

The Avengers/Patrick Macnee Fan Network Newsletter 11



Issue Number 11

September • October, 1979

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- Credits -

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Ramblings

There has been much going on in the last couple of months. First off, of course, is the fact that moving from Longmont to Kansas City took up so much of my time and cramped me somewhat concerning correspondence and filling orders. I think that everyone knows of the hassles involved in changing residence and setting up house, so I'll spare you the details. But I would like to thank the people who have been so very patient during this time in waiting for a reply from me.

Nextly, there has been a city-wide search for a new printer to do this Newsletter. The next couple of issues may be a bit diverse in paper stock and print quality while I experiment with a couple of different printers to decide on a permanent one. Please bear with me for a time until I can get things back on an even keel.

Many thanks to everyone who wrote to ask about my move, new residence and so on. By way of a capsulized run down on current affairs here... the move went smoothly and I even handled the gigantic moving truck without much difficulty. The new apartment is nice and has lots of wood within to please my tastes. We have a phone now. The number is printed on the title page for those who wish to call. At present I am still unemployed and looking (and I can't find a printer who will trade services for my darkroom...). I have found that Missouri specialized license plates are relatively inexpensive so ordered, and had approved, a plate for my motorcycle which says 'STEED'.

By the way, gentlebeings - I'm afraid that I'm not able to work miracles. I've had letters sent to my PO Box addressed to Barry Manilow, Bob Hope and Frank Sinatra. Uh...! Aside from confusing the poor postal workers here (which I enjoy anyway, but that's another matter), I must say that you're only wasting stamps. I don't know any of these gentlemen and haven't the faintest idea of how to get in touch with them. Sorry, but you'll have to try elsewhere!

Network News

PEN PAIS

ELIZABETH NUGENT, 88 Salisbury Avenue, Bootle, Merseyside, England L30 1PZ. Birthdate 3/17/64. 5'7" tall with long, brown hair and brown eyes. Interests: horror films and the supernatural. Hobbies: any sports at all, camping, American pool.

VIRGINIA BOWMAN, 1400 South Wolff St., Denver, CO 80219. Born July 26, 1963. Love science fiction, horses, dogs, cats, Sherlock Holmes, reading, playing piano/guitar, TR7s, "The Avengers" (not in that order!). Interested in foreign countries, England in particular.

TONY KLUCK, 1319 Thorncroft Court, Westlake Village, CA 91361. Birthdate: 6/26/62. Interested in "The Avengers", "Space: 1999", film production, direction and SFX, anything on actress Martine Beswick (especially interested in forming a fan club in her honor), good soundtrack music, "The Prisoner", "The Six Wives of Henry VIII", "Anna Karenina" and getting mail (That wasn't too forward, was it?).

DAN HELMICK, 108 Somerset Rd., Hudson, MI 49247. Born April 3, 1960. Obsession: Saul David Productions ("In Like Flint", "Logan's Run", "Our Man Flint", "Fantastic Voyage", "Skullduggery"). Interests: "The Avengers", "The Prisoner", 007, soundtracks by John Barry and Jerry Goldsmith, Monty Python, SF by Keith Laumer and Larry Niven.

Patrick Macnee is currently touring England in the play "The Grass is Greener". Previous information had it that Joanna Lumley would also be starring in the play, but I've heard nothing definite on that yet. Others in the cast include Jennifer Wilson, Norman Eshley and Hillary Pritchard. Hopefully we'll have a report on the play by next Newsletter.

Patrick was also in Singapore not long ago (I don't have the exact date) where he won an exhibition tennis match against Bobby Riggs! Anyone considering a go-around with him had better practice!

Gareth Hunt is appearing in Ira Levin's "Deathtrap" at the Garrick Theatre in London. Other cast members include David Yelland, Joanna Doubleday, Bob Sessions and Sheila Keith.

For more information on Patrick Macnee in "The Grass is Greener" and Gareth Hunt in "Deathtrap" see the "Report from England" in this issue.

There is a new fan club in the consideration stages for actress Martine Beswick ("From Russia With Love", "Thunderball", "One Million Years B.C.", "Seizure", "The Penthouse"). If you are interested in more information send a SASE to: Tony Kluck, 1319 Thorncroft Court, Westlake Village, CA 91361.

Lisa Rubin, 5030 Linnean Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20008 is searching for copies of all the "Avengers" paperbacks. She is also looking for someone with "Avengers" (old series) episodes on videotape who can copy them onto VHS format for her. If you have any of these and would like to help, you might get in touch.

