



EN GARDE TWO

En Garde

TWO

40th
PIR
ISSUE

FORMERLY "THE RIGGER DIGGER"

a magazine of personal opinions and natter...particularly
about Diana Rigg, Patrick MacNee
and THE AVENGERS

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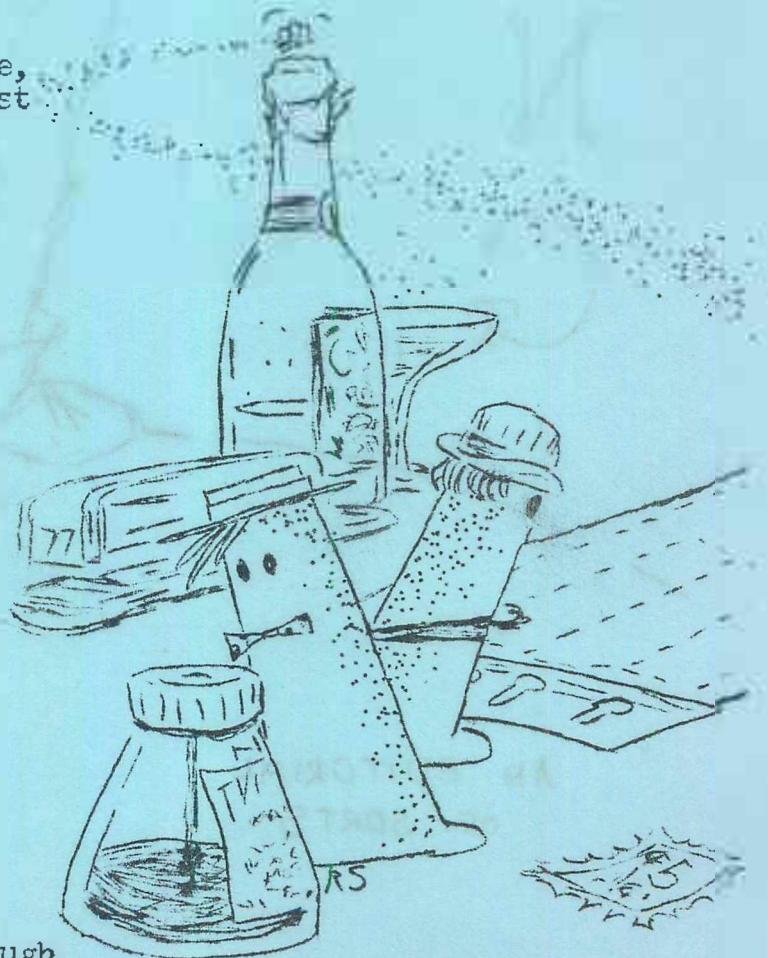
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T A C K I N G



AN EDITORIAL
OF SORTS

GREETINGS AND SALUTATIONS

This is the very late second issue of the Diana Rigg-THE AVENGERS-and Patrick MacNee fanzine. It also boosts whatever else this particular editor wants it to. Including whatever additional facets of the entertainment medium I appreciate.

As you might have noticed, the title has been changed. Upon sober reflection (and under the prodding of some well-intentioned letter writers), I have decided to alter the title.

The previous title, THE RIGGER DIGGER was somewhat overly in-groupish and a mite juvenile. Not only the title, but much of the interior dialogue was unfortunately inane. Part of the cause for the strange dialogue last issue was because of my speaking patterns. I tend to intermix sheerest slang with edruite verbalizations. This being the unfortunate manner of my speech, I unfortunately carried it over into the writing. I hope to perform much better this time.

Upon sober reflection, it is a decidedly odd way of speaking, isn't it?

EDITORIAL POLICY Such as it is, continues to be oriented about that most facile of actresses, Miss Rigg, THE AVENGERS, and Patrick MacNee. Those of you who feel that an amateur magazine built around this is a great deal more information on any one such particular subject than you care to possess are invited to continue in your own fashion. This is no crusading journal, and never intends to be. I simply happen to think that Miss Rigg and company are easily one of the best things to ever hit the idiot box. If your own enthusiasm is less than mine, I certainly do not consider that to be in any ways or means abnormal.

Follow thy own drummer. I follow mine.

For those of you who are interested, further copies of EN GARDE may be obtained by a variety of means.

Simple subscription, at .40¢ apiece. Please, no long term subscriptions.

By contributing in some ways, means or form. This may be done by writing anything pertaining to the entertainment field in particular. Editorial discretion will decide what is printed and what is not. At all times, I shall endeavour to present the contributor with a reason or explanation if anything is rejected, or changes are desired.

Contributions consisting of material printed in the general publishing world are also very welcome, as is AVENGERS-slanted material of any kinds. News of forthcoming appearances of Miss Rigg and Mr. MacNee in the general entertainment field is also particularly welcome. If presented in time, I shall attempt to inform the general readership as well, of course.

Artwork is desired, indeed some more decent non-editor material is on the way. More later.

But you may also obtain copies through the simple medium of sending this editor a LoC, or Letter of Comment. It need not be long, cogent, or even very literate. Some sort of public reaction to my efforts are my only means of gauging the worthiness of my little zine.

As stated above, there will be some more outside artwork for the next issue. But for the moment, please bear with me through the present difficulties. We try harder.

The outside artist I have great hopes for is Mr. Derek Carter, presently of Toronto, Ontario, Canada. I am hoping to wring quite a number of excellent bits from him, betwixt his own work. For Derek is one of the four artists primarily responsible for the artwork present in a thing called "ROCKET ROBIN HOOD".

6) This cartoon classic is one of the horde of kiddie-oriented cartoon shows that swamp the early Saturday hours. Having finally seen one of the shows (thanks to the flu), I can state that it seems to be a fair example of the genre.

The animation is very nearly non-existent, but this has been standard for TV cartoon shows ever since Huckleberry Hound first raised his simple head. For in order to produce the smooth, even animation we remember from the hey-day of Bugs Bunny and Crew, very nearly three or four times the number of drawings are needed than are produced today for a show. To obtain this sort of animation, more than three or four times the number of artists would be necessary, as well as vastly increased auxiliary personnel and services. Even so, the schedules would have to greatly lengthened and the weekly kiddie cartoon would very likely become tri-weekly, if that.

But by using this short-cut and letting the characters be a bit stiff, it is possible for a non-Disney outfit to profitably produce a cartoon show on a tight schedule without having to charge Disney prices for their product.

For they are, after all, bound by economics. As Derek moaned, good cartoonists and artists are difficult to come by and come high. Even for a simple cartoon show like LONE RANGER you need something like four ink men, four pencil men, and auxiliary technicians of equal number like scripter, dubber, etc., and managerial staff.

But at least the art in ROCKET ROBIN HOOD is well-crafted and occasionally becomes quite lovely line work.

Derek says it's a living.

Naturally other sources are being approached for more artwork, the Doug who drew the cartoons herein as well. Haaalllllooooo out there, all you artists.

REPRINTS AND CREDITS Let me now give credit where credit is due.

The EN GARDE article, by Robert Musel, is taken from the Jan. 21st, 1967 issue of the TV GUIDE.

The Hank Davis review of Garforth's THE FLOATING GAME was first printed in Sirruish, a science-fiction fanzine edited by Leigh Couch, Rt. 2, Box 889, Arnold, Missouri, 63010, issue #5.

THE AVENGERS review by Cleveland Amory reprinted in this issue first appeared in TV GUIDE, May 14th, 1966, Vol. 14, #20.

THE AVENGERS-Jolly Good Show is from the March, 1967 PLAYBOY. No credits are given for writer.

The photos used for the photocovers for this issue are courtesy of ABC-TV.

OTHER THAN REPRINTS there will be original articles wherever possible. Mr. Arthur Louis Joquel, an old-time science-fiction fan of some stature, has consented to a little thing for us on some AVENGERS-type fighting. You realize, of course, that the throws, holds and blows Miss Rigg has (and will) use on THE AVENGERS are not exactly orthodox. But then Miss Rigg is not exactly a black belt (or even green, for that matter). And the turnover in the auxiliary acting staff is probably too high as it is, necessarily precluding her use of the Real Thing on some hapless actor or actress.

Not to mention that the C.I.D. might object to various odd bodies lying about the studios. They're picky that way.

Really tho, much of the effectiveness of a karate or gung-fu or ju-jitsu blow or throw lies in the particular way one holds the body.

These correct stances, correct in that they are the most effective ways of delivering your leverage or blow, are very, very stiff and artificial looking. Certainly they do not generally look graceful. The idea of selling TV shows with lovely-but-awkward-looking heroines is none too popular amongst the producers of such things, of course.

Therefore we have the spectacle (lovely though it be) of Honey West's and Cathy Gale's and Mrs. Emma Peel's gracefully belting the 'ell out of someone whilst a small minority of viewers smile indulgently at the examples of self-defense portrayed. Ah, but only a Mrs. Peel can make us love it.

Occasionally, what is more, she would present us with a really edifying scene.

As happened in "A FUNNY THING HAPPENED TO ME ON THE WAY TO THE STATION." There was one particular moment near the end.... Steed was handcuffed to a pipe in the railway car with the villains whilst they waited for the Prime Minister to pass them and get blown up. Mrs. Peel to the rescue!

A female villain discovered Mrs. Peel on her way and grabbed a fork from a nearby plate. After a little preliminary skirmishing, Mrs. Peel neatly side-stepped her and with a little deft application of assisting force persuaded her to move even more swiftly. In as neat an application of mathematical momentum as seen, the female villainess achieved a new parabolic trajectory that terminated in the rear wall of the railcar. Ouch!

In EPIC (which I incorrectly titled "The Destruction of Mrs. Emma Peel" last issue) applied quite a series of highly entertaining holds to a villain who didn't appreciate them very much, liking the occasional kidney blows even less. If it had been played for real, that chap's kidneys would have resembled a pudding at the end of production.

At least Mrs. Peel could occasionally really put up a display of the arts of self-defense which were, of course, somewhat sloppy. (As I mentioned previously, graceful heroines sell better than awkward ones.) But there were many times when these vicious and brutal and unfair and effective blows and throws would have performed considerable damage to the receiver if they had been meant seriously. You need at least a bit of skill and practice to be able to pull your punches and still make it look good.

I am looking forward to Mr. Joquel's article, and hope to put in at least a few cogent thoughts of my own after his article.

ALAS, ALACK Though Mrs. Emma Peel will soon once more grace the airways of the United States, it will be but for a little while. After seven or eight episodes, Mrs. Peel will (inexplicably, no doubt) leave Steed to fight the forces of Evil without her "highly gifted amateur" aid.

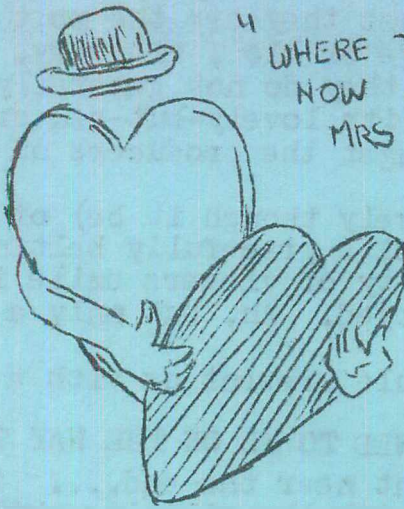
The forces of Good may never recover from the blow.

At any rate, though 13 episodes with the redoubtable Diana Rigg are sitting a-'moulderin' in the vaults of ABC, she will probably never again grace our screens past March.

Of course Universal-International is now selling syndication of the black-and-white shows on a local show only basis, we cannot hope to see her nationwide as Mrs. Peel again.

For that matter, no one is going to buy the local-show rights until after THE AVENGERS leaves the nation-wide networks, but each of ye might consider mentioning the matter to your local stations once it is nationally cancelled.

After Mrs. Peel disappears into the same limbo which holds Cathy Gale, the figure of Tara King will appear. She will be portrayed by Miss Linda Thorsen, an honors graduate last April from the Royal



Academy of Dramatic Arts, hereafter referred to as the RADA. She is billed as a cerebral, willowy blonde, according to the official releases. She wears her hair fairly short, is moderately tall, and looks high-strung. It is also stated that the feminine violence is being laid aside.

Alas, alack! Away with the gung-fu. The karate. The judo. The tong-soo-doo.

Alas, alack! Away with those absolutely kinky clothes, those marvelous ultra-mod ensembles worn so well, the fetishist boots, the leather and crilene jump suits, all the EmmaPeelers. And

whether you are aware of it or not, Honor Blackman as Cathy Gale and Miss Rigg as Mrs. Emma Peel is credited with originating and popularizing the notion that boots are fashionable wear for women.

Alas, alack! Away with the totally avant garde image of Mrs. Emma Peel so warmly portrayed by that Yorkshire lass we love so well. Anyone who says anything about Provincials gets sent to Coventry.

Well.... Life may indeed be a continuing series of episodes wherein we shed old images and dreams and acquire new ones. But one may with a bit of regret, quietly decry the loss of an image of such flair and competence and beauty.

I can think of far worse things to attempt to store in the eye of one's mind than that of the most gifted amateur in the world.

Mrs. Peel is dead! Long Live Diana Rigg.

FETISH SYMBOLS, ANYONE? The thought has been expressed before, that Mrs. Peel's appeal (and that of Cathy Gale) lay in the pandering therein to the fetishist tastes of some types.

Mostly the leather types, though with something for the Female Dominance fans. Certainly it would be easy to say that their appeal lay in that. But like most easy things, not quite true.

Certainly leather suits are not exactly everyday wear even in Mod London, and a highly gifted lady who can easily break your neck... or bend you to her will... is not quite the qualities looked for in the Mrs. America contests.

But anyone who overemphasizes this very deliberately included ingredient of the show forgets that Diana Rigg looks devastating in just about any single thing she puts on. Not even the loudest critic can truthfully say that she looks out of place, or freakish even in the most Mod ensemble. She has too good a sense of taste to allow that. No, I think quite a good deal of her appeal lies in the idealization of the two main characters.

We have, after all, John Steed, the perfect Gentleman, the perfect Englishman, the perfect literate, the Renaissance man of the 20th Century. He is gifted, suave, handsome, superbly dressed and able to defend himself in any circumstance. To compliment this image, we have the similar idealization of, first, Cathy Gale, and then in a more complete form, Mrs. Emma Peel.

For a close examination of the character of Mrs. Emma Peel shows us more than a simple killing machine, able to wreak havoc at will. We have here the ideal woman. Educated, suave, intelligent, able and willing to make decisions and stick to them, fortified with a firm inner morality and conscience rather than letting a social conscience be imposed on her from the outside. She kow-tows to no man, but is lacking that fierce militancy so characteristic of the usual female

emancipatrix. She is warm, feminine, sexy (if you will) even whilst omitting the "safe" pliable creature image. She is the exponent of true freedom and emancipation for the woman. 9

Of course, as far as I'm concerned the real appeal of Mrs. Peel lies not in some facet of that make-believe personality but the very real personality of Diana Rigg that lies behind.

In that personality, you can see the free agent who understands that real freedom means freedom of choice. Not badgered by society or economics or anything but the very real presence of one's own inner morality.

It is relatively easy to assume the morality of an outside nature. But an infinitely more difficult task to create an inner force and be able to stick to it. This, to me, seems to be the greater conscience, to have your own morality, and to live in it.

This is probably utterly maudlin romanticism speaking, but isn't a complete personality, well integrated, infinitely more preferable than some image, however desirable?

This is what I think is the Mrs. Peel appeal. That there seems to be such a self-sufficient total personality behind her. Not just a few facets of a total person, but a complete person.

The 20th Century Renaissance woman?

SPEAKING OF STORING THINGS Sometime in the future, the AVENGERS will in all probability fold again. Then it just might be possible to store a few things. Like 16mm prints of various shows.

Thanks to the recent friendship with a few members of the Detroit Film Society, I've been offered the information that occasionally it is sometimes possible to purchase 16mm prints of some old TV shows. Hitchcock, Armstrong Circle Theater, Hallmark Hall of Fame, that sort thing.

Naturally all this fired my imagination to no end. But the financial burdens of such a move would be fantastic, to the individual pocketbook. The mere renting of such a show can in itself run to \$15-\$20. The purchase price would easily run to \$100, and maybe even higher. For a colour show, a 50% boost in purchase price is bound to be standard. Again, maybe even more.

Not the sort of thing that even hard-core Diana Rigg fans can feel free in spending for a mere effectation. Nevertheless, eventually THE AVENGERS will start appearing on the market. Odd dribblets at best. And with the aid of the Detroit Film group, eventually a few might see their way into the vaults of the group libraries.

