll try to remember to quote you. I hate to see a fella done out of the chance to speak his piece, just because he's maybe a little bashful.

"Padding", Arthur: while there were overly-large zines in SAPSmilings 48 & 49, the 817-page #50 contained nothing larger than Art Rapp's 60-page S'warp, which was only "padded" in the sense that half of it consisted of the "Communist Indoctrination" report, which Rapp felt needed distribution in both SAPS and FAPA. For that matter, just which zines in that mailing do you consider to be "padded" (if you say "yours", I'll probably shoot myself, because I've been working like mad to hold down the size of my zines in recent months)? But let's keep our facts straight, more. I think maybe you just got bugged at Friendly Al and got a li'l bit carried away (oddly enough, this sort of thing has even happened to me, on occasion; isn't it nice that there's two of us goofers in this world of Perfection?)

As to what AlanJ would get from Toskey by teeing-off on him-- well, allowing for differences of temperament and writing styles, I think he'd get just about the same kind of blast he got from Guy, and a good job, too. And you do all right yourself, Art, except where you forget that your target is Lewis rather than SAPS, which has not attacked you, Guy, or N'APA.

I don't know the context there on your page 12 where you say this to Mike Deckinger: "You forget that Bjo was in Seattle area. We don't know the full story of that, not really." As I say, I don't know the context, but I don't care for the sound of this excerpt of yours one damn bit. And since Bjo was our house-guest for the nine days she was here in Seattle last summer, I think it would be a very good idea if you spelled out just exactly what you were talking about, there. In the event that you are referring not to last summer at all, but to the time several years ago when Bjo lived in Seattle for a few months, then it is none of my business and I stand corrected, leaving you to the tender mercies of Bjo herself. But it does appear that you could use a little more straight reporting and a ~~lot~~ lot less of the sly hint naming-no-names routine, to very good advantage.

And now just to keep the record straight for the general public, I'd like to mention that I'm not out to be an enemy of Art's or anything like that. He and I have been corresponding (including arguments) for quite awhile now, and I like him and most of his published material. But I do call 'em as I see 'em, and intend to keep right on doing so, in here as well as elsewhere. Not overboard, though, if I can help it. Like: the natural hotheaded tendency would be to tell Art that if he is all that bugged at SAPS he could make some waiting-lister happy by failing to renew his due or activity. But actually I would much rather see Art continue in SAPS and perhaps re-evaluate what appear to be some preconceptions he seems to hold concerning the group. Calling a man on a couple of out-of-line items, and damning him to Ghuist Territory or the FAPA waiting list for all eternity are two different things. I trust you will all, including Art, see the distinction.

((Wow! It's March 20th, and I am rambling outdoors warm and shirtless in between composing immortal prose on here in short bursts. Great, man!))

So now let's see, what else is lively in the mailing?

Well, there's a bit of fuss over Hamlin's insistence on using a title based on "Maine-iac" which was coined by Ed Cox 10, these many years ago. Several good arguments were given on this. I think that GMCarr's is definitive, here. Belle did a Good Thing by creating and offering some good possible alternative titles. Yes, Hamlin, you can continue to use the title, but the idea does not seem to be very popular. (And I hope that Bob Lambeck's use of the takeoff on A Bas is just a one-shot deal. Huh, Bob?)

Well, now I see what happened to all that good Weber material we used to see in SAPS. Your treatment of this Reinhold Schmidt business is priceless, Wally. Hey-- Kearney, Nebraska-- wasn't that the deal in which the "saucer-caused" fire turned out to have been produced by a quart of crankcase oil, and the empty can (same brand as carried in the trunk of the guy's car) was found in the bushes near at hand? This would be around 1957-8, perhaps?

And then there's N o P l a c e f o r t h e F a i n t h e a r t e d

Always and inevitably, there will be discussion in N'APA of the relations and reciprocal attitudes between N3F and non-N3F fandom; intergroup relations are a natural and legitimate topic at any time. I note some mention of a "defensive attitude" on the part of N3F members (and must add that the old motto "A good offense is the best defense" seems to get quite a bit of play, here and there). Well, this sort of thing pops up in SAPS-FAPA relations, too, for that matter.

OK, so some N3F members appear to be overly militant about their affiliation, while on the other hand (let's face it) the group does not enjoy a "good press" among non-members. Action and reaction, with positive feedback; no? And so it usually winds up with a frustrated outburst to the effect that "outsiders" have no right to have an opinion of the organization. Carried to its logical conclusion, the implication would be that the only acceptable action on the part of a non-member is to join and to be enthusiastic about it. Or to cease existence, fanwise. Now certainly it's understandable, how an ardent enthusiast could be driven to such an attitude (that "it's none of their business"), but still it solves no problems.