In response to a blurb in the "Garage Sale" section last issue, Lisa wrote to inform me that members of her "Prisoner" club have been experiencing difficulty in receiving orders from T-K Graphics after their checks were cashed. On the other hand, I had someone else write to tell me that they were very pleased with T-K Graphics. I wanted to pass on Lisa's warning for those considering something from T-K Graphics... there are persons displeased with their service (or lack thereof). You'll have to use your own judgement when ordering from them, but if I have further reports of problems with T-K I'll be sure to pass the word.

A bit of good news to end with - I have been notified by the International Council of Fan Clubs that our Newsletter #6 was chosen as 'Best in its Class' for 1978!! ICFC awards will be presented at the Fan Club Associates convention in Milwaukee this October 19-21 and I hope to attend and accept the award personally. Of course, the Newsletter would be nothing without the interest and contributions of its readers, so this award is yours as well. Congrats!

Garage Sale

The following items are available from Fan Network Headquarters, PO Box 1190, Belton, MO 64012: THE AVENGERS #2 "The Laugh Was on Lazarus", THE AVENGERS #7 "The Gold Bomb", THE AVENGERS #8 "The Magnetic Man", THE MAN FROM UNCIE (British Souvenir Press/Four Square Book), THE MAN FROM UNCIE #3 "The Copenhagen Affair" (British Souvenir Press/Four Square Book). The AVENGERS books are \$1.00 each, UNCIE books are \$1.25 each. Prices are for U.S./Canadian members and include postage.

Back issues of the Newsletter #3, 4, 5 and 9 are still available. The first three are \$1.40 each or \$4.00/3. #9 is \$1.60 or may be included in the price of a current subscription.

I also have for sale one copy of the "LOOK" magazine, October 5, 1971 issue which contains a 4-page article on Patrick Macnee. The price (entire magazine, intact) is \$3.00 including postage.

Please send a SASE with any order. If the item is gone I will return your money. If not, I'll send your SASE back. All money collected from these items will go to benefit the Fan Network.

Debbie Stoy, 21 Marion Avenue, Sumter, SC 29150 writes that her "Avengers" fanzine is ready for mailing. It is approximately 25 pages long and contains articles, a story, artwork, photos and so on. Price is \$4.00 each or you can include it as part of a subscription at \$8.00/3. Issue #1 ("Space: 1999") is still available at \$5.00 each. SASE for more details.

Gene Davidson, 444 Larchwood Drive, Berea, OH 44017 has a few items he's wanting to sell: a copy of the Ron Grainer album "Themes And..." which contains the 1967 "Avengers" theme and tag theme - price is \$20.00, large collection of rare items from the "Prisoner" TV show, an autograph by Woody Allen. Anyone wishing further details on these items can SASE Gene.

There is a dealer who has a couple of "Avengers" comic books to sell. Available now are one each of the

British ("Theshawks"?) and the American (Gold Key) comics in, he says, excellent condition. The price is \$3.00 each. To order, write: Brian Kinchy, 6609 Biddulph, Cleveland, OH 44144.

James Smith, 3 Camelford Road, Gillmoss, Liverpool, L11 0DG, Lancashire, England has for sale the following "Avengers" items: "The New Avengers" 1978 Annual for \$8.00, the "New Avengers" 1979 Annual for \$6.00, "Woman's Weekly" magazine article on Joanna Lumley at \$1.00 each, "TV Times" article on Joanna Lumley (from "Sapphire and Steel") for \$1.00, 1967 "TV Stars Annual" containing an article on "The Avengers" with photos of Steed and Emma (as well as something on Patrick McGoochan in "The Prisoner") for \$6.00. Payment should be made by International or Postal Money Order made out to James Smith.

Charles Bradley, 2219 Burdette St., New Orleans, LA 70118 has for sale two copies of the "New Avengers" paperback "House of Cards". Price is \$2.00 each. I assume that they are the American versions, but you can SASE him if you want to be sure.

Joseph Tricarichi, 2520 Ashurst, Cleveland, OH 44118 has for sale the following British TV Annuals, all in 'New' condition: 1979 "Dr. Who", 1978 "Space: 1999", 1978 "Star War Annual #1", 1977 (?) "New Avengers", 1978 "New Avengers", 1979 "Blakes 7", 1977 "The Quest". All except the last one are \$6.00 each. "The Quest" is \$5.00. Add \$1.00 postage/handling. There are from 2 to 10 copies available of each Annual and they are on a first come, first served basis. SASE for details.

"Paladin" is coming! David Lubkin and Eileen Roy are co-editing a zine on agent-type persons including "UNCLE", "The Avengers", "The Prisoner" and so on. Submissions are still being accepted and there is no definite publishing date set on the zine yet. Contents should include stories, filksongs, poems, artwork... the basics. (From the flyer I have, it sounds like art will be high quality!)