But do not expect to even hear of any individual shows being available at least until late '69 if that early.

Discouraging, isn't it?

13 shows at a whack are available now, from Universal-International (as previously mentioned). But at a whacking big price. It will be a little while before individual shows start showing up.

Also, in a few days they are reviving the show. Due, by now quite predictable mediocre Nielsen ratings, the show will have some difficulty getting a top advertising price, and ABC will probably drop it once more.

It will probably be replaced by some un-funny comedy or camp western (which isn't meant to be camp) like HIGH CHAPARRAL or whatever the next hybrid offspring of GUNSMOKE or BONANZA will be titled. Which will statistically betting probably be even less of a draw and make even less money for ABC.

By mediocre ratings, I mean that the ratings will be in the lower half of the ratings sweepstakes list, certainly not that AVENGERS deserves to be termed mediocre by any twist the word might be put to.

Even when it could be seen that Miss Rigg goofed off and didn't expend herself, or when the script was yet another re-do of some yarm that had been already done twice before. Even then, the show was never mediocre, and mayhaps that was part of what killed it off.

The supporting auxiliaries from producer on down, not to mention those hardy perennial professionals, Rigg and MacNee, never achieved that dispiriting blandness of "just another AVENGERS show". That cloying, grayish charisma which is the familiar death-wielder to most series shows.

Mayhaps it was simply because it was so obviously a formula show that the staff and cast were able to avoid most of the series errors. Certainly the formula THE AVENGERS was set in was just as tight as the mythical never-never land in which the average Western takes place. But being aware of the binding restrictions and the dangers obviously made Wintle and crew put that little extra bit of themselves into the show. This lifted it above the trite, and formularized.

After all, a formula show can offer many chances to come to grips with many dramatic situations. One sets the period, the place, the motivations, the framework of the world about them with just a flick or two, and then one can burrow down into the story itself. What will the dangers be and how will the Avenging Duo solve the mystery? With imagination, this capsulization can be made to be as wide as the horizon itself, and Clemens, Wintle and crew showed that this was possible.

Mayhaps one of the most endearing points of the show was that it was indeed straight, un-hoked-up melodrama. It did not try to pretend it was making some valid comment on society. Too many phony drama shows today say that they have a valid comment. But THE AVENGERS did not have a great deal of self-important message. It just said what it had to say very, very, very clearly. Jean-Luc Godard said there is no point in having sharp images if you've got fuzzy ideas.

At any point, partly because of this prominent quality, THE AVENGERS just doesn't have the mass appeal necessary for one of the customary meteoric TV successes. With Miss Rigg right in the swing of things with her ultra-mod attire and charming ways and that lovely mobile face so distinguishable from the usual Raquel Welch-type Hollywood Lovely-Girl-With-Exposure. With MacNee and his near-caricature of the perfect Englishman. With a spy-vs.-spy motif throughout the show. With some of the finest tongue-in-cheek humour extant in the entertainment field today. With lots of action (even though very little actual blood) for the Yankee audience. With colour, finally, and some loosening up of the script a bit for the Yankee audience.

With all this, it never did quite make it. Not into the top thirty, that is quite evident. That despite a change-over in feminine leads forced on them by Miss Rigg's abandonment of the role they can make it in the ratings game is obvious whistling in the dark. Miss Rigg left the series, of course, before she became absolutely stereotyped in the role, and for some more live acting. But leave she did, and I have little hope for THE AVENGERS ratings once the great mass of Mrs. Peel fans learns she will no longer be with them.

There are, by the way, some 26 additional colour Diana Rigg AVENGERS available or in the ABC vaults. Shows which we shall probably never see nationwide. For once given the axe, ABC would not try to revive it once more, even with her.

The reasoning behind dumping Mrs. Peel in mid-Second-Season is beyond me, however. It lies in the vale of tears where all command decisions in the networks are made these days. Someone probably decided it was better to replace her now, and hope the new star goes over, then to replace her in the fall.

The American networks, obviously, are obsessed with the Star attitude. As much as the Hollywood studios ever were. Nobody wants

to risk a penny in a show, so they find some "Name" and put it into a show. Why this once they went ahead and picked an unknown is beyond me. It is not a usual pattern.

But, lacking what they now discover is a "Name", and with a dialogue and story-line that cannot be assimilated immediately on the spot like the usual situation-comedy mush, THE AVENGERS will probably kick off again.

Actually, that this Linda Thorsen is unknown is actually a sign of hope for the artistic integrity of the show. Wintle is no fool, and is a good connoisseur of actress flesh. After all, didn't he replace Honor Blackman with Diana Rigg? Miss Thorsen is obviously a hot talent, as differing from the usual "hot properties" we are untreated to these days.

So, I sadly and unwillingly expect that THE AVENGERS might be dropped again this coming fall. Some obscene jabberwocky will fly the night hours in it's place. After three tries, no one at ABC will willingly advocate bringing it back a fourth season, even with Miss Rigg back in the lead female role. So, sometime about summer of '69, it will possibly begin appearing in the lists of those companies specializing in rentals to small groups and flicker houses.

Once begun, I hope to eventually make Detroit some sort of center for that sort of thing, but not very soon.

But as the explanation before this points out, don't expect to see any up for rent before then.

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SCRIPTS, ANYONE? There are not only outfits specializing in renting films (and a few TV shows) to smaller outfits, but an outfit or two who will sell working scripts from TV shows. Working scripts or copies of them at any rate. Whether any could be obtained from THE AVENGERS is a serious question. For don't forget, the show is completely produced in England.

But hope springs eternal. Messages sent to Julian Wintle, c/o ABC, 1330 Avenue of the Americas, NYC, NY might eventually reach him. Enough letters sent and he might send off a few script copies for the fans. So, everyone write, right? Right.

I might also add that, of course, ABC is the place to send fan letters, and nice polite (and non-gripping) letters asking ABC to please keep THE AVENGERS on the air. And if they might show some more Diana Rigg shows.

They get enough complaints (in fact, they receive mostly complaints), so a kind word might not hurt.

EXPENDABLE ART That is what some term posters, these days. These are considered "camp" by some, and art by others (who frequently point to Toulouse-Latreuc as a poster artist). Irregardless of the esthetic arguments, posters of people like Jean-Paul Belmondo, Peter Fonda, Jean Harlow, Marlon Brando, cartoons of LBJ, illegible adverts of the Avalon ballroom, etc., are easily available throughout the nation. What do you do with them? Most people hang them up on walls, ceilings, doors, anything with a flat space, as well as stop signs, Volkswagen camper tops, bank windows or whatever strikes their fancy.

Well, for the connoisseurs amongst us, there has never been any commercial publication of one for Miss Diana Rigg, Mr. MacNee, or the both of them together. But for the real hard-core Rigg fan, I have some astonishingly bad-and-good news for you. There are now two fotos of her available as posters.

But there's a catch.

Money.

I had the two originals made up myself, out of my own pocket.

12] Now the chap has the two negatives, he knows just what papers and developers to use, what developer, light, etc. But any further prints will go for \$12 apiece, which makes it again a very costly proposition for what in the long run is still just a poster.

Expendable art, if you will. That \$12, however, is just about cost to him. If I could go ahead and order 40-200 copies, the price would easily go down to \$6 and then \$4 dollars apiece. But then not only would yhos truly and the producer be stuck with a very large tab, but also a pile of very possibly non-selling merchandise. Since most posters go for anything from \$1.00 to \$2.50 apiece, you can see how slow even \$4.00 posters would probably go.

I presume that Stan Landman and John Mansfield and some might go for 'em even at that price of \$12, but not many. If you're a student type and would like to arrange credit, please let me know. Maybe some sort of installment type plan could be initiated.

Shipping would be commercial heavy-duty tubes, easily purchasable in the area from a commercial supplier of barrels. It would not add too much to the cost and I am volunteering to provide them free to the project. Like, I'm completely unwilling to see my supplier go to all that trouble and not make at least a few sales. Besides which, supplying them would be a labor of love, etc. Postage extra, though.

The size of these is....

Now get this.

Three $\frac{1}{2}$ feet by Five feet.

Both of them. That is about 35% bigger than even the biggest of the commercial faces put out by International Faces, Inc., the biggest poster people.

If you're ever in the area, I'll show them to you. I'll take them to the upcoming Marcon Science Fiction convention in Toledo this March. As well as to the MidwestCon, a similar affair held in Cincinnati at the end of June.

Not only that, but with any luck I hope to just barely obtain a print or two (on loan from ABC, of course) to show at either or both of these functions. Do not count on it, but I shall send on any further information whenever I receive it.

I'll publish the dates and addresses for both functions as soon as I learn them as well, if anyone is interested.

ALAS, I MISSED IT This year, earlier, I now learn, THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST appeared on the telly. In this production there appeared the redoubtable Patrick MacNee.

Though I missed it, I have seen some photos from the show, and any AVENGERS fan seeing it must have had weird flashes of deja vu or whatever you wish to call it. For MacNee was dressed exactly like the Edwardian dandy (which, indeed, he was supposed to be), and thus bore a more than average resemblance to John Steed, agent extraordinaire'. It must have been entertaining.

"WHY, HELLO THERE, INSPECTOR BENSON". Those were the words so carefully enunciated by that other Yorkshire dervish, Laurence Harvey, in "ARTHUR". "ARTHUR" was not an Arthurian legend epic, but the name of the "narrator" of the story, the New Zealand chicken farmer who Got Away With Murder.

It was a '59 half-hour show, aired during the regular Hitchcock series presented to the public during those years. It starred Laurence Harvey as the homicidal chicken farmer, and Hazel Court (one of the old Hammer films group) as his victim. Inspector Benson, Arthur's friend of long standing, was forced to investigate...and suspect the worst...of Arthur after Hazel Court's trail ended at Arthur's automated one-man chicken enterprise.

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After an initial fruitless investigation, he is forced to bring an New Zealand C.I.D. Inspector into the picture. But Arthur has gotten away with it because he ground up the victim in his new feed grinder and fed it to his 10,000 contented chickens.

Gruesome, but one of Hitchcock's better ones. Under a different title, the story itself first appeared in one of Hitchcock's collections of short stories. "STORIES THEY WOULDN'T LET ME DO ON TV". Tho obviously he finally did get to do it on TV.

Inspector Benson?

Would you believe Patrick MacNee? In loose, baggy trousers, cuffs folded over the shoes, black suit coat with no handkerchief in the pocket, wide lapels, a gray wide-brim fedora hat, no umbrella at all and about fifteen pounds lighter? But it was indeed MacNee, even to that strange cobra-ish smile and that facile collection of features which has so endeared him to millions of AVENGERS viewers. Indeed, it was the voice I first recognized rather than the face or walk. That accent, like Miss Rigg's, is fortunately unforgettable and uncopyable.

That rich, creamy enunciation was quite unchanged and quite as dulcet as ever, making the mumbles school of non-acting even more absurd by comparison.

I noticed at the time that he then had a habit, seemingly, of not knowing quite what to do with his hands. It is a common fault in American men, but seemingly not common over there. He does have the problem to a very infinitesimal degree in THE AVENGERS. But then he has the exceedingly natural props of bowler and brolly, gloves and coat to give him that lovely poised look. One merely grasps the brolly firmly, or the bowler, or puts on the gloves, and the picture is ever so complete.

How much more graceful than the hand in the pocket, or absently waving the cigarette, or whatever.

I must see some more MacNee and Rigg credits.

COMEDY OF ERRORS; OR THE ALDwych REVISITED As some of you are already aware, the Royal Shakespearan Company does not stay all year at Stratford-upon-Avon, nor disbands once the summer season is over. Rather they go into high gear or the West End of London, if you will.

The Aldwych Theatre there is the winter home of the Royal Shakespearan Company, and there they play before their friends, the audience.

Well, whilst there one season (evidently last year, '66-'67), the BBC was allowed to film one of the Company's Shakespearan renditions for the telly. This show, quite complete, was then later presented on the BBC. Where it probably didn't draw as many viewers as whatever was on the ITV, but Shakespearan drama is prone to such disregard over here as well.

Nonetheless, it was a superb production, performed by a gifted troupe, and extremely faithful to the Master whilst being original and, in spots, quite hilarious. As indeed, such a droll comedy should be presented, so as to force the lips to wend their way upwards and merry sounds to sound forth in appreciation of that fair play.

Basically, the stage, costumes and scenery was simple and bare. Yet they didst do clothed it with the imagery of their wills so that that bare stage did become in turn; a market square in Ephesus, the home of Antipholus of Ephesus wherein didst dwell Adriana and her sister, the blond Luciana, the king's court, or filled with merry jugglers and a fair at the will of the players and your own imagination. It was indeed a rare and fair enjoyment.

The stage was bare, upon it a large stage, and a step higher another stage, and a smaller stage upon the very rear of this, so that the stage came to have four levels upon which the players might cavort and present themselves.

(14) But let me leave THE COMEDY OF ERRORS for a while. In fact, I've written up a run-down of the show and it immediately follows this editorial. I hope you will enjoy it, those of you who did see the show. And I hope that you who did not will get a wee portion of the flavor anyways.

DON'T SCRATCH MY BUMPER It's got a Bumper Sticker on it. Rob Firebaugh, a student at the U of Kentucky, has had a number of bumper stickers printed up. They're available for a limited time only, as he only had a hundred printed up in the first place. They are a bright phosphorescent orange printed on a very dark blue background. They read....

"Mrs. Peel - We're Needed"

His address is 361 Linden Walk, Lexington, Kentucky, 40508, USA. The going price is .30c plus .06¢ postage. .10¢ if you would like it mailed uncreased, and I'm sure you would. He sends them in a folded manila envelope and they arrive in beautiful condition.

As previously mentioned, he only has a hundred, so you had better hop to it.

Bill and Barbara Blackbeard also mention in the lettercolumn that yet another bumper sticker in use on the West Coast was around. They never did find an outlet, and so have none of their own. It read, a propos the William J. Burns Detective Agency stickers that are seen on many autos;

"THIS CAR PROTECTED BY MRS. EMMA PEEL".

If they can remember the size, color combination and placement of the words maybe another batch could be printed up here. We'll see.

STILL NO MACNEE POCKETBOOKS My English source of supply, Mr. Slater, is quite frankly hesitant about trying to obtain non-science fiction from an outfit like HODDER. For evidently HODDER is one of those outfits that just simply do not try very hard to fill individual merchant orders. There are quite a few publishers over there with similar attitudes, of course.

They print up a run, send out their pocketbooks to their distributors, period. When they get sufficient numbers of returned pocketbooks, they remainder them to a secondary outlet. This makes their bookkeeping very nice and tidy, but plays holy nob with anyone trying to order any batches of books direct from the publishers. The wholesalers couldn't be less interested in bothering with an individual retailers odd orders, either.

So, I'm ordering twenty each of DEADLINE and DEAD DUCK. With the hopes that maybe Ken Slater can pry an order out of those people. Try, try, try again.....

The Canadian source, an outfit specializing in British paraphernalia (mostly magazines and books), is having much the same problem, it seems. He got a few a while back in a large batch of odds and ends, so no trouble in initial supply. Ordering a few specific titles, however, brings up against the same problems that Ken Slater has. Only with a vengeance, since this dealer is overseas to boot. They just aren't too interested, so it will probably take some time.

It's an unfortunate aspect of the business of real bookselling that the dealer has to spend so much futile time and effort in order to attempt to stock his shelves with what he wants. Anyone can fill up a few revolving racks with whatever the wholesaler shovels at him. But it takes a different sort of selection to build up any sort of clientele and business.

At this point I might add that it is of course obvious that Mr. Peter Leslie (the "co-author") did the bulk of both novels. But it is equally obvious that Mr. MacNee gave a good deal more to the books than the use of his exceedingly good name.

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The very flavour, the taste if you will, the details of clothes, Bentley, wine, food, locale, repartee betwixt MacNee and Mrs. Emma Peel..... It all bespeaks the totality of the personality of John Steed as envisioned by Patrick MacNee. That Mr. Leslie could perform such a task on his own hook is very improbable.

MacNee is, of course, very familiar with the Buckinghamshire countryside, the Midlands, the Fens, and very much in love with them. And obviously as much in love with the elegance and character that John Steed demands of him as an actor, or he could not do him so well.

In short, Mr. Leslie, gifted writer that he is, was much more than a simple ghost writer this time.