Most of you probably saw my letter in Postwarp in response to AlanJ's request for outside comment, and some took the aboved-mentioned attitude, some more violently than others, of course, and GM was mad at me already, anyhow. I was sorry to see this reaction. Alan's offer struck me as a constructive move, so that while I had previously been going along with the fannish gag and kidding the pants off N3F for no particular reason except that it got laughs, I wrote that letter in all good faith and as fairly as possible. (Some will ask howcome I said I'd never join the group and now here I am. Simple. I changed my mind, figuring that I can let most of the red-tape go over my head and have fun here in N'APA and maybe an RR or so.)

What I'm getting at, I hope, is that attitudes aren't changed by complaining about them, but by discovering and changing the causes, if possible. So let's see if we can see what might be some of the causes behind present N3F/nonN3F antagonism.

My hunch is that it all goes back quite a way. At one time, the N3F was the fannish organization except for FAPA whose purposes/were much more limited. Today N3F is but one of a number of fannish organizations and with a discouraging lack of prestige outside its own membership. What, to coin a phrase, happened?

Well, for one thing, fandom grew, both in numbers and in diversity. But more than that, fandom changed-- basically, the change was from (overall) organization-mindedness to a more anarchistic state of mind, with smaller special-purposes groups (local clubs, apas, etc) springing up all over, and little overall coordination or need for same. Both the Insurgent Movement and (I gather, from some of my reading as a fan-history buff) internal dissension added to the effect of this change. And the results?

For the purposes of this discussion, the major result is that N3F is now a fan organization rather than being the fan organization not because of any inherent flaw in N3F but purely because the majority of the people who make up today's fandom do not agree that there is any need for any overall organization that would rate "the" in its description. And while it may or may not be true that fandom would benefit if such a group existed and functioned as the group-- I'm not making a point of that, one way or the other-- it is incontrovertibly true that fandom doesn't need one.

Now let's don't get into analogies about patients who don't think they need surgery, or the like; if a man is enjoying his hobby and doesn't wish to change the setup, he doesn't "need" to do so, and that's that. Keep getting on his back about it and you only antagonize him.

And here, I think, is the bind. Some of you-- oops, make that some of us; I'm writing in the belief that my two sets of dues will get there OK, after all-- some of us are still hung up on the idea of N3F as the fan organization, and too much of the recruiting and particularly individual discussion of the group with "outsiders" is based on this assumption to an annoying degree... annoying, that is, to the very person you're trying to "convert". Self-defeating, don't you think? It is the N3F itself, with its insistence (by and large) that all fandom needs the N3F, and its lumping of outsiders as "the heathen" (yes, I know that one use of that term in this mailing was in jest, at least)-- by maintaining (perhaps for good reason, for all I know) a petty-seeming exclusiveness concerning "mixed" activities-- by its own air of being fenced-in and perhaps a bit holier-than-thou to those who don't choose to enter-- that builds up the outside attitude that N3F is a little world of its very own. Insular is the word I'm groping for, if not provincial.

Now I do not say that non-members should have access to "benefits" financed by dues-paying members; it's more just a matter of public relations in how some of the in-group restrictions are stated or emphasized, I think. I realize that the group wants officially-sponsored activities restricted to the membership, and rightly so-- but all too often it comes out sounding like a mother telling her children not to play with the neighbor kids because they go to the wrong church or something.

But that's a sidelight, and subjective at that; I may be alone in that reaction, perhaps. The main problem would appear to be for some of us to come to terms with the fact that N3F is no longer (and probably never will be, again) the fan organization, but that it can certainly be a very good fan organization for those to whom it offers something. For instance: I am now, I hope, a member of N3F and of N'APA. But in sending in my dues, I did not automatically become one of those who feels that everybody should follow suit. I am here because N'APA looks good to me, and because I expect to enjoy it. The same goes for my other, non-N3F, fanac-- I'm not primarily a N3F member or NAPAn or SAPSmember or FAPAn or CRYdrudge or fmz-reader or correspondent or (too infrequently) Con-attende-- primarily, I'm just another damn faaan, and have found that the more diverse my fanac becomes, the more enjoyable it becomes. You know, along with recruiting into N3F, it would behoove the group to encourage its members to branch out into "outside" fanac, too. Now of course this thought isn't as pertinent to the present audience as to the general membership: of the 34 names on the roster, all but 6 are (to my knowledge, which is hardly all-inclusive) engaged in some form of non-N3F fanac, mostly apan. But the N3F members who are never seen or heard of outside the group (or hardly ever) are most often the ones with the way-out oddball views of just what fandom might be like, overall. Now if anyone restricts his contacts to a certain facet of fandom because of mundane limitations, this is all well and good. But to maintain such restriction because of a "102% N3F" attitude is foolish and self-defeating-- any anthropologist will tell you that you gotta go out and live with the natives to get anywhere.