You can reserve a copy of "Paladin" for \$4.00 and a SASE; the final price will be set when it's ready for printing. For more details, turn to the "LOCs of Gold" section where David discusses the project. Order from: David Lubkin, 1696 E. Grand River #77B, East Lansing, MI 48823.

Bob Robinson, ACCOLADES, PO Box 1324, Glendora, CA 91740 has available a good collection of Diana Rigg and Patrick Macnee article clippings. Prices are 50¢ per page or you can arrange a special rate for larger orders. He also has clippings on other stars. For a list or to obtain further details send a SASE with your wants.



Report from England

by Bill Bradshaw

A few credit notes - Joanna Lumley has, along with boxer Henry Cooper, Cicely Courtenidge, Douglas Fairbanks Jr., Wilfrid Hyde-White, Spike Milligan, Jimmy Edwards and others, signed to star in a remake by comedian Eric Sykes of his classic silent 1966 short "The Plank". Shooting began in West London on June 4.

Joanna was at last Sunday's rally in Trafalgar Square to 'Save the Whale' - reading out children's conservation poems along with Spike Milligan. She now has short, spiky hair... looks very tasty, too.

Also, Patrick Newell made two comedy series appearances in one week (May 29-June 5) as a stuffy 'Colonel' in the dreadful WWII "HMS Thundercloud", about a land-based navy 'ship'; and as 'Klaus', the German cousin of old-ladies-home proprietress Miss Milton in the equally silly "You're Only Young Twice" - a geriatric series (in every sense, that is) incredibly in its third season! He seems to be fattening up a little I must say.

Did you know about Venus Smith? She was one of the second season's alternating three lady leads, along with Cathy Gale and another whose name I cannot recall (played by Ingrid Hafner) who tested audience reaction, I gather, until Cathy proved the favourite and was picked up as the regular.

Another item I recently pieced together was that in the Steed/Cathy era, our bowler-hatted hero used to receive his weekly instructions Jim Phelps style (any other IMF fans around?) from a number of similarly bowler-hatted mystery men including One-Seven (Frederick Farley), One-Ten (Douglas Muir) and One-Twelve (Arthur Hewlett). Apparently all the old Steed/Cathy shows do still exist in videotape vaults. Seems criminal to let such classics rot away in vaults while video-lovers like ourselves would give anything to save or reproduce/preserve them if only we could!

Gareth's "Words on War" series begins this week... at 4.20 pm!! Why it's being shown at kids viewing time beats the hell out of me, but I long ago gave up trying to fathom the minds of TV programmers.

"Sapphire and Steel" has begun on ITV, Tuesday and Thursday evenings 7.00 till 7.30. Silly idea putting it on as two weekly parts. A one-hour show would suit the concept much better as the ideas behind the show are nicely worked out and rather scary. At 30 minutes, though, there's no way to capture and hold the attention and the audience's nerves.

The series looks good and should pick up, but it comes off as very slow and tepid as yet. The appalling credit sequences and the none-too-strong scripts don't help the situation, but Joanna and David McCallum play off against one another well.

((Then, to some later comments on the show...))
I take back what I said previously about "Sapphire...". The fourth show was on today and it really is turning into an excellent mystery item. Joanna is called upon to do more than her Purdey role ever allowed her the chance and there are some very weird and unsettling effects and ideas in the show.

"Billion Dollar Threat" is here now and I caught it on a double bill with an enjoyable youthsplotation movie called "That Summer". Wish I could say I enjoyed "Threat" to the same extent, but it really was limp, I have to admit. The only moments of uplift were when Pat was on-screen (a delight) and that one sequence where the hero, Sands, outdrives Horatio Black's villains and blows up their jeep with a shotgun-cum-bazooka... the only time it came close to 007.

"King Solomon's Treasure" is on it town for a limited engagement and got a couple of quite favourable reviews: "...it's hard to dislike our three bluff heroes who miraculously survive rebellious priests, erupting volcanoes and tumbling cities to return to the old country with nothing but a tale to tell their grandchildren."

Rang Linda's home again today - she's back! We had a nice chat and we're meeting up for some tea before she goes back to America to live on July 30th. She'll be settling there but says she'll be back to

London now and again. It only occurred to me after we'd finished talking that the American guy who answered the phone was Cyril Smith and I think now that I'd like to have said something to him other than, "Could I speak to Linda, please?" !!

Linda was able to give me some details about "The Grass is Greener". Now, why was she able to when none of the West End Theatres could help me? Simple - the play isn't playing the West End at all. From July 30th it's going on a 6 month tour and this begins with seasons at Guildford's Yvonne Arnaud Theatre (where Linda was in "Murder in a Bad Light") and another theatre in Richmond.