HOW TIME DOES FLY DEPT. The Saturday before Christmas Eve, I received a hurried telephone call from one of the local Cinema club types. He very politely informed that I was missing something. Patrick MacNee in Dickens' "A CHRISTMAS CAROL". This particular version was the 1951 British effort. Alastair Sim played Scrooge and did what can only be termed a beautiful job of it. It takes a great deal of effort to breathe life into such a tired old chestnut as A CHRISTMAS CAROL. He was aided by a great deal of real cinematic craftsmanship and artistic direction.

Director - Bryan Desmond Hurst. Producer - the same. Studio was Renown, a British outfit, of course. American distributors were United Artists.

Comedian George Cole played a serious role as the young Scrooge. Alastair Sim was the old Scrooge.

Bob Cratchit - Mervin Johns. Fezziwig - Roddy Hughes. Tim Cratchit - Glyn Dearman. Fred, the nephew, Bryan Worth. Alice, the young Scrooge's true love, Rona Anderson. Old Marley was Michael Hordern.

Script was by Noel Langley and C. Pennington Richard. Film Editor was Clive Donner, Music by Richard Addinsell.

The young Marley? Would you believe Patrick MacNee? Would you also believe he had barely twenty words to say all told? A sad, sad, case indeed.

Basically, the story was presented with decision and real dramatic overtones, with little of the icky maudlin sentimentality so often associated with the story. At the end of the three visits, you were actually able to feel a little bit of the horror Scrooge felt. Simply because of the emphasis and skill in presenting the events and the ending of Scrooge through his death.

But the gem of the evening, of course, was the viewing of the younger Jacob Marley. Scrooge met Marley at Morgan's, where he went to work after leaving Fezziwig's employ. And there sat MacNee over a desk and account book, with his combed in Napoleonic style with the one curl over his forehead. A real early Victorian dandy, with vest and long-tailed over-jacket and lace front and gaitered shoes.

It wasn't at all difficult, however, to conceive of this bony-cheeked dandy becoming the charmingly jealous butler in "WHAT THE BUTLER SAW". Very interesting.

IT IS DEFINITE In fact, you'll have seen the first show before you see this magazine. For ABC has been running adverts, little cuts in between programs, announcing that THE AVENGERS are back. Jolly Good Show!

They put up that charming cut they used for the adverts for last year's revival. No doubt you've seen it and remember it.

In comes Mrs. Peel, "It'll be a crime if we don't find a body." In comes Steed in bowler and broggy, "It'll be a crime if we do!" Then that fantastic thing where she comes in attired in that very clinging leather suit, "Attacked...I defend myself!" After describing

16] how she deals with them, to the accompaniment of Steed enthusing along with her, he declares, "And so the secret of the double-barreled atomic soft-knitter is saved!" And she puts on one of the most comical expressions to say, "And the nation is secure!"

Up rises the Union Jack on the flagpole, to the tune of God Save The Queen.

They're sitting on a couch. Mrs. Peel says, "Now who ever heard of a body under a bareskin... Steed! There's a body under the bearskin rug!" He: "It's a woman's body." She: "But it's alive!" Steed gets up and says, "That's all right. I don't mind." And helps her to her feet. Cut.

THE AVENGERS are back. Cut.

It is a shame, really, that such a decent show is apparently foredoomed to extinction. Given a prime hour slot in the beginning, such as the 7:30 on a Wednesday evening that it is now getting, the ratings would probably always have been high enough to keep it on continuously. Opposite garbage like VIRGINIAN and LOST IN SPACE it will probably do better this year than it ever did. And Diana Rigg has now left the blinking show.

This is, of course, the real shame about television. That a decently produced, directed and especially scripted and acted production can get shot down in the ratings game through no fault of its own. Simply because it was opposite a Big, Big, Big Show. Or was scheduled for too late or too early in the evening. Or was scheduled for a day and evening like Friday and Saturday evenings. For any TV-connected person you know can tell you that those two evenings are Death On Wheels. For too many people are away then. Shopping. Visiting. Dining out. Going to movies. Partying it up. Doing almost anything, in fact, but watching the telly.

And who does most of this non-TV activity? The under-thirty or thirty-five set. And who have found the frantic antics of Mrs. Peel and John Steed the most appealing to them? Exactly the same age groups. Even Nielsen's people will tell you that.

Only something really able to attract by itself, or attract the older people (like GET SMART or THE LAWRENCE WELK SHOW) can really survive that sort of bleeding ulcer. And now it has been turned into a real Suicide Corner by the arrival of the Friday Night Movies. Something that can provide drawing power in the face of that sort of competition is rare indeed. But a weekday night? When everyone is sitting there, glued to the cyclops of the Living Room?

A propos of this, I have heard it on some authority that STAR TREK was purposely put in Suicide Corner. Simply because it was a marginal show...and the networks, therefore, could not charge the fantastic rates they can for a Top Ten or Twenty show. For the rates the network charges the advertiser goes up in direct proportion to how highly rated the show happens to be.

This naturally works untold hardships and disasters upon the weaker shows. Not that they need be less of a show. But simply to continue running them means the networks aren't making as much money as they think they could make. Sure. Drop the shaky ones, put in another super-doooper spectacular, use a tested and proved true idea or theme, and charge the advertiser quadruple or sextuple what he was paying for the weaker show. That is, if the new show does better in the ratings game.

Naturally this disregards a few things. Like, for instance, that someone is always in the bottom third of the ratings. To combat this self-evident fact, the networks keep trying to put all their shows in the top two-thirds, anyways. Next they will no doubt try to perfect a perpetual motion machine and an entropy-reverser, by God!

No one seems to have heard of the law of diminishing returns.

Also, that by using a tried and tested-true idea of theme they

are simply re-hashing old ideas and themes. Even the networks are now aware that by trying nothing new, the actual returns in audience participation and enjoyment are shockingly declining. By dressing these tired Heimatlandschnulze's, or tired corn in color and big name stars and lavish sets and productions, they are able to reverse the trend. For a while. But only for a while. Then even the spectacles pall, if there is nothing there for the audience to grab hold of. 17

Even more disastrous, however, is the fact that by putting the shows in color, and hiring prestige actors and actresses, and putting on the hog in production and filming, the production costs skyrocket. I do not mean they rise, I mean skyrocket. It isn't all inflation and higher wages for the technicians that is making production costs go up beyond the ceiling. It is more often this erroneous notion by dressing up last season's garbage in a bright tinsel-clad package, the garbage isn't garbage any more.

And man, does that tinsel cost!

Also, we are faced with the prospect of more and more shows being either entirely produced or at least partly financed by the networks themselves. After all, the more the costs rise, the more the networks (and the bigger studios) become the only people with the loot necessary to be able to finance the Big, Big, Big Tinsel productions of today. The more costs rise, the rarer becomes the note of innovation and risky gambling change. Everyone is obsessed with the notion that they can't afford to produce a dud. As surely as Busch makes Beer, however, everyone becoming afraid to do anything original and daring makes duds even more probable per number of new shows per season. To just repeat what has proven successful before means you won't always continue to be successful.

So we get Westerns, Westerns, Westerns. Series based on movies (and just how many times can you make the basic premises of a good movie as attractive as they were the first time?). Mutant offspring, begat many generations before from forgotten detective series, police series, and those ever popular Situation-Comedy Series. The average situation-comedy show these days has descended to the point where they are about as funny as thirty minutes of President Johnson Press Conference. As a matter of fact, some of Johnson's jokes at least are humorous enough to make you laugh.

Just play it safe. Don't think. Buy scripts and ideas from the clods who've written the scripts and ideas for every major show in the last eighteen years.

If it really stinks, just quadruple the production costs with expensive onlays like Stars and Colour. That way no one's supposed to notice they last saw the idea on Burke's Law or Dear Landlord.

And for that sort of money you better not bomb out. So you better play it safe and maybe put in a cuddly dog or something.

And for that sort of money the advertisers only very unwillingly pay for anything outside the top Ten or Twenty.

And the disparity between the top rated (and top priced) shows become even more stark to the network personnel.

And the networks become even more eager to produce sure winners and more eager to dump not only the bad shows but anything marginal as well, regardless of potential or quality.

And no one will gamble a thin dime on an Idea, or a Real Innovation of some sort.

And since something like THE AVENGERS isn't easily and quickly understood by the Mass Man out there, why, Drop It! Then we have the fantastic spectacle of the network being deluged by fan mail and bringing it back next season and dumping it and.....

Part of the trouble, of course, is that the ability to think while enjoying yourself is rapidly being trained and bred out of the Amer-

18) ican public. Or Mass Man, if you will. The humor is not blatant, it is rather subtle, and refers often to reference points not easily grasped. It is, after all, so much more comfortable to be able to just turn your mind off when you watch TV.

At least THE AVENGERS will be spared the ignoble and languishing death that so many series have previously been put to.

Though Wintle & Crew did hoke up THE AVENGERS a bit for the Yankee audience. Though the scripting did loosen up a bit, with some more easily understood sight and sound gags. (And all this is exceedingly unfortunate, in my estimation.) Still, the show stayed essentially what it had been before. THE AVENGERS. Accept no substitutes. Unique, styled only after itself, formularized and happily produced in a country where really top-flight writers and auxiliary staff and production could in all cost at most half what a similar American effort would. And only a nit-picker would say there was any language problem.

There are, however, worse fates than merely being sent into that limbo where dead TV shows go. There is what is happening to STAR TREK.

This aforementioned (and apparently also doomed) show has, in its latest season, succumbed in great degree to that most heinous of TV diseases. The Big Money talkers have decided to Hoke Things Up A Bit, to bring the level of the show down "a bit" in order To Appeal To A Larger Mass Of Audience. Ignoring a little bit of telly history, in the process. As far as I know, no series yet has been saved from the scrapheap by the application of large doses of bad taste. This does not apply, of course, to those designed and built with large doses of bad taste, like BEVERLY HILLBILLIES and GOMER PYLE.

Such a degrading of a show has merely served to offend and drive away those who had previously enjoyed the series. Without bringing in any new viewers. For after all, the taste and clientele of a show is very early established, and only rarely does a viewer try once more something he did not like previously. It'd be too much work.

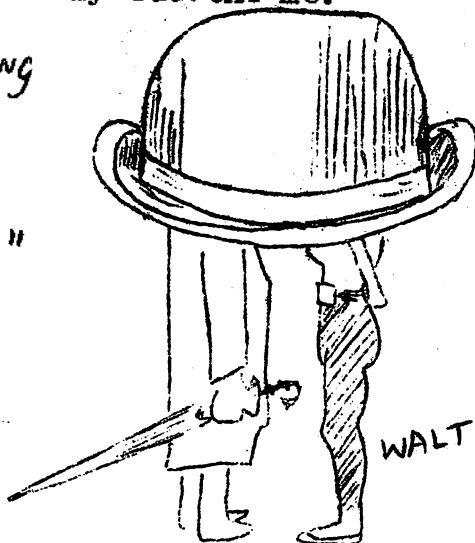
So, they lost their previous popularity without replacing their lost audience with a new one.

It was quite bad enough to watch STAR TREK sent to Suicide Corner, knowing it would be fighting the Friday Night Movies as well. But to perceive the insidious cancerous growth of sloppy thinking implicit in their present scripting, and the diseased sheen of maudlin directing is more than mortal soul can bear.

Most series have gone rapidly downhill, but rarely have I and the rest of science-fiction fandom had greater expectations for any other product seen on the goggle box. It is heart-rending, I believe, to see the death of anything in which so much hope and love has been placed. Even more terrible to see is its death in degradation.

And indeed, the thought of the demise of Mrs. Emma Peel and THE AVENGERS DEEPLY saddens me.

"INTERESTING
WEAPON
THEY
HAVE
THERE!"



But there is the cold scant comfort to be garnered from the fact that even in its probable death THE AVENGERS still stood on its own two feet. That, as the UNKNOWN magazine was to the science fiction enthusiasts, so there was never a bad show. Tho the quality might slip a mite, it never fell. It remained, as it had for so many years, the kind of entertainment achievement for which no one connected with it need feel ashamed.

How much more pitiful, then,

is the spectacle of rack and ruin of a show. To watch it in the process of slow disintegration, succumbing to the disease and dry rot of mediocrity. 19

Such is the story of STAR TREK. Whilst occasionally the stories still come up to par, delighting both the ear and eye and the mind as well, the level has definitely dropped. Not even such lovely stories as millions of tribbles in Clington warships can save it now.

SAVE THE ENTERPRISE Nevertheless, there is an effort being made, right now, to save STAR TREK. And considering the fact that the networks are working and firming up their Fall schedules right now, I think it is time we organized a campaign to save THE AVENGERS.

I kid you not. This is the time to start enthusing over what a marvelous show this is. Come July and August and they'll already have decided what to put where. Then it would be relatively easy for some executive to turn a deaf ear to any flood of fan mail and cancel the show out. Or rather, to leave it canceled out. Twice before already only history-making floods of fan mail complaining of the cancellation has made them bring it back in the Spring.

As mentioned previously, survival percentages for THE AVENGERS are not good, simply because of the change of female leads. This magazine will continue, of course, as a Diana Rigg and MacNee fanzine, but I'd like THE AVENGERS to roll along with me. It's such a gooodood show. It deserves to live.

Frankly, keeping a decent show on the air is practically a full time job. Unless you inform the networks otherwise, those people who make the decisions have to assume that Nielsen and his Mass Men image is correct. Now, when options are being picked up is the time to inform them that Nielsen and his Average Families don't include you, and you're a buying member of the American public too.

If you don't do anything, by God, you deserve Gomer Pyle and Bonanza and Peyton Place.

I might mention here that a few rules might help your letter do the most good. These rules come to me from Mrs. Bjo Trimble and were originally written for use with the STAR TREK effort. I think they're so a propos and useful, I'm reprinting them right now.

DO Be neat, write clearly and sign the letter. Reason: It does no good to send a sloppy letter that nobody can read, and anonymous mail is always thrown away.

DO write "fan mail" to the show, addressed to the network. But do not put the actor or actresses' name on the envelope. Reason: the network will open the mail first, this way, and see it before passing it on to the person in question, so it is one more way that you can let ABC know how well you enjoy THE AVENGERS.

DON'T Get smart, address a V.I.P. familiarly, use insulting language or tell the network their business. Reason: You are asking for a favor; the privilege of watching THE AVENGERS this fall. The wrong attitude can get your letter piled with the other crank mail.

DON'T Write THE AVENGERS on the outside of the envelope. Reason: The letters will be sent, unopened, directly to the show and will not be seen by NBC, to whom you are making your appeal.

DON'T Send form letters, mimeographed or multiple carbon copies, or copy the wording in this sheet or anyone else's letter. The letter need not be long, but it must be in your own words.

20 Reason: Anything approaching a form letter is very easily detected; even copying the wording of another letter will instantly give the impression that only a tiny segment of fans are doing all the writing. Your letter should be original in every respect.

DON'T Represent yourself as a group if you aren't. Reason: As with form letters, networks are geared to ferret out spurious claims, and trucks will not help at all.

DO Be sincere. If you don't buy a sponsor's product, just say something nice about their intelligence in sponsoring something like THE AVENGERS. These people can spot a "put on" even faster than you can. If you do buy the product, be sure to say so! I don't know yet who will be sponsoring THE AVENGERS but by the time you get this, you will probably have seen them. Reason: Sponsors seldom get anything but complaints, and a sincere letter can encourage them to continue sponsoring THE AVENGERS.

DO Circulate petitions amongst fellow workers, classmates, etc, with the appeal to save THE AVENGERS and keep the Wednesday time slot. Encourage anyone you can to write letters, as well. Reason: A group of signatures on a petition can impress ABC with the idea of how many people - some of whom will never write in otherwise - really want to save THE AVENGERS.

DO Suggest to ABC that they use the other Diana Rigg/Mrs. Emma Peel shows not only in their vaults but the others as well. Don't forget that there were two years of Rigg/Mrs. Peel Colour shows and we have seen only one half-season's worth, with maybe seven or eight more to be screened this Spring. Reason: If you think that Mrs. Emma Peel was one of the greatest characterizations to ever hit TV, as I do, you'll want and hope to see more of her.

DO Use your group or club stationary whenever you can legitimately do so, especially for a petition. Reason: Professional and community groups can carry a lot of weight, particularly when the letters are addressed to ABC. Networks and corporations are extremely sensitive to groups which could become "pressure groups" at some future time. This includes educators, student groups, pastors and priests, and almost any club.

DO Hand out this information to anyone who is interested in saving THE AVENGERS. Copy this for club members, people at work, etc. Reason: It will take the cooperation of everyone to reach any proportion of the great mass of unspoken AVENGERS fans. No one person or group can possibly even know of all the potential fans who might aid us in this little project.