If anyone is waiting for the punchline, I'm afraid heshe will be disappointed. This is not essentially a pre-planned scene (hi, Ron); it's more just trying to get a few points on stencil in some sort of logical sequence. OK?

Under the Elinorial Code, this is No Place to Start a Novel what with being the final page...

So perhaps a little summing up of odds and ends, and maybe a few hello-asides on various other little items in the mailing?

First: I hope that none of this speculation and cause-searching steps on too many toes; I'm not in here for that (though I realize that such is bound to occur at times in any free-wheeling expression of divergent opinions) and the preceding writeup is not so intended; I hope this will be obvious to most, if not to all.

So: G I CARR: any "fight" that we have here in N'APA will be of your making. If you insist, of course, we can have trouble; otherwise, I'm perfectly willing to go on the basis of what appears in this apa, without regard (insofar as possible) to previous hostilities. No need to drag the group into whatever personal hassles we might have, particularly since we have already once acted in the same direction, knowledgeably, in the save-Elmer situation (and thanks, for that show of kindly ways). We've both had our say, and so far as I'm concerned, that can be the end of it.

Oh, yeh, the By-Laws: the plonking wording of that Preamble, and the odd deal of including a prohibition against changing it, in an Article that is itself subject to change, is as good an example as any of the Poor Public Relations mentioned on a previous page here. Now the purpose of the Preamble is to confirm, safeguard, and certify the self-evident fact that N'APA is an N3F activity-- and this is something with which no one has grounds to quarrel, surely. But it does seem as if this point could be handled in some way that would be less like waving a red flag at a bull: all it takes, it seems, to start the fannish headbone to thinking of devious schemes, is to stand flat-footed in the mud and say "You can't!" It would seem sufficient, here, to rely on the first sentence of Article II: "...shall be open to membership to any member in good standing.." and take care of any other necessary-seeming safeguards in the N3F (rather than N'APA) authorization that sets up N'APA as an operating deal. Now I'll admit that here I discuss that ^{of} which I know not -- but it seems only the reasonable thing to expect, that a group such as N3F would have some sort of vehicle-of-authorization in its own paperwork. Well, there, outside the framework of N'APA but yet binding upon the membership, is the place for the delineation of N3F-N'APA relationships. In, I'd better add, my own personal opinion. At this time.....

In the writing of even such a short small zine as this one, done last night and today, it's inevitable that I've forgotten numerous items that deserve comment in this #4 mailing of Wally's. Let's see, now...

Alma Hill: nice to see you again (in print; hope to see you in person at Pitt). Yes, I know with a guilty knowledge that I owe you a letter or two. P*a*t*i*e*n*c*e.

Les Gerber: Yeh, I caught that little plug, and thanks. I had already sent the first set of dues, and an obsolete card to Guy, the day before I spotted that, so how is that for precognition, hey? Your zines are coming along fine, but I hope you'll graduate to heavier, two-sided paper before long now... a very minor gripe, though.

Guy, Eva, Bob, Cos, Mez, Bruce, Bjo, Ron (none previously mentioned, I think): glad to have an additional channel of communication with you, too.

Oops-- in connection with the next-to-last paragraph on the previous page, re encouraging N3F-only fans to branch out more: N'APA appears to be a very good deal in this respect. But for that reason, it's not going to be a good deal for a whole gang of us multi-apans to hold down too many slots here in N'APA indefinitely. Some, yes-- the whole point is (by me, let's specify again) that newcomer-and-previously-experienced apans participate in the same group here in N3F. But when the time comes that the roster consists largely of multi-apans and a waiting list consisting mostly of brand-new aplicants has built up, then some (but definitely not all) of us multi-apan types should consider moving over and making room. At that time, I'm expendable as they come, I figure; whether or not I stay in N3F aside from N'APA depends on how it goes meanwhile, of course. Till then, though-- hope to be sceing you quarterly.