The producers told me that rehearsals are at present going on at Guildford for the opening July 30th, the show running there until 18 August.

Next step: Ring Guildford and try to speak to Patrick, right? I got through during a break in rehearsals at 1 o'clock and he was absolutely charming! He sounded a little tired and said not to come and see the play until the second week when it had ironed itself out. Then, he said, we can meet up and have a few drinks. He then said how grateful (again) he was for your and our interest in him and how he looked forward to meeting me (HE looks forward to it!???). Needless to say, I was amazed and delighted at getting through to Pat and I only wish you were here to see the play too.

I've been 'in bed' with mild flu for three days (bad enough to keep me away from the studio, but not so bad that I can't sunbathe and zip down to Aldwych and the telephone kiosk on the corner!) and was listening to the radio yesterday, twiddling the dial, when I came to Michael Aspel's morning show on Capital Radio. He was talking to Gareth Hunt!

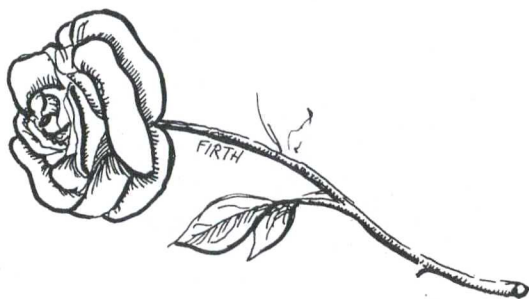
I soon gathered that Gareth had been his guest for the past two hours and was plugging his new play. I flipped through the pages of "Time Out" to see what play he could possibly be in that I had missed and I finally found it - "Deathtrap" by Ira ("Boys from Brazil") Levin. Reason I'd overlooked it was the fact that Denis Quilley has been in the play for months and months (at the Garrick Theatre)

and Gareth Hunt took over only this last week.

Well, before you could say "linament" I was on the tube to town and three o'clock saw me enjoying "Deathtrap" once again. I can't reveal even the plot to you (one is sworn to secrecy!) but Gareth was quite brilliant in the role of murder playwright Sidney Bruhl - American accent and all. He was both very funny and eerily scary when called upon to do either and he had far more charm in his performance than the nonetheless excellent Denis Quilley. His hair was greyed-down to suggest middle age... I thought for a moment he'd actually gone grey!

Naturally I went backstage straightaway and as soon as I sent him a Network card he had me taken to his dressing room and we had a chat for about 5-7 minutes. Gareth went on that he enjoyed making the series "...knowing Brian and Joanna and Patrick, of course - great fun." I got him to sign a couple of programmes and asked about photos from the play. He wasn't sure what the situation was but wrote down my name and address and promised to get in touch with the guy concerned.

((Bill is currently working on an article concerning Laurie Johnson, composer of "Avengers" music over the years. Watch for it in the months ahead!))



"Love All"

by Jeremy Burnham

Designer Robert Jones

Music Supervision by Laurie Johnson

Directed by Peter Sykes

Produced by Albert Fannell and Brian Clemens

Executive in charge of Production Gordon L.T. Scott

Four important civil servants, Tait, Fryer, Roxby and Sir Rodney Kellogg, are at a top secret meeting in a Whitehall Ministry. All have one thing in common - they seem incredibly prone to love at first sight.

This is unfortunate as the first person they see is the frowsy-looking charlady scrubbing the corridor outside. And she is in the pay of the enemy.

After the meeting, Sir Rodney embraces the charlady, Martha, and she extorts the secrets of the meeting from him. When Metcalfe, a young man from security, overhears them, Martha orders Sir Rodney to shoot Metcalfe with her gun.



Steed keeps a rendezvous with 'Mother' at an underground cricket school. Nonchalantly walking along the road reading a newspaper, he falls down an open manhole, landing safely on a mattress.

His superior, playing cricket with Rhonda bowling and Tara looking on, discusses the security leaks and assigns them to the case.

Sir Rodney Kellogg, meanwhile, is under guard following the murder. But he escapes and makes his way to Martha's home. Without her charlady disguise, she is an attractive young woman.

Sir Rodney persuades her to elope with him in his Rolls Royce, but after they have gone a short way, she shoots him and joins an accomplice, Bromfield in another car.

When The Avengers investigate the murder Tara recognises the aroma of a rare and unique perfume in the Rolls Royce and visits the manufacturers, Bellchamber Brothers. Bellchamber gives Tara a list of the handful of rich clients the perfume has been sold to, but Martha has been eavesdropping and gets Bromfield to send one of his men to recover the list from Tara.

In a fight at Tara's apartment, Freeman (the man sent by Bromfield) accidentally shoots himself with his own gun and the list is charred to ashes.