DON'T Mention any connection with ABC, Warner Bros. (who is distributing the show in the US) or Wintle or anything or anyone like that even if you do know someone. Reason: Networks, justifiably, have suspicious minds. Mentioning any such connection will only nullify your letter, because they will immediately suspect that you have been talked into writing them by the show, instead of this being a fan campaign.

DO Write now. If you're short of time, or inconceivably lazy like myself, you need not make it long. Just sincere. Your letter, odd as it may sound, could tip the scale. Reason: The networks use an estimated figure of one fan letter for every 4,000 or 5,000 fans. Each one does count for something, believe me!

So, be very sure that all your letters are addressed to:

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ABC Television Network
1330 Avenue of the Americas
New York City 19, New York

Also, letters of much importance are those directed to your:

Local TV station carrying THE AVENGERS.
Local TV columnists in newspapers and publications
National TV columnists in metropolitan newspapers
and magazines
TV Guide.

And, of course, you might try writing a letter to all the sponsors that appear on the show. Usually the address found on the product will suffice.

Also, naturally, as a science fiction enthusiast, I heartily recommend that you try to do something of the same for STAR TREK. Despite my disappointment in its second Season, it remains for all intents and purposes the only game in town. Certainly it is one of the few places where anything resembling original drama is still occurring. Godhelpus, it certainly is a change from the usual pabulum with which we are treated these days.

The addresses for STAR TREK are:

Mr. Julian Goodman, Pres.
National Broadcasting Co.
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York City, New York 10026

Mr. Mort Werner	Mr. Herbert Schlosser	RCA
NBC Television	NBC-TV	30 Rockefeller Plaza
30 Rockefeller Plaza	3000 W. Alameda Blvd.	N.Y.C., N.Y.
N.Y.C., N.Y. 10026	Burbank, California	

RCA is mentioned because RCA happens to own NBC, n'est ce pas?

FROM TWO SOURCES. I discovered that Diana Rigg is at present working on a location movie. First came a clipping from the wilds of northern Alberta and John A. McCallum. It showed an action shot of fairest Diana and a sentence that she was starring in "THE ASSASSINATION BUREAU", under the heading that Diana Gets Her Gun. Period. Then Bill Brown from metropolitan N.Y.C. informed me that the picture was being produced by Paramount Pictures.

"She will play a crusader for women's rights in the world of journalism at the turn of the century. The film, based on a story by Jack London, is scheduled to start on locations in France, Italy and England." End of quote.

However, things are straightened somewhat at this address due to a number of factors. I work in a small Tool & Die Shop and am at present on a six-day 10-hour day. Not only that, but Detroit is in the midst of its tenth week of a newspaper strike. Therefore I am cut off not only from my usual sources of information, but I am furthermore cut off from the main Library downtown. It is only at that location that many out-of-town magazines and newspapers are available with any degree of reliability.

Please bear with me during this period of difficulty. This difficulty is not the fault of your receiver. It might be the fault of my new Associate Editor but then it might not.

It's probably the fall-out.

Yhos, M. Richard Schultz



EN

GLARIDE

by
Robert
Musei

from
TV GUIDE
JANUARY 21, 1967

BRITAIN'S DIANA RIGG IS AGAIN AFTER THE AMERICAN VIEWER

Diana Rigg is a tall, auburn-haired Yorkshire lass, perilously close to being beautiful, who is considered a character by her friends because she loses her keys several times a year and has to smash the window of her apartment with a milk bottle.

She is also one of the finest young Shakespearan actresses of our time. This combination of the kooky and the classic has produced a television personality of such potential that the British are already talking about her as a world star not only on the small screen but in films as well.

Miss Rigg co-stars with Patrick MacNee in THE AVENGERS, an all-British series about a secret agent, played so stylishly that it took local viewers a long time to realize they weren't watching the real thing but a skillful parody of the thriller formula.

When the word finally got around, the series, already a cult with the "in" crowd, became even more compulsive viewing for the rest of the nation, and its creators hope the same pattern will unfold in the United States, based on the reaction to the first batch shown last spring.

No one can be rooting for its success much harder than Prime Minister Harold Wilson, for in the midst of a desperate economic squeeze the series was sold to ABC-TV in the biggest dollar-earning TV deal ever - \$2 million for the first 26, rising to \$4.5 million if the options are taken up.

Only the Beatles surpass these figures in the British entertainment world and they were honored by Queen Elizabeth with membership in the British Empire Order. Can we look forward, then, to Dame Diana and Sir Patrick? Not quite. But while the Treasury is gloating over the hard currency, let us repair to Borehamwood Studios, where they are laying in champagne because our heroine, it is whispered, has to get slightly stoned to relax properly for still photography sessions.

Asked to give a one-word description of herself, Miss Rigg once said: "Tall." She insists she is only 5-feet-8½, so it must be an optical illusion that in sandals she stands almost eye to eye with MacNee, who is 6-feet-1. Whatever her height, there is hardly an inch that isn't exactly where it should be and a computer could hardly have programmed a more fetching face. The eyes are brown, the cheekbones high; freckles dust the clear skin which needs no makeup except for the camera and special occasions; and the teeth are strong, white and serviceable.

When this filming season started, Miss Rigg commuted between Stratford-upon-Avon, where she starred for the Royal Shakespearan Company as Viola in "Twelfth Night", and the TV studio where she played Mrs. Emma Peel, wealthy widow of a test pilot and MacNee's companion in his bizarre adventures. This dual activity called forth snob remarks like "from the sublime to the ridiculous," but Miss Rigg does not see it that way at all. "Television," she says, "taught me an economy of style I didn't have before. I feel it has done me nothing but good. When I meet directors now my attitude is different, I can be constructive instead of being simply an instrument of theirs." She was so constructive in her ideas for the role of Viola that they let her play it her own way at Stratford, an unusual tribute for which television can take part of the credit.

Miss Rigg was born in England, spent her childhood in India where her father was in the government service, and was sent back home for education. She studied at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and did a little modeling while at liberty.

She says she was an unorthodox model, apt to turn up on rainy days in gum boots and trousers and the other casual gear she prefers.

"All the other models, of course, turned up well groomed. They were advertising themselves. The stuff I wore bore no relation to the fact I was a model."

Aiming high, as she always has done, she asked for an audition at the prestigious Royal Shakespearan Theatre. She was accepted and spent five years as a regular member of the company, touring the United States and Russia in "Comedy of Errors" and "King Lear".

"I was the tallest Cordelia in the world," she says, adding: "Every time I think about how hard I'm working now, I think back to when I was 19 and waiting for the result of my audition at Stratford. I spent a lot of time in church those days because it was the only place I could find that was warm and dry."

When she left historic Stratford she was asked to audition, with a number of others, for THE AVENGERS, to replace its first woman star, Honor Blackman, who had quit to go into a James Bond film.

"It was touch and go whether I went to the audition," she said. "It didn't seem to be me, somehow. In the end, though, I went, and afterward I said to one of the producers: 'This is all a waste of time, isn't it?' The producer agreed with me."

In fact, they picked another girl, but after two episodes they ran Miss Rigg's test again, and her face and "animal quality", according to producer Julian Wintle, "stuck in our minds." The two segments were scrapped and Miss Rigg was signed for what had started out in 1961 as the quite legitimate search of a bereaved husband for the slayers of his wife.

That THE AVENGERS has evolved from the serious to the satirical is partly due to MacNee, who comes by his debonair attitude honestly as a cousin of David Niven, and his scene-stealing by heredity, as, his press agent insists, a descendant of Robin Hood. He refused to take the plots as holy writ, though his first co-star, a dedicated actor, did.

"I'd been playing villains in three-cornered hats in Hollywood," MacNee said, "and I thought John Steed ought to be played the same way. They said, 'Your performance is terrible. Do something about it!' So I went away and bought the fanciest clothes I could, and I've been going on that way ever since."

MacNee is dressed by Pierre Cardin as an Edwardian dandy in waisted jackets, curly-brimmed bowlers (derbys), always with a furled umbrella. THE AVENGERS is almost as remarkable for what it does NOT say as for what it does. No one knows exactly who Steed works for except that his cover is that of a dilettante man-about-town and purveyor of old-world courtesy. ("They like his courtesy in the U.S.," says Wintle.)

His relationship with Mrs. Peel is enigmatic. He never calls her Emma. She is always "Mrs. Peel,". He is always "Mr. Steed" or "Steed" to her. Since she is not a secret agent, her motivation for joining him on a case is presumed to be a love of adventure. They never kiss, but one episode showed them apparently using the same hotel room.

"They're not sleeping together," producer Wintle said.

"Emma Peel isn't fully emancipated," explained Miss Rigg. "Steed pats me from time to time like a good horse. My physical relations with him are, to put it mildly, ambiguous. They're certainly not active on the screen. They might have been in the past or then again they might be in the future."

Miss Rigg is still struggling with the contradictions of life at rural Stratford and in the white-hot fame of television. She can't bear intrusions on her privacy, hates premieres where she is being put on show.

"I simply don't understand the autograph syndrome," she remarked during an interview that shifted from set to dressing room and back again to the set. An autograph hunter who stopped her in London got a frosty: "I'm sorry but it's illegal to sign autographs in the street." Fan mail baffles her — one doesn't get much at Stratford.

Peter Brook of the Royal Shakespearan Company compares her to Jeanne Moreau. "She is like a medium soaking up a part so it speaks through her. She is what the French call a theater animal, one of those people born with the theater in their blood."

She likes night clubs and dinner parties but she is at the same time an intellectual who spends much time alone, reading, thinking, playing records.

She said she actually does chuck milk bottles through her apartment window.

"I don't pay much attention to details in my private life and keys are not very important," she said. "It's different with my professional life. My neighbor got tired of plastering in new panes of glass for me so he's devised a window with a hinge and laid in a supply of glass. Now when I forget my keys and have to break it, I'll be able to fix it myself."

Miss Rigg cuddled herself in a new baby lynx jacket, a present from her boy friend, and said her ambition, "generalizing on a vast scale," is to be free. "I want to be rich enough to do what I want. It's my eternal cry."

She is wise enough to realize no one ever is really ever all that free. One of the first things that happened when she began to make a respectable amount of money was that the income-tax people took an interest in her for the first time.

About that boy friend: She says she is happily in love but does not believe she will ever marry the man.

"I've always been chary of marriage," she said. "At 17 I dreamed of an early marriage and motherhood, but by the time I was 22 I did not identify with it any more."

She is 28.

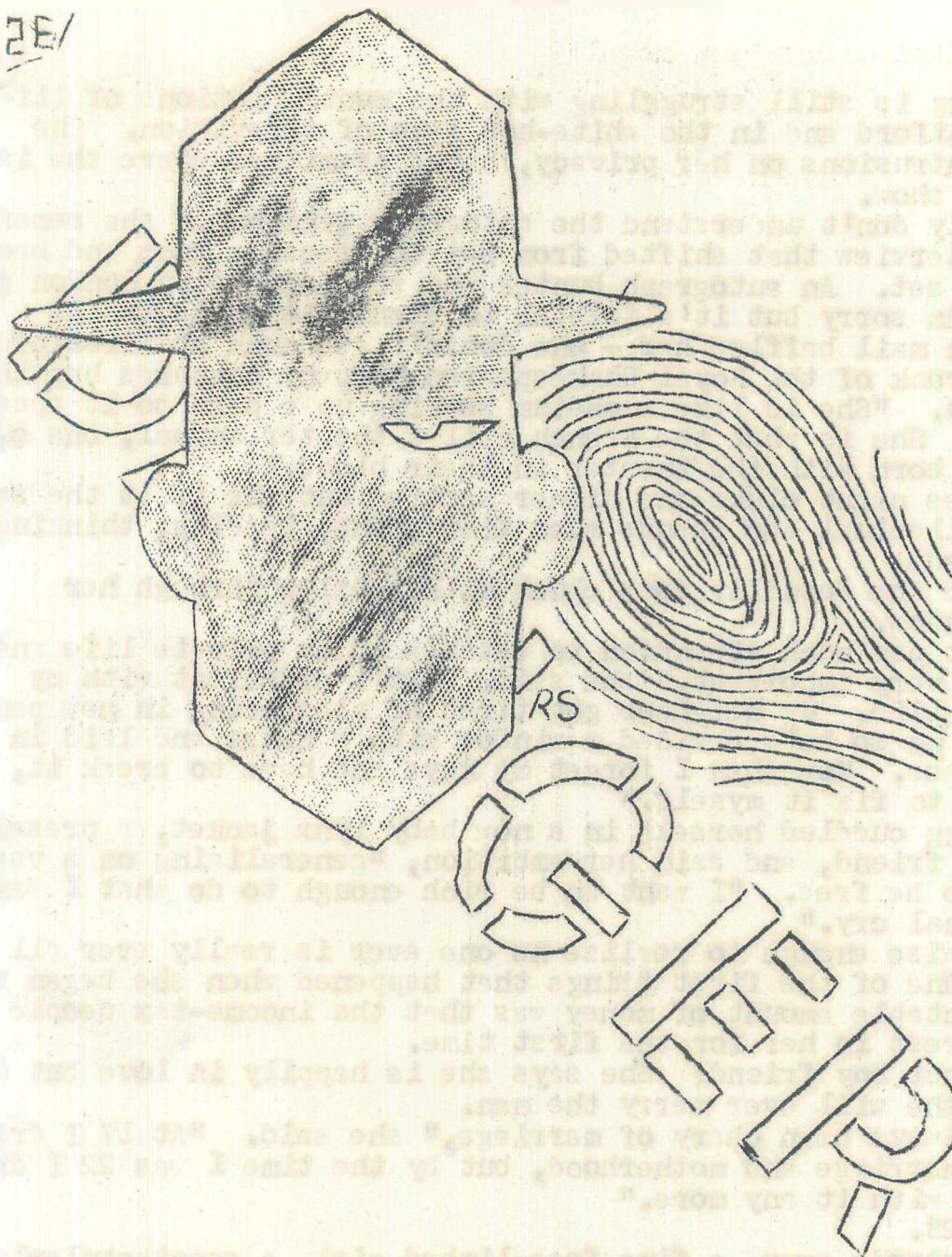
As she strode away, a fine free-limbed girl, a spectacularly attractive girl, I reminded her of the lines she had spoken in "Twelfth Night":

"Lady, you are the cruell'st she alive
If you will lead these graces to the grave
And leave the world no copy."

A joyous laugh came floating back:

"There is still time."

-Robert Musel-



JAMES BOND IS NO HERO TO HIM

by Robert Musel
from tv guide, may 14, 1966

When a seductive spy is trapped by a handsome pursuer, the rules of the television game give her a final chance for freedom by using as many wives as the networks will allow. In **SECRET AGENT**, however, the lady is apt to size up her captor, wisely decide to keep her wives to herself and let the incorruptible John Drake usher her toward the due processes of law.

For the incorruptible Patrick McGoochan, will not let his television character, John Drake, do anything he would not do himself. What good are wives against an actor who says: "Every real hero

since Jesus Christ has been moral"? 27

This may be news to James Bond's friends, but with McGoochan it is a solid truism. Some six years ago, when he was first offered the role of Drake, a special security agent vaguely involved in counterespionage, he was already looking with distaste on Bond and the other agents, red in tooth and claw, slithering through the boudoirs of the world.

He read the first scripts and suggested radical changes. The creators of the series were coldly polite. Did this actor want to do their show or didn't he? McGoochan then said he did, and so meekly that their suspicions should have been aroused in view of his previous record on stage and screen of fighting for his own conception of a role.

"It was a dirty trick," he says now, cheerfully. For what he had really decided to do was change the scripts during the actual shooting, when the desire to get on with the expensive job at all costs would be on his side.

So John Drake, conceived as rough, ruthless and romantic, was shaped by McGoochan into a man who carries no gun, covets no woman and courts no violence.

There was mild panic at first when it became obvious McGoochan had taken command of the ship and was steering in uncharted television waters. An American representative hurried over to England, where the series is made, to plead for more sex and sadism and at least some publicity photographs of the star entwined with glamorous girls. McGoochan told him there must be a market for a hero who is decent, and to go find it. Of course, he was right. SECRET AGENT not only sold everywhere else, it became one of the few British series to crack the prime-time American market - CBS carried it briefly in 1961 as DANGER MAN (its British title), telecast it again last summer, then brought it back for a third trial this winter.

Not many people know the real McGoochan and that's the way he likes it. One of his associates told me he had never been to his home and could think offhand of very few who had. "I believe," McGoochan says, "that a public performer has a right to a private life." He rarely sees journalists, usually limits the all-powerful British press to 15 minutes per interview. Yet, instead of tearing him apart, they like him. For this is no affectation born of success. He was that way before reviewers began hailing "a brawny hulk of Irish muscle" 11 years ago.

McGoochan (a suggestion that he change his name once brought the savage retort that it would be an insult to his father) is 38, taller than he looks - 6-feet-3 - and even better looking than he screens, with blue eyes under hooded lids, a crinkle of lines in the corners. It is a handsome face, indeed, but one that has obviously been lived in.

Since I probably set a new British record by interviewing McGoochan twice in a relatively short time, I am somewhat of an authority on the man. His secret is that he is basically very shy. The first time I left him, he didn't know what to do with his hands and he finally settled on tipping his cap to me. He is more assured now than he used to be, but he still sees no reason to bring his pretty wife or his three daughters into the publicity for the show.

McGoochan was born in New York of Irish farming parents who returned to the old country when he was in his infancy. The family moved on to England, when he was 10 and, although he won a scholarship, he quit school in his teens to go to work. He had a spell in a wire mill and as the young manager of a small sub-branch of a bank. Later McGoochan became a poultry farmer and he might still be counting his chickens except for an attack of bronchial asthma that put him on

his back for six months.

One day, after his recovery, he went into the Sheffield repertory theater on a whim and asked for a job. He was accepted as a "dogs boy" (stagehand of all work). But in the next four years they made an actor of him and he made a married man of himself by taking actress Joan Drummond to wife.

He hit London's Broadway - the West End - with considerable impact in 1955. "Finely drawn," said one critic of his role in his first play. "Could not have been more dramatic," was the judgment on his role in Orson Welles' stage version of "Moby Dick". "Magnificent!" was the tribute of the London Times for his interpretation of Ibsen's "Brand" in 1959 which won him nomination as the best stage actor of the year. That same year the Guild of Television Producers and Directors voted him best TV actor of the year.

Since no one gets rich on the British stage and because he had a family to support and few movie offers, McGoochan was ready to listen when he was pitched SECRET AGENT.

Nevertheless he decided he would play television his way or not at all. "When I first started the series, they wanted me to carry a gun and have an affair with a different girl in each episode. I wasn't going to do that. I simply will not appear in anything offensive. I won't accept bad language or eroticism.

"But this doesn't mean I'm against romance. Romance is the finest form of entertainment. Westerns are romance. It's something you create in the mind of the viewer. What I object to is promiscuous sex which is anti-romance. Television is watched by so many people, children and grand-mothers amongst them, that it has a moral obligation to its audience."

After filming of the first 39 half hours ended in 1961, McGoochan went back to films ("I've yet to make a really good feature film") and television plays. And then it was decided to turn DANGER MAN into an hour-long series and, after four years, McGoochan was back as Drake.

McGoochan is a demanding artist, but he is generally liked by his crew because they recognize him as a professional who could, if he had to, light a set or edit a film or even design a production. Home movies are his hobby and he is using them to train his daughter, Catherine, 13, who wants to be a director.

Travel is another of his hobbies - always with his wife. He rarely visits the bright lights of London. He prefers to drink, mainly beer, at an ordinary pub. One reason may be the tradition no one is bothered in a pub.

There was a stampede when the word first reach the secretaries that McGoochan had come to film at Shepperton. His effect on women is remarkable. I had to meet some friends at the studio bar and McGoochan guided me there. The biggest stars have played at Shepperton, but you wouldn't have believed it from the stir his arrival caused. Pretty heads spun his way. Red lips smiled in his direction. McGoochan, the family man, paid them no attention.



NEWS
AND
NOTES

This is, of course, a continuation of last issue's grouping of miscellaneous articles, reprints and oddities under one roof. This issue is very much editorial and reprints and lettercolumn, but more and more original material is at least being promised.

We have hopes.

A LANKY, LONG-HAIRED LASS IS LEAVING MISS PEEL BEHIND The misspelling isn't mine, it belongs to the San Francisco Examiner and Chronicle. The article it headed came from the "DATEBOOK", a supplement for entertainment and happenings about the Bay Area.

The article appeared on December 24, 1967, a Sunday...and Christmas Eve, natch. Author is Maris Ross.

"DIANA RIGG- you probably know her better as "Emma Peel" - does not want to be a star.

She does not want the star treatment either. Limousines and luxuries - Hollywood can keep them. She likes the way the Royal Shakespearean Company handled her and its other big names when it recently produced its first film, "A Midsummer Night's Dream".

"There was a great deal of discomfort," she said, savoring the heresy. "Nobody had stand-ins. We did our own standing-in. Generally we even did our own make-up!"

Miss Rigg said she and co-star David Warner were too interested in the film to worry about incidentals. This lanky long-haired lass of 29 created the role of Emma Peel in the offbeat television espionage series, THE AVENGERS, returning to ABC in January. Now she has branched into feature movies, but says she objects to the use the Movie industry makes of its box office talents.

"Basically they give you what they consider the star treatment and at the same time exclude you from the very important part of filming - the talking, discussing and working out things with the director, almost on improvization level," said Miss Rigg.

"I don't want to be excluded."

"More often they treat you with the deep suspicion that you're going to turn difficult. If people do turn difficult, they generally do because they are misunderstood, not treated as a human being.

Also, a great deal of money is wasted, and where there is a great deal of money there is a great deal of panic.

This is what I detest, the basic insecurity of these people who don't have their own standards, their own attitudes. Everything is based on the person directly above them."

Miss Rigg, as intelligent as she is beautiful, was one of the brightest lights on the Shakespearean stage when she defected to THE AVENGERS television series.

At the height of her success as "Mrs. Peel," she quit the television screen this year (she will appear in the first eight episodes) to return to the Royal Shakespearean Company for her first movie.

"For me it represented everything a film should be, working with actors and actresses whom I admired and respected," she said.

Next on her diary, starting January 15, is a movie called "ASSASSINATION BUREAU", which she chose "because it is the best film script I have read for a long time.

Basically it is the turn of the century when all those archdukes and kings were being assassinated and I, as a journalist, attempt to uncover the assassination bureau with some astonishing results. The point is, it's at a time when there were no female journalists so she is a militant feminist."

Miss Rigg finds nothing unusual in the mixture of classic Shakespearean actress, swinging spy and militant feminist.

"I am an actress and should be able to embrace every single medium and style and text," she said. 31

Miss Rigg enjoys the recognition of her work but dislikes to be pursued for her autograph. She enjoys a gay time out at a smart Hotel or club but refuses to talk about her private life.

"It is probably easier to categorize one as married, just about to be or having been," said Miss Rigg. "But I won't subscribe to categorization."

- * -

As I said before, in the last issue, she goes her own way and people who try to force her into other paths wind up with teeth marks.

AT LEAST I HAVE A FEW PHOTOS A local cinema buff in the Detroit area, one Dennis Kawicki, one day informed me that Patrick MacNee had been on the air earlier in 1967. To prove it, he showed me some photos he took off the television. (He does this often. He uses a 1.2 Japanese camera and fast film and has extraordinary luck. A real cinema buff, as I said.) Though I didn't see the show, here is the TB Guide listing for the show. (Yes, I noticed I used TB instead of TV but all things considered I'd say that this season is pretty consumptive and pallid, so the error stands.)

Channel 13-NET PLAYHOUSE

"The Importance of Being Earnest, by Oscar Wilde. Ernest Worthing is a London gent whose marriage plans are in danger: His friend Algernon has discovered the secret of Worthing's masquerade life. Filmed on location at an Elizabethan manor in Staffordshire, England. Produced by ABC Television of Britain. (90 min.)

CAST

Jack (Ernest) Worthing...Ian Carmichael
Algernon Moncrief.....Patrick MacNee
Cecily Cardew.....Susannah York
Gwendolen Fairfax.....Fenella Fielding
Lady Bracknell.....Pamela Brown

Patrick MacNee plays secret agent Steed in "The Avengers" series.

As I said, at least I have a few photos. Grouch, grouch, grouch.

GOOD WORK IF YOU CAN READ IT The following is reprinted intacto from a listing of German TV. It is a listing from BRAVO magazin, for Dienstag, 8 August, or Tuesday if you will. Time is 9:15 P.M. The show?

"MIT SCHIRM, CHARME UND MELONE

"Geschlossene Räume" mist Patrick MacNee, Diana Rigg us Der Wissenschaftler John Wadkin murmelt unentwegt die Zahl "621". Wadkin, der aushrere Jahre verschwunder. Entföhrt. Und er verschwindet wieder. Nach ihm kommt ein anderer Experte und die Reische, Aucher wird gekitchappel. Sein letzter Aulenthallsort: ein Hotelzimmer mit der mehr ale mysteriözen Nummer 621."

Anyone out there do good translation work? Meine Deutsche is lousy.

Now you wonder, why should I be interested in a translation of something written in German? Correction, it isn't one something, it's three something. Three articles on Diana Rigg, written in German, and published in the aforementioned BRAVO magazin. Superb is the only way I can describe them.

But they need a master's touch to bloom into life, of course. I'll pay for the translations, or give to some charity the translations (are you listening, Thomas Schluck?), or bless you in my thoughts if you don't want payment.

Just remember: "Diana Rigg: Ich hasse schöne Männer," im Bravo.

Naturally, "Mit Schirm, Charme und Melone" is Our Favorite Show. "With Umbrella, Charm und Bowler Hat", what else could it be?

CLEVELAND AMORY IS STILL A GOOD MAN As mentioned last issue, I had hopes of obtaining a copy of the original Cleveland Amory review of THE AVENGERS black-and-white series for TV Guide. It appeared in the Guide, May 14, 1966, in Volume 14, #20. Here it is, quips and all.

THE AVENGERS

This one, which is England's top-rated spy show, is so British you don't have to be British to understand it - but it helps. Not that you shouldn't have a go at it - dash it all, old boy, you should. Rather. Jolly good, really, once you get the hang of it. A bit of a spoof, you might say., but it'll give you a turn, too, don't you know? But all stiff upper, of course, don't you....

You don't? Oh. Well, it's the story of two agents - John Steed (Patrick MacNee), who is billed as "a top professional," and Emma Peel (Diana Rigg), who is billed as "a talented amateur." Mr. Steed wears a bowler with which he can knock you flat, and always carries brolly which doubles as a billy. (You don't know what a brolly is? What are you, an American or something?) Miss Rigg, on the other hand, plays the part, it says here, "of an internationally educated daughter of a wealthy shipowner and youthful widow of a famous test pilot" - you know the type - and she, it also says, "represents the swinging girl of today and the forward-looking woman of tomorrow." Got it? Pretty good, what? Well, make no mistake about it, she is both pretty and good. Furthermore, she not only dresses to the nines and changes her clothes at least that many times a show, but she also knows judo, karate and the score.

Together Mr. Steed and Mrs. Peel - who never call each other anything but that - are a pair. At one point Mr. Steed comes bursting in to tell Mrs. Peel that he has been murderously attacked by a savage. "Fortunately," he says, "he overlooked my cucumber sandwiches." "Oh," says Mrs. Peel, taking one, "good." Such scenes stick to your ribs, they do.

Each of the episodes we've seen has involved not only individual satires of the old days (the Tycoon, the Army Colonel, etc.), but also general satires of modern life. "Rush, tear, grab and grub, that's life today," growls the machine-hating tycoon as he plans The Bomb - a machine to end all machines. And if this episode was something of a bomb, too - well, you can't have everything.

In another episode, which included a dotty colonel in a simulated jungle in the middle of England - who honestly did say, incidentally, "By Jove, the natives are restless tonight" - a group of dispossessed rubber-plantation owners plan to recoup their lost colony by giving sleeping sickness to the local population. They plan to do this via, they say, "1000 tsetse flies".

(33)

These, they claim, will make the persons bitten **not only** "Sleep the sleep of the living death," but also make them "eventually rise and walk the dark forests of hell for all eternity".

That one was too close for comfort. By Jove, for a moment there we thought those plantation owners said 1000 teevee flies.

ON THE SCENE As a matter of fact, that's where this next item first appeared. **PLAYBOY** magazin has these short snippets of people and **occassionally**, places and things, which are very definitely part of the **contemporary** scene. Movie stars, industrialists, black militants, white militants, inventors, publicists, artists, you name it.

This sort of column eventually, of course, had to feature Our Favorite Show, and they did so. It appeared in the March 1967 issue of **PLAYBOY**, page 143.

THE AVENGERS jolly good show

It has taken American six years to discover **THE AVENGERS**. Since 1961, the show's **Mod** mayhem has delighted a sophisticated British audience with its hip and slightly far-out antics; but after importing the **cloak-and-robber** series for an abbreviated run last summer, **ABC** shelved it to unveil its new fall schedule. Now, with the anemia of that schedule firmly demonstrated, **THE AVENGERS** has made a deserved return (in living color), because it is one of the small handful of consistently inventive, offbeat and thoroughly entertaining programs on television. **THE AVENGERS** themselves are a rather insouciant duo who have a quite undefined but binding mandate to protect the Empire in times of dire peril. They are sly, indomitable and eccentric - and the show is done with an audacious flair and flippancy that make the **U.N.C.L.E.** crowd look like a bunch of dull coppers. Patrick MacNee as John Steed is a dapper, derbied courtier - beddy British - with no visible means of support and a slight propensity for stumbling at crucial moments. But the star is definitely Diana Rigg, who, as the widowed "Mrs. Emma Peel" (her husband was a test pilot), exudes more sheer sexuality than American TV has previously handled. (She has made British viewers all but forget the show's first female lead, Honor "Pussy Galore" Blackman, who defected to play with the bad guys until James Bond straightened her out in **GOLDFINGER**.) "Mrs. Peel" is an erotic stylization, rather than a character, in pants suits, miniskirts and an incredibly kinky wardrobe. Her other great attribute is that she is one of the neatest brawlers anywhere: She karate-chops villains by the roomful, barely mussing her leather fighting suit. There are no holds barred for Miss Rigg or for the show's uproarious style. It's all high-wire melodrama, good-humoured fetishism and flamboyant self-mockery. We hopefully expect it to be with us for a long while."

As was obvious, it wasn't. Dammit.

TOTALLY ILLOGICAL As some of you may not know, there are a number of **STAR TREK**-Leonard Nimoy/Mr. Spock fan clubs and groups. Naturally, as a science-fiction fan, I warmly support the show. As a bug on oddities and **SIGs**(Special Interest Groups), it interests me greatly.

Quite frankly, the **STAR TREK**-Nimoy/Spock fanzines are fantastic. They are literate, interesting, comptently edited and almost unfailingly pleasing. I'm Astounded.

Briefly, therefore, here are a few zine addresses and notes on them from Yho Hmble & Obt Srvnt To Cmmnd, Ye Editor.

34/ PLAK-TOW: bi-weekly from:
Shirley Meech
Apt. B-8, West Knoll Apts.
260 Elkton Road
Newark, Delaware, 19711
10 issues ~~for~~ \$1.00.

You've got to try this one. It has just about every living thing going concerned about STAR TREK and the crew. This includes a bibliography of current and just past articles, TV and film appearances of any and all STAR TREK crew members. Also all news on same, new local clubs....and of particular importance, a up-to-date listing of all publications available to the public.

They are very worried about STAR TREK cancellation rumours, with good cause. NBC moved STAR TREK to Friday night, a bad night for TV shows. And it's opposite The Friday Night Movies, and it's top-rated movies. Ratings are down and only the, literally, outraged screams of its fans are going to keep it going this time. Letters can do it, it's done it for other shows.

Frankly, though the quality slipped a bit this year-season, I can think of one other show I'd rather see more. As far as science-fiction goes, it is the only show/game in town.

(Nasty rumours We Hope Are True Dept./What's this I hear that with the advent of THE AVENGERS opposite LOST IN SPACE, that particular bundle of crud took a phenomenal nose-dive in the Nielsen's? I can think of fewer things more designed to bring a smile to my face than information that this rumour is accurate.)

SPOCKANALIA: yearly from:
Devra Langsam and Sherna Comerford
83 Lincoln Avenue
Newark, New Jersey 07104
.50c per issue

This one is good. I mean this in a truly literal sense. The articles, and there are many of them, are built around one basic premise. That the Universe in which STAR TREK exists is a real one, and that therefore there has to be a reasonable explanation for everything that occurs in the show. Including Spock's green blood, two hearts, half-human and half-Vulcan genetic background, racial tendency towards unemotional illogicality, distances possible by warp drive, the whole ball of wax.