At the Ministry it is Roxby's turn to succumb to Martha the charlady, soon after he receives a strange book. His colleague, Tait, gets a book, too - and declares passionate devotion for a policewoman who has come in to give him a parking ticket.

An engraving on a ring taken from the dead Freeman leads Steed to the Casanova Ink Company, where he finds author Rosemary Z. Glade - a man - dictating a book to his attractive blonde secretary, Thelma. In the Printing Room he sees Bromfield, Martha and a large, tough woman called Athene. He distracts them and steals a copy of the books they are printing.

Before he can read the book at his apartment, Steed is attacked by another of the civil servants, Fryer, who is latest to fall for the charlady. She has told him Steed is a rival for her affections. After knocking out Fryer the Avenger looks at the



book and finds a mechanism in the back which shines through a hypnotic pattern of microdots in the pages. Under magnification, they reveal the message:

YOU WILL FALL IN LOVE WITH THE NEXT PERSON
YOU SEE.

Tara, alas, has been reading a similar book in Tait's office. And the next person through the door is... Bromfield. He tells her there is no future in their romance and orders her to leap through the window.

Steed arrives in time to knock out Bromfield and save her, but is in turn attacked by Tara, who wishes to avenge the man she loves. Steed is forced to knock her out with his bowler - albeit a very gentle tap.

Steed then dismantles the mechanism from the books and sticks twelve of them on his jacket and waistcoat. Result: as Athene, Bromfield and Martha advance menacingly with their guns, it is love at first sight. Tara, recovering from the bump, also catches sight of Steed's coat and joins the queue for his affections.



As Steed's
Rolls disappears
into the darkness
it is full of
admirers arguing
their claims to
him.....

Patrick Macnee as
John Steed

Linda Thorson as
Tara King

Cast also includes:

Veronica Strong as
Martha

Terrence Alexander as
Bromfield

Sir Rodney Robert Harris
Mother Patrick Newell
Thelma Patsy Rowlands

- and -

Brian Oulton	Frank Gatliff
Ann Rye	Zulema Dene
Peter Stephens	Norman Pitt
John Cobner	Robin Tolhurst
Larry Taylor	David Baron



"House of Cards"

by Brian Clemens

Directed by Ray Austin

Professor Vasil, the acclaimed professor is about to be returned unwillingly and uncereemoniously to his homeland by his fellow countryman Perov. Their private plane waits on the tarmac of the small airfield to take them aloft.

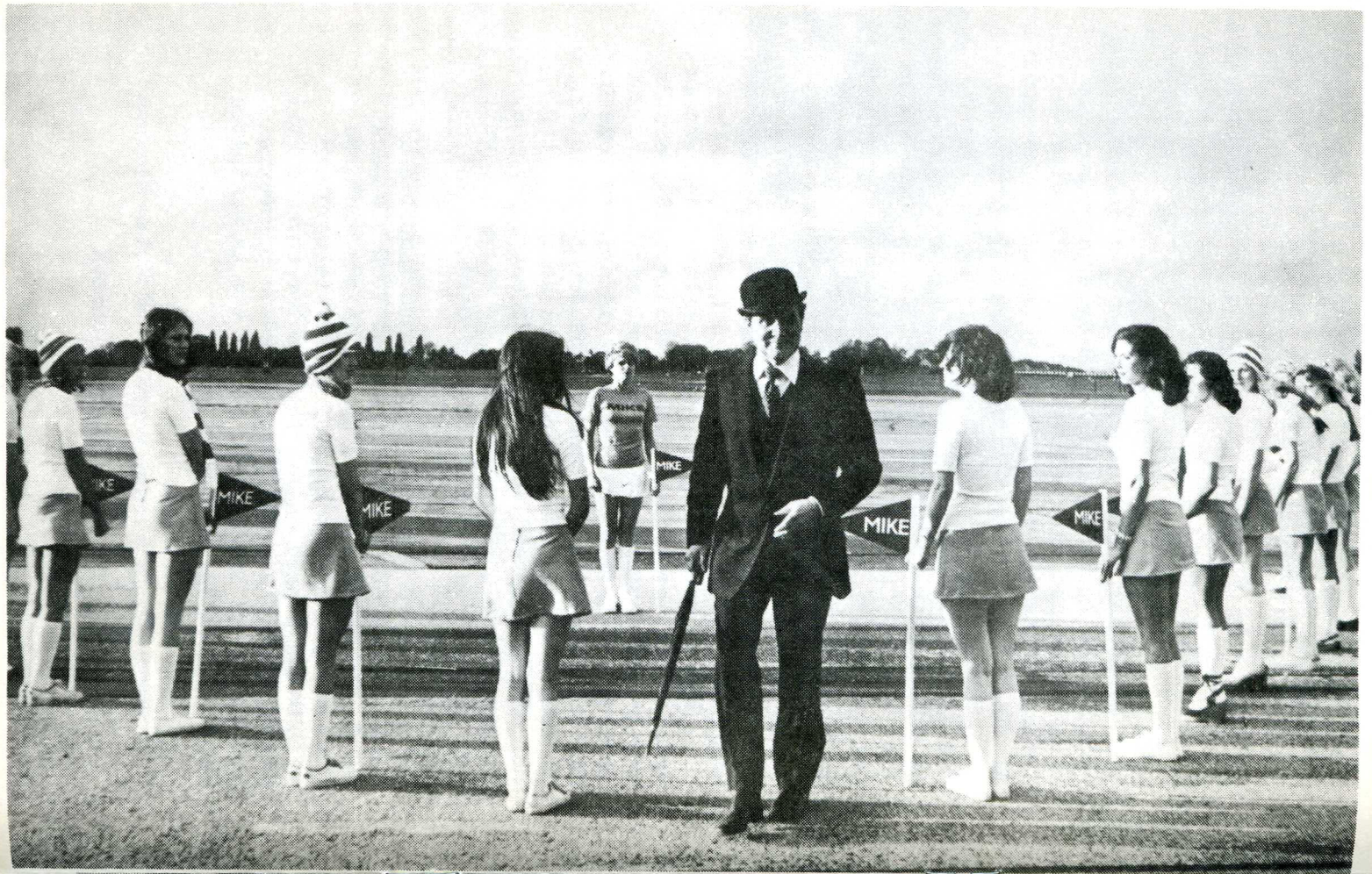
Then there is a sudden burst of confusion in the airport lounge when several pop fans, all girls, go into a near frenzy at the sight of their hero. They stampede into the midst of Vasil and his captor, Perov, and two of his bodyguards. Perov is pinioned by the girls, the henchmen are swept underfoot and Vasil is gently escorted to a nearby car by Steed who had outwitted Perov. It was all part of a diversion set up by Steed, Purdey and Gambit.