If you care for competent, literate, intelligent articles very strongly differing from that curd you get in REDBOOK and LIFE all the time, this is for you.

DR. MCCOY'S SICK BAY: irregular from:
Barbi Marczak
5906 Cecil Avenue
Detroit, Michigan 48210
\$1.00 plus two .6¢ stamps, membership
dues in the DeForest Kelley fan group.

Strictly for those who feel the (also) previously unknown Kelley is a real swinging actor, as well as Nimoy and Shattner. All others need not apply.

LEONARD NIMOY NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FANS: quarterly from:
Peggye Vickers
122 West Carolynne Drive
Garland, Texas 75040
\$2.00 plus four .6¢ stamps, membership
dues in the Nimoy fan group.

36) Patrick MacNee is appropriately dapper, suave and urbane as a free-lance opponent to evil, in this case a demented villain who used a laser beam to knock off the wealthy members of an astronomical society in order to get their loot. Miss Rigg was charming as his derring-do associate. Part of the phantasy air about the show is the lack of examination of the pair's relationship other than a mutual devotion to tracking down evildoers. It's also apparently the writer's choice never to make clear just who the duo work for other than some sort of British "Establishment".

The producers have also taken a page from what English film directors discovered decades ago -- that Old Blighty is apparently populated by a limitless number of expert bit and character actors. As a result, the dozen or so minor roles were handled shrewdly and gave a considerable added dimension to the show.

- * -

THE AVENGERS

(Return of the Cybernauts)

With Patrick MacNee, Diana Rigg, Peter Cushing, Frederick Jaeger, Charles Tingwell, Fulton Mackay, others

Exec Producer: Julian Wintle

Producers: Albert Fennel, Brian Clemens

Director: Robert Day

Writer: Philip Levene

60 Mins., Thurs., 9 p.m.

ABC-TV, from Manchester, England

As its last whirl for the current ((Editor's note: written end of October)) "Avengers" team of MacNee and Rigg (Miss Rigg's replacement is now being hunted), this new set of filmed hours resumed its place in the schedules with the added interest of whether the formula can survive the girl-change. There seems to be no reason to doubt it, for the relationship between Steed and Emma is deliberately unemotional and flippant and hangs entirely on the blend of cool traits, rather than any attachment of the heart.

This segment, in fact, was more concerned with plot than their own intrepid defeating of the villains, and the pair were somewhat diminished by being fooled part of the time and not having much chance to show their mental or gymnastic superiority. And that was an error, for the couple should have the heedless daring of a cartoon team.

The plot latched on to an idea from a previous series, and Philip Levene developed it with dash. The cybernauts, computerized robots, trained to take over the world, were now being used against Steed and Emma in revenge for their having destroyed the earlier mad master. They were now under control of Paul Beresford (Peter Cushing), and had kidnapped three scientists who were collaborating to produce a device that would turn any human being into a robot. So Beresford, who had chummed up with The Avengers on the social level, managed to get Emma to wear a watch that immediately turned her into a zombie. The affair came to a predictable end, and the sci-fi improbability of the plot was maintained with the familiar sense of tongue-in-cheek.

The segment was given above-average direction by Robert Day, and the production values were as slick as ever. So long as the dapper and faultless Patrick MacNee and Diana Rigg grab more of the lime-light in the future, the skien should maintain its verve and its ratings.

35

Again typical fan stuff like photos, interviews, meetings with The Great Man, that sort of thing. Hard core Nimoy/Spock material which oddly enough isn't bad written. Certainly the level of writing and direction is about twenty years older than the usual Movie Star professional magazine abomination.

All of them are concerned, of course, with two things right now. Watching their favourite show and trying to save it. A methodology I might emulate immediately.

SCIENTIFICTION SALES If you are a science-fiction reader who might like to expand your reading beyond the recent stuff available in the local drugstore or used-book store, you might send off a card or letter to:

Howard DeVore
4705 Weddel
Dearborn Heights, Michigan

He has for sale at prices quite reasonable (taking into consideration the total unreasonability of prices on everything these days) prices, books and magazines you've probably only heard about before, but never seen. ERBurroughs, EESmith, pulp ASTOUNDINGs, AMAZINGs from 1926, WEIRD TALES, English hardcover books and magazines, pocket-books from pre-WWII on, digest-sized magazines, lots and lots of goodies for the reader.

Send him a stamp and your address and he'll send along a price-list. You name it and he has it.

VARIETY IS A NEWSPAPER It is also what THE AVENGERS has, as well as style, audaciousness, kinkiness and Diana Rigg. At least until March. But the journal for entertainment known as VARIETY also reviews a great many things. Broadway and off-Broadway shows, movies, actors and actresses, productions imminent and rumoured....and TV shows. What it has to say about most TV shows are not repeatable to sensitive non-showbiz ears like yours, but they have generally nice things to say about THE AVENGERS. The following are a few of them.

THE AVENGERS

With Patrick MacNee, Diana Rigg, others.
Producers: Albert Fennell, Brian Clemens.
Director: Robert Day.
Writer: Philip Levene
60 mins., Fri., 10 p.m.
PARTICIPATING
ABC-TV (Color)

In THE AVENGERS, ABC has found a worthy successor to "Twelve O'Clock High", which it replaces in the tailend spot of prime time on Fridays. Brought in near the end of last season to replace the faltering "Ben Casey", the British-made (ABC-TV Ltd., London) show built a respectable following when it was continued through the summer. It should certainly do no worse against the CBS feature films than the diminishing "High" and could make inroads with the adult audience against NBC's "Laredo".

THE AVENGERS is an adult show in the best sense of the word, requiring as it does a moderate amount of intelligence to follow a fairly complex plot line and some reasonably sophisticated dialog. It avoids the spy-fi spoof trap of mashed-mouth sexiness (although Diana Rigg is attractive enough in a form-fitting jump suit), but is a little un-Britishly dependent upon violence as a solution to its plot problems.

THE AVENGERS ((dated January 17, 1968))

37

(Mission: Highly Improbable)

With Patrick MacNee, Diana Rigg, others

Producers: Albert Fennell, Brian Clemens

Director: Bob Day

Writer: Philip Levene

60 mins., Weds., 7:30 p.m.

PARTICIPATING:

ABC-TV

"The Avengers" returned to ABC-TV and a new time slot in fine fettle with a show that was superior by dint of the usual craftsmanship associated with the series plus some well conceived and well executed special effects. The title for this segment, "Mission: Highly Improbable", had more than a little significance since "Avengers" appears to be getting addicted to the sort of artful gimmickry that has become the trademark of CBS's "Mission Impossible".

The move from 10 p.m. on Friday nights to 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday presents some demographic hurdles that the series will have to overcome. The Friday night slot was ideal for the series, making available an audience of both young and old. This new earlier slot is kid time at the set, and this rather sophisticated show may well have tough going against the fare on the other two webs.

The opener had about it the sort of production and thespic gloss that has marked the series from the beginning, and was considerably abetted by a tightly-knit script. The premise was not exactly new, having to do with a device that miniaturizes people and things that gets into evil hands.

Patrick MacNee continues as excellent in his roguish portrayal of the urbane and elegant John Steed, spicing the role nicely with a light dose of camp. Diana Rigg, who exits the series later in the season, is a delightful foil. The show is also enhanced by peerless performances by a batch of British character actors in supporting roles.

- * -

AVENGERS KEY FACTOR AS BRIT TV UP EUROPEAN SALES TO \$750,000

London, January 16, '68

Spearheaded by the success of "The Avengers", comedy-thriller vidseries, the British ABC-TV European sales have expanded by 150% over the year and are currently running in excess of \$750,000.

While it is recognized that these figures pale by comparison with the kind of money which companies can collect by selling products to America, Norman Salter, general sales manager of Associated British-Pathe', distributors of ABC programs, believes that this is an achievement, bearing in mind current prices in the European market, and provides the company with a firm foothold in an expanding territory.

Currently showing in color in Germany and Holland, with French screening due to start in a few months, "The Avengers" has just been set for its first Eastern European airing with the sale of 13 shows to Polish TV. Segments have also been dubbed for transmission in Italy and Spain and subtitled for Portugal.

Company's Europusn has also brought in sales for "The Bruce Forsyth Show", the arts program "Tempo" and the "Armchair Theatre" series. In the pipeline for overseas sales are "Struggle For Peace", a 13-part series on the balance of world power, coproduced with NET, which aired in the U.S.

Canadian and Commonwealth webs have also taken the series. Also on the block from ABC are a set of supernatural tales entitled "Mystery and Imagination".

Additions to the European portfolio will include "Riptide", a 26-part one-hour adventure series currently in production in Australia; "World of Crime", a 13-part half-hour series produced in Britain and America, and 39 episodes of "Arthur", a color cartoon devoted to the exploits of King Arthur and the Square Knights of The Round Table.

"The Avengers", which has just started its third run in America on ABC, has brought in about \$5,000,000 from the States. One of Britain's most successful TV exports, it has been bought by more than 70 countries and has been dubbed into Japanese and Chinese Cantonese.

- * -

BARD'S LORD

((about October, 1967))

Now that the film version of "Marat/Sade" is set for public inspection on Wednesday, Lord Michael Birkett, the producer, here with director Peter Brook to promote their work, also was ready to divulge details on more than one picture project involving himself and "Marat/Sade"'s Royal Shakespearan Company players. The 37-year-old Baron, who, with 13 years of varied film experience, is decidedly as close to studios as he is to the House of Lords, pointed out that there are three classics set for the cameras. The Shakespearan troupe, with Lord Birkett producing, in association with the American Filmways Company, will make, in succession, "A Midsummer Night's Dream", "Macbeth", and "King Lear".

"We'll do 'Dream' this autumn entirely on location at a manor house near Stratford with Peter Hall directing and with David Warner, who's remembered for his fine job in 'Morgan' as Demetrius, and Diana Rigg, as Helena. You know her here as that shapely creature with leather pants in "The Avengers" TV series, but she, like David Warner, is a fine Shakespearan trouser," Lord Birkett said.

"Macbeth", he said, "starring Paul Scofield with Peter Hall directing, will be done in the spring of next year." He went on, "Scofield and the Shakespearan Company will stage it first and then, probably next summer, we'll do 'Lear' with Scofield as 'Lear' and with Peter Brook directing."

Lord Birkett hastened to explain that "while this may sound simple, we are fortunate in having the advantage of a permanent ensemble that is completely rehearsed, which enables us to do plays and films on remarkably reasonable budgets and short filming schedules. Like 'Marat/Sade', which was made in 17 days for something less than \$500,000, we are reasonably certain that these three films can be done - not as filmed plays - but as films - in the shortest time and at what the trade has been calling 'the right price'."

Would Lord Birkett continue to cleave to the classics? "Of course not," he declared flatly. "I did produce the movie of Pinter's "The Caretaker", you may recall. And, I'm hoping to produce a feature with Peter Sellers. I can't speak about it now but I can assure you that it isn't anything Shakespearan".

- * -

I might add here that CBS, which is going to show "Dream" as a special, has yet to schedule it. Therefore, it shall probably not be aired before May at least, probably September. Then it will go to the movie-houses.

AT LEAST WE KNOW WHO ONE OF THE HEAVY'S WILL BE Late news in from ¹³⁹
Our New Co-Editor,
Gary Crowds is very helpful. "The Independent Film Journal" notes
that:

"Diana Rigg, of "The Avengers" video fame, will have a starring role in Paramount's "The Assassination Bureau", joining the already announced Oliver Reed, Telly Savalas and Lisa Gastoni."

I'm sure most of you are familiar with Telly Savalas. One of his latest roles was in THE DIRTY DOZEN, where he played the bible-quoting psychopath who didn't like live women. He has been cast so very often as a Heavy, or villain, of some sort that he has managed to develop a series of techniques of his own to put across the image of abominable blighter-ness in dozens of shades ranging from weak--and--despicable to the zenith where the audience foams at the mouth in absolute rage. Like I said, he's a master at it.

I'm sure he will display his full craftsmanship and make our skins crawl when we see him paw the lovely Diana Rigg. I'm sure he will paw her in the movie. With talent like that, you don't caress or touch, the merest contact becomes a study in licentious grabbing.

Actually, I do honestly think he will probably be one of the Heavy's in the flick, and considering his past work, will prove a truly splendid counterpoint to Miss Rigg.

HO HO HO AND A COVEY OF CONVENTIONS The time for Science-Fiction conventions is back with us again. Those of you who are sci-fi fans need no urging. Those of you who are science fiction readers or enthusiasts, might find it interesting to drop by one, if they happen to be in the area. Not only are hard-core science fictionists,...and authors and professional magazine editors....present, but also Conan fans, Tolkien group meetings, ERBurroughs Bibliophiles, cinema/sf variety that is/ bugs and even comic book collectors regularly show up at the things these days.

No one particularly worries about whether you're a hard-core sci-fi fan, though you're liable to get sort of lost at times if you don't know what the speaker is referring to.

Generally speaking, I enjoy them very much. Not only do you get a chance to talk over recent (and ancient) developments in sci-fi and writing in general, but, at least here, many old friends are present who I hardly ever get to see at any other time.

A newcomer might feel lost and out of things, but that'd just be because he is a newcomer amongst a group where everyone practically knows everyone else. And because he just simply wouldn't be hep, wise, knowledgeable regarding the stories, the personalities, and particularly the forty-year old history of sci-fi fandom itself.

Try dropping in if you're able to do so. You might like it.

ESFA Open Meeting:

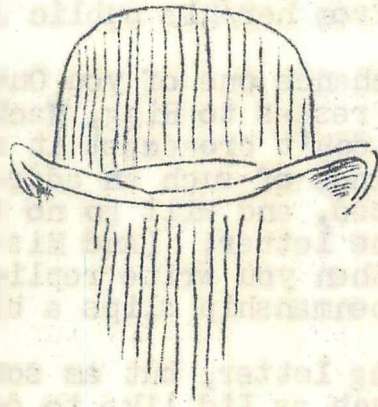
March 3rd, 1968. At the YM-YWCA, 600 Broad Street, Newark, New Jersey. For information, Allan Howard, 157 Grafton Avenue, Newark, N.J., 07104. Membership \$1.25.

SFWA Awards Dinner: If you're not already a published author, forget it. SFWA means Science Fiction Writers of America (even if they have quite a few English members these days), and the banquet is for members of the clique only, which is only right. This is the pro's judging the pro's and they can be both merciless and magnificent.

When they praise, therefore, the praise means something. It is, in fact, a judgment by a jury of the writer's peers.

- BOSKONE-5:** Athe Statler-Hilton Hotel, Boston, March 23-24th. For information, Paul Galvin, 219 Harvard Street, Cambridge, Mass., 02139. Guest of Honor: Larry Niven. They will present the "Skylark" award during the banquet. A Meeting of the Tolkien group is programmed. This is one I reccommend for beginners. Membership, \$2.00.
- MARCON III:** I'll be at this one. Holiday Inn East, Columbus, Ohio, March 30-31st, 1968. Guest of Honor, Frederick Pohl (who is a Very Good Man and very easy to meet and talk to, as well as being a topnotch author and editor of IF and GALAXY sci-fi magazines). Panel discussions, talks, gab, gab, gab, all of it much kostlich!, that is delicious. For information, Larry Smith, 216 East Tibet Road, Columbus, Ohio, 43202. Membership is \$1.50.
- THIRDMANCON:** This is one I wish I were attending. At St. Anne's Hotel, Buxton, Derbyshire, England. Guest of Honor, Kenneth Bulmer. For information, Harry Nadler, 5 South Mesnefield Road, Salford 7, Lancaster, England. Membership, \$1.00 for Yanks.
- BAYCON:** At Hotel Claremont, Oakland, California. This is the 26th World Science Fiction Convention, the Big Do of the sci-fi microcosm. Going to the con will be Yho Hmble & Obt Srvnt To Comnd, myself, of course. Guest of honor will be Philip Jose Farmer, and there will be $3\frac{1}{2}$ days of non-stop goodies ranging from schticks by Ellison to sober considerations of what is happening to the science fiction market. As with the above, there will be a Hucksters Room, where everyone sells books, paperbacks, magazines, movie stills, manuscripts, posters, younameits, maybe even tribbles, only the WorldCon will be even bigger. Maybe not the 1600 attendance of the NYC World SF Con last year, but big. For information, BAYCON, P.O. Box 261, Fairmont Station, El Cerrito, Calif., 94530. Membership: \$1.00 for foreign, \$2.00 non-attending domestic, \$3.00 for attending. Join now and receive their Progress Reports.
- MIDWESTCON:** Traditionally the last week-end of June, in Cincinnati or environs. Very informal, very carefree, no program to speak of, so a newcomer might feel very left out. I know not yet where, but the man to contact about it is: Mr. Lou Tabakou, 9363 St. John's Terrace, Cincinnati 36, Ohio. Quite naturally, I plan to attend.