Perov, veteran agent, who infiltrated thirteen agents into the country during the last 20 years is deadly and devious - the trickiest of them all. But because of the airport fiasco he is ordered home to face the Commissariat. Instead he commits suicide. At least, that's what people think as they later see his coffin head towards the crematorium oven. It may be his coffin, but Perov is alive and well and planning to put his House of Cards operation into action.

The names of Steed, Purdey and Gambit and Vasil, among others, are shuffled from his pack of deadly cards - a code system he has designed over the years. The king of hearts is the card with Steed's name on it. That is the code to kill Steed. Gambit's name is on the knave of hearts and Purdey is lined up to become the assassinated Queen of Hearts.

Produced by Albert Fennell and Brian Clemens

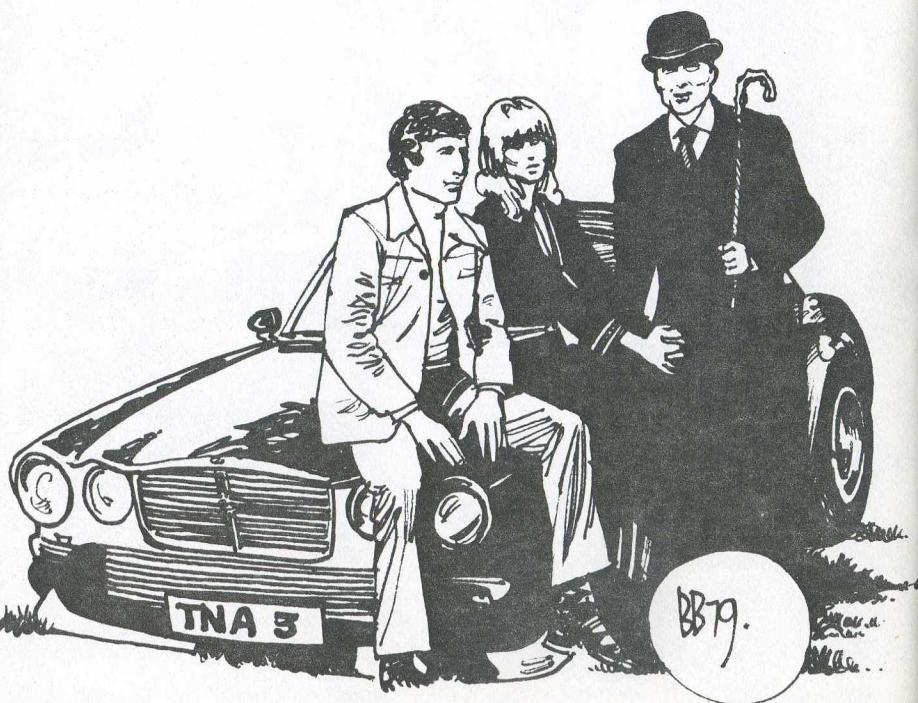
Music by Laurie Johnson



"House of Cards"