That's all for right now. Remember, it's Heidelberg, Germany, for 1970. Dare we call it the Bheer-Con?



"Emma, I'm
Home!"



WJH

Here Thare Bee Thygers

-- A LETTERCOLUMN

This lettercolumn is respectfully dedicated to my new co-editor, Gary Crowds, who has been expecting me to produce EN GARDE #2 for quite some time now.

First off, of course, we must come to That Letter. I refer to the one from Diana Rigg, of course. Dated October 27, 1967, from Leeds, according to the postmark. Naturally there is no return address, and now might be as good a time as any to suggest something to you Rigg-MacNee fans out there.

A "star's" address is, strangely enough, relatively easy to get hold of sometimes. And while I, and you, and so-and-so might be cool enough to keep the address a private secret. But others are not. The address suddenly starts getting around. Before you know it, the star starts getting not just weird or fawning-type mail but starts

getting perverted material that ranges from the merely abominably obscene to violently threatening. There is nothing guaranteed to turn a public figure away from her/his public faster than amounts of that sort of stuff.

So, if by some weird chance one of you Out There manages to get hold of the private addresses to Rigg, MacNee or Wintle or Brian Clemens or someone, please don't broadcast it about!

If one of you let me know of such an address, I can guarantee that it will never be printed, and will go no further than myself. At that, I continue with the letter. (And Miss Rigg could use a good typewriter I think. When you write replies to bundles of fan mail by the bushel, one's penmanship slips a bit!)

"Than you for your long letter, but am sorry I have no fan club. S' so cannot help you as much as I'd like to do so. Am so busy right now. Am currently filming "Midsummer Night's Dream" at Stratford. Mainly out of doors and am freezing to death in these costumes in the process!

Best Wishes, D.R."

Unfortunately short, but then she's a busy lass. No reply from MacNee yet, but am waiting.

The thought strikes me that her phrase that she has no fan club will now have to be written in the past tense, regardless of the unorganized nature of the group beginning to cluster about EN GARDE.

I might also mention right now that regarding Miss Rigg's defection from THE AVENGERS, I am, of course, sad to see her leave. But it will take her years as it is to put the Mrs. Peel/Superwoman image behind her. There is such a thing as being tagged for such-and-such a role and the producers mentally cataloguing the actor or actress as being fitted only for that type of role.

- * -

S. Landman

3400 Tryon Ave comments are in order.

Bronx, N. Y.

10467 say

Re those Corgi Avengers cars. In the New York area they can be obtained at the Hobby Shop in the Port Authority Bus Terminal as well as in a toy shop (whose name escapes me but which is located on the south side of 42nd Street off Lexington Avenue) in midtown.

Also, I might mention that I do not believe \$5.00 would be too much to pay for a book of Avengers comic reprints. ((However, you are in the minority. Interest in such a project was practically nil and am thus advising Ed Aprill of Ann Arbor that the idea is no go. And must therefore also return the copies of DIANA to Bob Latrona, alas. That was some beautiful artwork in there....Ye Editor.))

Re page 22, next to last paragraph, you are wrong. There were Four series of AVENGERS, as I shall outline below.

1. 1961 Patrick MacNee played henchman to actor Ian Hendry.
2. 1962 MacNee moved up to Star status as Hendry dropped out and was replaced by Honor Blackman portraying Cathy Gale.
3. 1964 Diana Rigg replaces Blackman and originates the role of Mrs. Emma Peel.
4. 1967 21 year old Linda Thorson takes over the role as Tara King.

((Correction noted and accepted happily.))

From TV Tornado #29, July 29, 1967 - "In the latest series of "The Avengers" Steed owns two vintage Bentleys. Your readers may like to know the registration of the vehicles.

His green Bentley (1926) is YK-8152. His red, supercharged Bentley (1927 Lemans) is RX-2186. While Emma's powder blue Lotus Elan S2 is SUH-499D, her previous one being HNK-998C. Steed's YK is a London mark and RX is a Berkshire mark. Both Emma's are Hertfordshire marks."

From "The New York State Theatre Program", May 1964. The Royal Shakespeare Company presents King Lear (Diana Rigg plays Cordelia) and the Comedy Of Errors (Diana Rigg plays Adriana). The program says:

"Rigg, Diana. b. Doncaster. Trained at Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts. Then repertory experience, coming to Stratford for 1959 season, understudying. Joined Royal Shakespeare Company 1960 and has since played increasingly important parts both at the Aldwych and Stratford."

On page 3 of RD#1, you say an issue of RD is available for .40¢, LoC or contrib. Therefore, will you please consider this letter payment for a copy of #2?

((I must surely will. Standard policy is .40¢ per issue, no long term subscriptions, a LoC(letter of comment), trade for your own fanzine, or contributions and clippings.))

Sincerely

Stan Landman

Drew Simels
1444 The Plaza
Teaneck, N.J.
07666

You have no idea how pleased I was to read your magazine. I remember signing for it at the New York Science Fiction Convention, but I never really dreamed of getting it. It genuinely pleased me to read about one of my favorite television shows written by one who shared the same basic views about television and entertainment in general. It was, however, far from perfect.

Although I may be mistaken, I don't know how old you are, but I do sort of guess that you are somehow related to fandom (in fact, I think you mentioned a few fanzines in one of your commentaries). I have made the acquaintance of some of the publications concerned and have not been rather impressed.

What it boils down to is this: Your writing could definitely stand improvement. Unless you want to stay clear of a non-Fandom audience, I would appreciate it if you would refrain from that vast compost heap of "in" terminology, which is so much a part of s-f fandom magazines. And the title? Really! You talk about "pimply juveniles, sticky and gooey with over-praising and gross distortion of the truth" and yet you defeat your own purpose by naming your magazine the way you have.

Now, a somewhat personal gripe. You're too specialized. I know how great the show is and all that, but I don't see how you can possibly hope to come out more than twice a year. Look, writing about THE AVENGERS is great, but whenever I read the magazine I'll always say to myself that it's a shame you couldn't expand to cover British television series in general. Then you could incorporate material about such worthwhile items as "SECRET AGENT", "THE SAINT", "GIDEON C.I.D.", and the like.

Apart from the above points or arguments or whatever else you'd like to call them, the magazine is great. However, due to the fact that I am so "fanatically" involved with the show "SECRET AGENT" as you are with "THE AVENGERS", I would like to know if you or anybody else you know of, possess any information or photographs concerning that show. I would greatly appreciate it if you could let me know exactly what you have.

44) Oh, one more thing. I'd really enjoy it if, in the future issues (that is, if and when future issues develop) you could list the titles of every AVENGERS episode that has been on TV in the U.S. as well as the cast and characters and a plot outline. It would be a "Great service to AVENGERS fans everywhere."

Best of luck,

Drew Simels

((Anything as intensely personal as a novel, a magazine, or a product that one has just produced is much too close to be viewed dispassionately...and well...by the producer. Time, and the words of interested parties provide a fresh look that is both necessary and instructive. I decided that the slang was a bit overdone, went ahead and changed the magazine title as well.

However, the non-specialization of EN GARDE was stated in the first page of my editorial in #1. As EN GARDE is a magazine of personal opinion, natterings and other things, I shall feel free to include any and all non-AVENGERS-Rigg-MacNee items that I personally would like to see in its pages.

Ah, the feeling of power is heady sometimes.

Hence, the McGoochan article in this issue. Anything anyone has on THE SAINT or SECRET AGENT would be especially welcome. Anything anyone has concerning photos, articles, etc., on SECRET AGENT might be mentioned to Mr. Simels, as my own files are unfortunately void of any such erratta.

Also, a nearly complete listing of AVENGERS shows seen here in the U.S. is already on stencil and in print in #3. Those who are getting #2 but not #3 might send me a line of some sort requesting the issue. Those who have listings of any sort for the first two shows of the black-and-white AVENGERS as well as something for Castle De'Eath are invited to send them in for issue #4.))

- * -

J. Randolph Cox
St. Olaf College
Northfield,
Minnesota
55057

Having been extremely busy, I did not get around to RIGGER DIGGER until this week. I found it extremely interesting in spite of the "cute" title. The analysis of John Steed as Renaissance Man was quite true.

...I had bought both British AVENGERS books in England two summers ago and enjoyed them very much. A letter to Mr. MacNee c/o Hodder and Stoughton, the publishers, brought an autographed photo and brief note, no doubt a form reply but welcome nonetheless. Comments to the producers in England and to Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton regarding more MacNee-Leslie books have as yet brought no results. But a request for photos of the set for Steed's apartment to aid me in remodelling my own brought a letter from the publicity department of Associated British Productions Ltd. as well as six 8 X 10 photos (including one of Steed and Mrs. Peel in the apartment). I am now trying to locate pictures and other furnishings preparatory to remodelling (although I believe I shall wait until I own my own home before I begin). I have not found the name of the painting that hangs over the fireplace, but it looks familiar: a British battle of the 18th or 19th century. There are other pictures which I may find it easier to duplicate myself than to locate in original prints.

I find myself wearing the bowler and carry an umbrella (conventional style...Associated British Productions says the sword kind is illegal and theirs is a mock-up for the series...subsequent search has revealed sword-canes but no umbrellas) and button-hole everyone I meet into watching the series. I used to bring my portable TV to

work on Friday evenings last Spring. Some of the staff did not (45)
appreciate it when they found out. There's more to the story, but I
won't go into that.

I shall write to Ed Aprill and request the AVENGERS reprints.
He may include this sort of thing in his monthly CARTOONIST SHOW-
CASE which is only \$2.00 a number. I'd be very much interested in
the Corgi toy if it ever becomes available. I'll comb the stores
this Christmas.

((Anyone interested in the Corgi set of cars and figures can
get them from me, if they want. Price, with postage, is \$5.20. As
I got a local outfit to stock them, I'd like to help him sell them.))

- * -

Bill & Barbara Blackbeard
2077 Golden Gate Ave.
San Francisco, California
94115

Relished RIGGER DIGGER Uno enormously.
Barbara and I have enjoyed the "Avengers"
AVENGERS almost as long as we have
loathed the Man & Girl From UNCLE,
Star Trek and Time Tunnel crapola so
widely and enthusiastically heralded

in the darker corners of fandom as a kind of Second Coming of the
Entertainment Messiah (his First Coming lying in the advent of
Marvel Comics) — especially in the special pleading put forth in
the case of Star Trek: look, ye in the gullible fandom, such as
Sturgeon and Ellison in search of great pelf are pouring their time
and talent into this abortive rathole, let ye then therefore goggle
your eyes at their work as crucified on the flicker box and thicken
the letter sacks of the network lest this horror be scuttled with
the other unlucrative horrors...

Naturally we want the second and all subsequent issues of R-D.
Since the first (passed on to us by non-collector Bill Rotsler, who
also enjoyed it much) was a FAPAZINE, I don't know if this can be
arranged, even on a trade basis (you're down, as a Peel & Steed
devotee, for Queen Anne's Revenge #2, now in the works), but here's
asking anyways.

We also want to order some pix, but wonder which are left at
this late date. If you could drop us a card with the numbers of
those sold — or still for sale — on't, and we will swell the fund
for Takumi Shibano somewise at once.

The date you collected on the show, plus your own comments, has
enriched our library and knowledge banks eftmuch, and we are stark
grateful. To return the data favor in some part, know you of:

The "New York Sunday News" piece on the show (and other
"related matters as implied in the title), "The Switch to the Non-
Violent Female", by Bob Lardine, pg. 4 of the pulp news section of
"National Edition", for 12/10/67. Several pix of MacNee, Diana Rigg
and the new star of the series, Linda Thorson, are featured.

The paragraph-long reference in a generally related piece in
the June, 1966 ENCOUNTER by David Sylvester (pg. 38) called "Tassels,
and Other Gadgets". Sylvester praises Diana Rigg but indicates he
prefers Honor Blackman as MacNee's comfrere.

"Diana Rigg and The Emma Peeler", four pages of color pix of
Diana Rigg, in the 6/10/67 issue.

Barbara and I think the "unremembered" pic, DRPML, is a scene
from the "living plant" fantasy, in which DR and PM wear ear plugs
in order to avoid hearing the compulsive orders of the man-eating
plant. We disremember the name of the show, though....

But write, and send D-R #2 when pubbed. (The water-color
touching-up of the revolvered rose on the title page was exquisi!)

P.S. Added data: Barbara remembers a bumper sticker in use in L.A. a year or so ago. Read: THIS CAR PROTECTED BY EMMA PEEL. We never found out where they were sold, though. *Sigh* ((Well, Star Trek may not be KING RICHARD III but it's a good deal better than anything else Friday nights. If we don't let these TV Wheels know when something is a little better than usual, they might never find out. I have the strangest feeling sometimes that TV Wheels never watch TV.

No more photos, alas. They went fast and one of these days I should go ahead and mail the Trimbles the money for the Takumi Shibano Fund. It's already made out in a Money Order so only the usual Schultzeithargy is keeping it here. I do hope you find some consolation in the covers for this issue. Next issue will be more of the same, and wait until you get hold of that bacover!

If I can ever, ever, ever find some way of reproducing that DR AND THE EMMAPEELLER thing from TV Guide in *Full* *Color*..... But to do it in black-and-white would mean losing most of the fun. It'd be like turning off the picture and just listening to THE AVENGERS.

"Man-Eater of Surrey Green" is the hypnotic plant you're thinking of, but I'm afraid that isn't the one. At least I don't recall the radio-type things the ear-plugs were attached to. See next ish for a full run-down on all previous showigs of THE AVENGERS.))

- * -

LOHR McKinstry
668 Park Street
Bloomsburg, Penna.

I had hoped for better, but the zine came off anyway. Minus a few unneeded cusswords and the ultra-fannish title, it could be a great zine.

The first few pages commenting on the pulps was interesting, but unfortunately had only little to do with THE AVENGERS. You neglected to mention two of the best single-character pulps, DOC SAVAGE and THE AVENGER. The info about the AVENGERS comic strips was welcome, as was that concerning the books at least partially co-authored by MacNee. If you can obtain any, please put me down for copies of both DEAD DUCK and DEADLINE.

The discussion of THE AVENGERS personalities was great. I guess you know by now that after the show returns, Diana Rigg will be in just the first 9 episodes, and after that, some other star. So, oblivion is not certain.

The episode featuring the turnstile death-house was THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT. The one you referred to as "The Destruction Of Mrs. Emma Peel" was EPIC on the show.

The guy in EPIC who played all those roles was Peter Wyngarde (Stuart Kirby on the show), the director was Kenneth J. Warren (Z. Z. von Schnerk on the show).

If you're interested, I have a complete index to the titles of both season's AVENGERS shows, in correct order of showing. If you wish to borrow it for publication, let me know and I'll send it to you.

Your spiel on how to commit suicide was way out of line. Some nut is just liable to try that.

((I must certainly am interested in your listing of the shows. Whilst I now have most of them, I haven't their dates of presentation, the titles or any information about the first two shows of the black-and-white season, or any information beyond the title to "Castle De'Ath". Please send.

As for the suicide bit, there are just simply too many ways to bump yourself off for me to worry overmuch about mentioning a new method. State of mind is more important than availability of method. Once the person is "set" a way will, unfortunately, always be found.))

Hairy Warner, Jr.
423 Summit Ave.
Hagerstown
Maryland 21740

47
I could probably qualify as a semi-AVENGERS fan. I didn't grow interested until it was being telecast on Friday nights. My work schedule is less flexible on Friday than on any other night of the week, and I rarely managed to see more than the final 25 to 35

minutes of each hourly episode. So, like a chess player who is noted for his end game, I have become a fair authority on the climaxes of the episodes, and almost never missed seeing that little pantomime for Emma and Steed with the umbrella-fertility symbol that concluded each hour. But only rarely did I manage to catch the whole thing from beginning to end.

Of course, I agree with you that it was a superior series and I share your hope that at least the final episodes already purchased will eventually find their way to the network. This week's TV Guide ((October 15, 1967)) indicates that the series may replace later in the season a new program that is about to crash and burn, which is good, but also cites Friday night as the most likely time when THE AVENGERS would reappear, and so I'd once again be aware of how it all came out but completely ignorant of how it all went in.

But in a way, I hope that something causes a year's delay in running these last episodes. Remember that right now we are in the borderlands of the home video tape recorder territory. Another year or two will see color units on the market and a fair number of black and white units in the homes of fans and semi-fans. If THE AVENGERS should run for a final 13 weeks during the coming winter, it's quite probable that these episodes would be as lost to us as all the previous ones are. If some more time elapses, someone is almost certain to have the enthusiasm and equipment to tape them, in black-and-white at least, and I assume that eventually some sort of duplication of home video tape recordings will become possible. Similarly, I'd like to see some time elapse before the series goes into syndication, but this is not quite as critical a matter, for independent stations seem to run a defunct series intermittently for at least two or three years after it has last been on the network bands.

Meanwhile, if M./Appel/ Emma Peel should return to the video tube before anyone dares to hope, I might point out that you could get partial momentoes with color film. I got pretty good results the other evening using the new 500 ASA Ansco color film, shooting at one-tenth of a second and F8. There was a slight bluish color cast which I'll try to get rid of the next time by using a warming filter. You could get better definition by using one of the slower films and opening the lens further, but remember not to speed up the shutter or you won't get a full sweep of the screen. But be sure not to burn any room lights in front of the set because reflections and glare that your naked eye won't notice will be painfully obvious on the slide. I should have explained earlier in this paragraph that I was experimenting with Shirley MacLaine, not Diane Rigg, since even in this remote corner of Maryland, THE AVENGERS are gone from the ABC schedule, just as in the more progressive areas.

You overlooked one possibility in your review of how television attempts to suit only the mass audience. Don't forget the kids. The sponsors don't, and the kids are the principal reason why it's so seldom that something out of the ordinary appears in prime time. Most homes still have only one television set in good operating condition. Therefore, the networks and the sponsors are desperately trying to fill the evening hours with offerings that will appeal to both adults and kids, on the theory that something with only adult

appeal will get tuned out to satisfy the youngsters. THE AVENGERS, whatever its other merits, didn't have much of the obvious slapstick and gimmickry that the kids enjoy. Just possibly, things will change, now that so many people are buying color sets and giving the kids the old black-and-white sets, and now that you can buy the kids their own cheap new set for less than \$100 if you live fairly close to a transmitter so that the cheap set will give good results. If those sponsors ever get the notion that the kids are off in their own room watching the most juvenile of the offerings, we might see some adult-oriented offerings that are calculated to sacrifice some ratings points in compensation for more active buying response from the smaller audience.

Like you, I felt a certain decline in the last AVENGERS episodes. But I believe, sacrilege though it may be, that part of the blame should be laid on the sturdy shoulders of Diana Rigg. She impressed me as having become smug and too sure of herself for proper dramatic effect, the same flaw that ruined potentially good series like Honey West and the Girl From U.N.C.L.E., both of whom didn't work up a sweat because they found their work so simple. One big exception was the episode in which Mrs. Peel was trapped in a house with a semi-maniac who wanted to get even with her and kept cutting up pictures of her as a sample of what he was going to do to her. She really behaved terrified that night, or rather those nights, because I saw the final stages of it both on original and rerun appearances, and I found the general effect much improved because she conquered her fear, instead of refusing to have a fear.

((At first ABC was going to skip the F. Lee Bailey interview thing (which promptly folded in a few weeks anyways) but put it back on the schedule and off again with THE AVENGERS in its slot, but at last decided to drop it. Then, after the series were filmed up, it was thought JUDD FOR THE DEFENSE would bomb out fast and they readied Emma and Steed to fill the gap. But the whole season for all three major networks was such a disappointment, there wasn't much reason to replace anything until January. Then CUSTER bombed out, and I mean bombed out, so having the Devious Duo available, THE AVENGERS are now on Wednesday's, 7:30 p.m.

Also, syndication for THE AVENGERS is already in effect. Universal-International right this very moment has for sale to any bidder some 56 Diana Rigg/Mrs. Emma Peel AVENGERS episodes. I don't know what the price will be, but probably before October at least a few small stations will be offering glimpses of The Good Old Days. Both in black-and-white and colour. So, if anyone is going to purchase a home video tape recorder, they'd better 'op it.

If the market for video tape shows wasn't so poor, probably someone would buy some Honor Blackman/Cathy Gale AVENGERS episodes.

*%\$#/"1/4@?1/2 I do so wish I could see of them.

Also partially to blame for the very slight decline of THE AVENGERS last year...and this year, though the scripts are quite wonderful barring the gadget-ridden "Mission: Highly Improbable"... you must include the American market's influence on the writers and directors. The idea that pops into my mind is that of someone saying to Julian Wintle and Fennell and Clemens, "Now, let's hoke things up a little bit...mustn't make things too hard to understand for those Yanks, you know....".

My new co-editor, Gary Crowds is readying a precis' of last year's episodes, and I'm sure that he will be able to point out some ways in which the colour series differed sharply from the old black-and-white's.

Has anyone else besides myself noticed how much more often this year Mrs. Peel is dressed in dresses, however unconventional?))

Robert Firebaugh
361 Linden Walk
Lexington, Ky.
40508

Hope the bumper stickers are sticking, but with this year's edition of The Show, it appears that the "Mrs. Peel--We're Needed" bit has been dropped.

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Am sending on a review of the first show, ("Mission: Highly Improbable") by some know-nothing named Cynthia Lowry. Lowry is obviously hostile to the show with her comments about "science fiction nonsense" and "kid stuff". Then she claims that THE AVENGERS may lose its "hard-core" audience when in fact this hard core has been built on previous shows with a high degree of sci-fi content.

((Frankly, I didn't rave too highly myself over the first AVENGERS this season. Probably because of their reliance on glib "humorous" dialogue and pseudo-gadgetry and the special effects it necessitated. Gags do not replace a good tight script, though in a good AVENGERS script wit is a necessity.

The review will be reprinted in #3, already in stencil, to go along with the run-down on the past two years of AVENGERS I've already got in there.))

- * -

Hank Davis
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Bravo! A rallying point for us Unwashed AVENGERS fans. Hot damn!

I discovered today that the SAINT MYSTERY MAGAZINE has gone under. One less fiction mag. *Sigh*

For shame! All those ultra true comments regarding those superb thespians which England is gracious enough to share with us colonials and not one (1) word about the truly cool Mr. Patrick McGoochan (drat! I hope I haven't misspelled his name), he who once appeared on the late, lamented and superb SECRET AGENT show. Now there's a fit co-star for the redoubtable Rigg, by Ghul

Come to think of it, I believe that the TV Guide with the first Amory review of the AVENGERS had an article on the marvelous Mr. McGoochan. When I send a Xerox of the former, I shall also send the latter composition.

I think that you have misinterpreted Jefferson's idea of the Common Man. My roommate, Mr. Robert Firebaugh, a political science major, says that Jackson's idea of the Common Man is more like what you have in mind.

Gad! If THE AVENGERS are kaput once and for all, then I can never see the TV programs which I have hatched, not unlike the eggs of Black Widow spiders, in my skull.

For example, suppose David Vincent of THE INVADERS managed to convince our Dynamic and Dashing Duo that The Invaders are here. Peel and Steed could easily mop up the whole ruddy mob of infiltrators in one show. Not only would we get another sixty swinging minutes of our hero & heroine, but, with the menace From Beyond finally eliminated, that crummy INVADERS show would be finished.

Or, suppose that some diabolical evil scientist trapped the Peel of Steel and catapulted her centuries into the future and she materialized in the transporter room of the United Star Ship ENTERPRISE. Then we would see a television first as it quickly becomes apparent that our gal Peel is the only woman in the known universe with enough sex appeal (or appeal) to turn on Mr. Spock.

Speaking of turning on cold cerebral types, I wonder how another hero of mine, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, would fare in maintaining his legendary apolmb in the presence of our gal Emma? Imagine Miss Rigg portraying The Woman: Irene Adler. Sigh....

50) Taking another of my hang-ups: the Lensman series. Imagine the formidable Miss Rigg portraying the formidable Miss Clarissa MacDougall! Of course, Doc Smith never said that the Red Lensman was from England, but he never said that she wasn't, did he?

((Or how about Mrs. Peel and Steed battling The Forces of Evil with the aid (or non-aid, depending on your point of view) of Wolfe Wolf, the improbable hero of Anthony Boucher's "The Compleat Werewolf?" Can you imagine Mrs. Peel upon first discovering that the famed linguistic expert Wolfe Wolf actually was a werewolf, and some of the ensuing scenes when Wolfe Wolf would "sniff out" the criminals and assorted villains? Not mention Steed's inevitable line about a dog being man's best friend and Wolfe Wolf growling at him for it?

Also, can you imagine Mrs. Peel being in Dire Straits (say at the Straits of Gibraltar) and Steed drafting a local man on vacation to help rescue her from the nasties? Naturally with this agent there might not be a fight scene at the last, because the Evillies will be up against the urbane resources of both John Drake, of M.I. 5 (otherwise known as SECRET AGENT or DANGER MAN) and John Steed. One of the inevitable lines must be Drake to Steed, "But you just don't do things that way!"

Let them come to the States and be persuaded to pay a visit to Nero Wolfe and compatriot Archie by an old friend. Naturally said Old Friend is knocked off in the study (imagine the body grasping for the large globe of the world, knocking it down as the throes hit him). This sort of event is guaranteed to bestir Herr Nero Wolfe (the Fat Man of detective fame) somewhat, even if he never leaves his house. With the intuitive skills and cerebral approach of groups Peel & Steed and that of Wolfe & Archie on the murderer's, naturally said murderer's haven't the chances of a snowball in a blast furnace, even if they be the highest echelons of the Cosa Nostra or the N.G.U.V.

Then, there's That High Emergency wherein Gideon of Scotland Yard is lent the services of Mrs. Peel and Mr. Steed, in order to track down the members of an Assassination Squad from a Foreign Power at the same time that he's trying to catch a highly organized group of thieves who knocked over The Old Lady of Threadneedle Street, The Bank Of England to you.

Ah, the possibilities are fascinating!))

- * -

Bill Brown
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I disagree completely about the success of a girl-change. Diana Rigg/Mrs. Emma Peel is an inseparable element of the show, which is the main reason I'd dislike the Old Honor Blackman hits. As for the new female lead - her name is Linda Thorsen, blond (bleached?) and 20 years of age. The New York Sunday News ran a picture of her and MacNee with a small explanatory caption. (She looks very tall, too.)

The November issue of Road & Track has a driver's test of "Mrs. Peel's" Lotus Elan S/E. (What is her car??? If not, it's a twin!) If you think it would be worthwhile, I could send you a copy of that article, but you've really got to be AVENGERS-happy to go to the trouble of collecting articles on the shows props. Which is just the trouble - I am.

((My dear fellow. So am I. Send a copy on and I'll decide whether or not to reprint it for #4. #3 is already stencilled, ye see. As for the girl-change on THE AVENGERS. I'm adopting a policy of wait-and-see, hoping the change in female leads won't scuttle the show, and hoping for the best, especially considering the already displayed talents of Mssrs Wintle, Fennell and Clemens in picking lady leads.))

Gary Crowdus
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I would not "water down" the style of writing in the mag (i.e., your own style and fandom jargon) even though you may be selling some copies on newsstands and, thus, reaching people who may not be part of fandom. A great deal of the charm of fanzines is being able to speak in our own language. (51)

Liked the editorial very much; For I think comments on the general nature of the TV medium (broadcasting procedures, the minds behind it all, etc.) is always quite interesting. It is always a good thing to get below the surface of these things. Also like News And Notes - this will probably always be a big part of each issue. However, let's hope you shan't have to resort to the Dept. of Reprints too often in the future. Ideally, you should be able to solicit original articles and perhaps run reprints of longer articles from other mags. But any interesting clippings might just as well be briefly mentioned in News And Notes rather than reprinted in entirety. (I.E., "Good interview with Patrick MacNee in the latest issue of....")

I'm contemplating trying to get hold of some production shots from the show (showing camera, lights, etc. - episode in production), and doing a technically oriented article on the show. Also, behind the scenes stills would be a nice exclusive touch for the mag.

Re production and lay out of the mag: Would try to have at least a photo on the cover of each forthcoming issue. Sketches, cartoons, and line drawings and other illos are OK for interior of mag, but I would think a photo for the cover would be almost essential. You might also consider a two-column layout - it makes for less copy per issue but it makes reading a lot easier and it looks quite a good deal neater.

As long as you're doing blow-up posters, bumper stickers, etc., why not go all the way? Have some buttons made up? I know several places in New York that will make quantities of buttons for a reasonable price. We could have several different types made up and perhaps sell them through the mag or offer them with subscriptions or something. I'll look into the cost, etc., and let you know.

Can you inform me as to Warner Brothers exact relationship with THE AVENGERS now? That is, do they have syndication rights to earlier b & w segments - to the present series - or what? I'll have to know, so that I'll know what may be feasibly obtained from the local Warner Bros. office.

((There are photo covers for both this issue and #3, as well as an Honor Blackman photo insert for #3, for the Honor Blackman articles and clippings. If Mr. Joquel will hurry up with his article on the flashy karate and judo styles used by the damsels on TV like Mrs. Peel, Honey West, etc., he'll find a similar insert made up for him. Photo covers are nice so long as the \$\$\$ holds up.

As for buttons... I've a few ideas of my own, but before ordering, I'd like to hear from some of you people out there. Any printable suggestions?

Warner Bros., according to my information, handled distribution (I imagine that's including syndication) of the current series in '67 and the present series in the US and Canada. Whether they have any slice "of the action" beyond that, I do not know.

I might note here that Gary Crowdus is the new co-editor of this little rag and is helping me enormously. He refuses to come here on week-ends, however, and help type stencils.....))

Devra Langsam
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Brooklyn, NY
11225

Why did they let Diana Rigg go? How about Diana Rigg for Lady Eowyn, in the giant, spectacular, unfinanced and undirected production of THE LORD OF THE RINGS, with Leonard Nimoy as Strider and Martin Landau as Samruman? She has the STYLE for it. (Not a very meaty part for her tho - J.R.R.

Tolkien's women are a trifle palid.)

I saw Mr. Nimoy in THE BALCONY, and until you've seen him in a police chief's hat and a bath towel, you haven't seen ANYTHING!

Did you read, in a not terribly (like three months) long past NY Times Sunday amusement section, about the TV gadget that you can buy (soon-ishly) for about \$300 which will be like a phonograph. But with visual pre-prepared disks. If you think this sounds odd, I'm just a bit incoherent. The device will enable you to run a visual/audio tape using your tv screen as the receiver. The disks would not be taped from your set, but would be purchased, ready-pressed, as phono records are, for playing, for between \$4 and \$14. Probably they'd do all the standard sellers first, like Shakespeare, and copies of Jose Ferrer's CYRANO. (Which would be nice to have in themselves, anyway.) But getting a colour tape of Star Trek is like getting a solid platinum tiara. I can think of any number of things I'd rather have - like lunch with Leonard Nimoy, or something like that. (Who do I bribe?) By the way, are you accepting money for your zine?

((From a sweet young lass like yourself, letters of comment like this are more than sufficient. For lazy types, money or trades or contributions or clippings or something!))

How about another Classic Meeting/Confrontation.... The Impossible Missions Force is in England, detailed to deal with a missing pair of viral biologist researchers, suspected of hatching a new series of typhus and parrot fever. Financing them is one of the low-power Middle East nations intent on crippling the western European powers, starting with England. Working from either end...the IMF after the biologists, and Steed and Mrs. Peel ferrating out the evil plans of the Middle East crowd....and who destroys the outfit first? Maybe the Terrible Pair of Mad Scientists is located first by Mrs. Peel and then she's snatched by Rollin Hand and Cinnamon Carter and the strongman, Peter Lupus as Willy and guest star Wally Cox before they find out she's on their side so to speak.....

Blast you Hank Davis.....))

- * -

WEALSCHEARDFROM: Mrs. Bjo Trimble, Clay Kimball, Ron Fradkin, Rick Brooks, Arthur Louis Joquek, II, Andy Porter, John A. McCallum, John G. Pierce, Bob Vardeman, Frank C. Olbris, Rich Kurzberg, Paul I. Lewis, M.J. Ward, John Ayotte, Robert Latona, Dick Eney, John Koning, Rosemary Hickey and the U.S. Internal Revenue Bureau. And all but the last were quite kind in their estimations of this little personal opinionzine.

If you got this but not
#3, you'd better do something.

Ye Editors

Richard Schultz

Gary Crowder

CINEASTE

A quarterly journal of the film world, its art, its future, where it has been.

From:

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