- CAST -

<u>Character</u>	<u>Artist</u>
John Steed	Patrick Macnee
Purdey	Joanna Lumley
Mike Gambit	Gareth Hunt
Perov	Peter Jeffrey
Professor Vasil	Gordon Sterne
Cartney	Lyndon Brook
Boris	Dan Meaden
Cristo	Terry Plummer
Roland	Frank Thornton
Olga	Ina Skriver
Suzy Miller	Annette Andre
David Miller	Murray Brown
Spence	Mark Burns
The Bishop	Derek Francis
Frederick	Anthony Bailey
Jo	Geraldine Moffatt
Tulliver	Jeremy Wilkin



"The Master Minds"

by Robert Banks Stewart

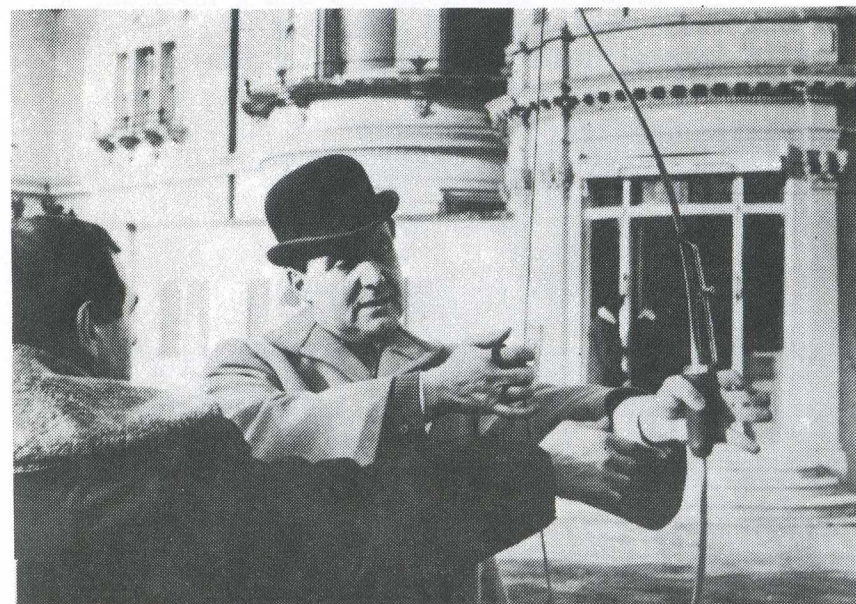
In which Steed becomes a genius ...
and Emma loses her mind.

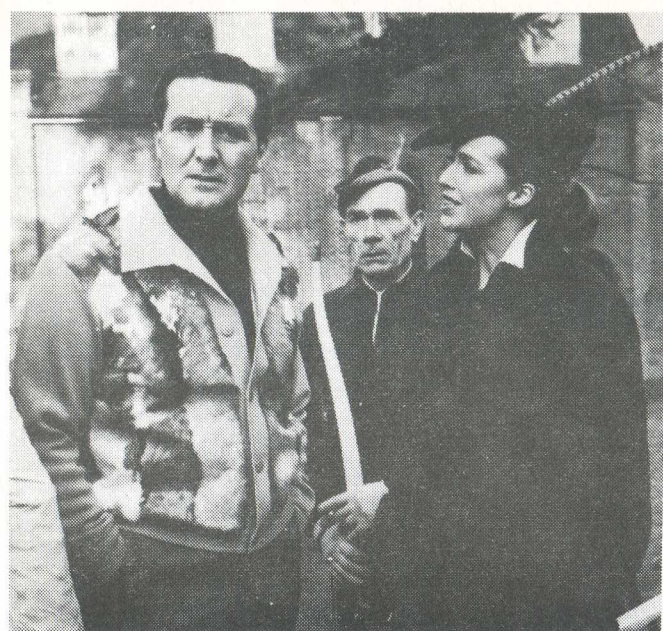
A security guard surrounds eminent government minister Sir Clive Todd. Suspected of treason, he lies at his home badly wounded after his surprise role in a raid on top secret files. The Avengers are called in, Steed making a search of the house, and Emma Peel acting as nurse in constant attendance on the barely-conscious Sir Clive.

From Sir Clive's daughter, Davinia, Steed learns that the man's close friend was a fellow M.P., Alan St. Johnstone, and that they were both members of Ransack, a club for intellectuals.

Steed goes to the House of Commons to interview St. Johnstone, but arrives too late, he finds that the M.P. - obviously a part of the conspiracy - has been shot dead.

When Sir Clive begins to show some response to questioning, Emma calls Steed urgently to his bedside, but they are foiled from making any further headway when Dr. Fergus Campbell administers a fatal





injection to the patient.

Appearing to come out of a trance, Dr. Campbell proves as appalled by his murderous action as those around him. In his subsequent brain-searching, he reveals that he, too, is a member of the mysterious Ransack club.

Steed himself secures membership of Ransack through Desmond Leeming, an official of the club. He goes to the country boarding school where the club conducts special courses, and Emma arrives there, too, as a secretary.

Conducting an archery class in the school grounds is Holly Trent, a sporty woman who speaks to Steed somewhat scornfully about Ransack and its members.

Hub of Ransack activities is the gymnasium, where the members exercise on the equipment and hone their minds at school desks with highly intellectual question papers. Steed manages to sustain a high I.Q. with Emma's discreet help.

By night, Ransack activities become extremely suspicious. Steed discovers that Emma plays a trance-like part in watching military training films and on going out on some form of combat expedition.

When Steed takes up this behaviour with Emma, she at first denies all knowledge of it, but then realises that she and the Ransack members were obviously victims of mass hypnosis, induced by a voice over the radio speakers in each bedroom.

The hypnosis theory also provides the answer to Sir Clive's treachery and his murder by the doctor. Steed had escaped hypnosis because the speaker in his room was disconnected.

Steed now begins to feign hypnosis and attend the indoctrinations, but the officials see through his hoax. They order his disposal and a seemingly trance-bound Emma volunteers for the job. However, when she reports Steed as dead, they realise her complicity and a fight breaks out.

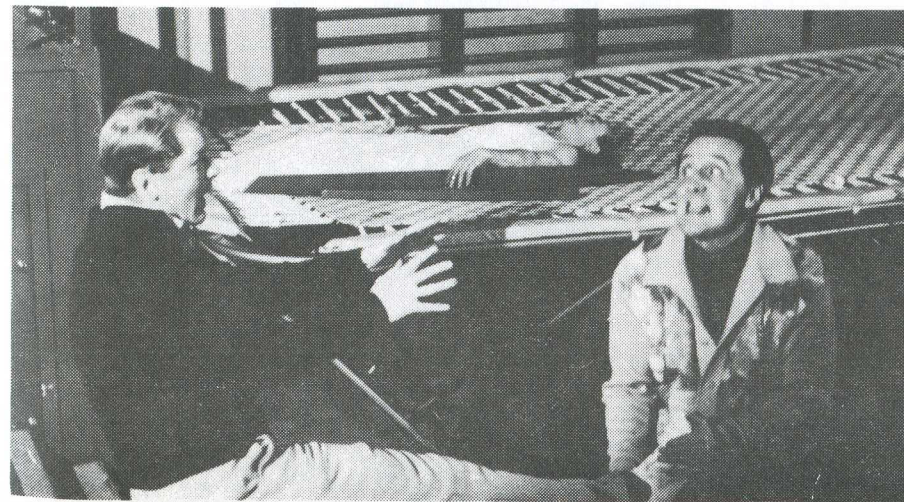
The unharmed Steed springs to Emma's rescue and they combine forces in using all the gym equipment as weapons with which to defeat the Ransackers. At the climax of the fray, the master-mind-in-chief is revealed as woman archer Holly Trent. The Avengers see that Holly and her deadly companions are induced to a sleep far deeper than hypnosis.

- Cast -

John Steed	Patrick Macnee
Emma Peel	Diana Rigg
Sir Clive Todd	Laurence Hardy
Holly Trent	Patricia Haines
Desmond Leeming	Bernard Archard
Dr. Fergus Campbell	Ian McNaughton
Sir Jeremy	John Wentworth
Davinia Todd	Georgina Ward
Major Plessy	Manning Wilson

Directed by Peter Graham Scott

Produced by Julian Wintle





Midnight Meanderings

Luck of Avengers Fans in U.K....
or How Patrick Macnee Arrived and We Didn't Know It

by Derwin Mak

Avengerwise, Christine and I had some frustrating times in London, but it was also filled with times that would please any "Avengers" or science fiction fan.

The first thing we noticed in the land of "The Avengers", MI-5 and CI-5 was that the "New Avengers" paperbacks were out of print and were nowhere to be found. It seemed as if the book industry had never touched "The Avengers" or "New Avengers". For someone trying to find those precious paperbacks, the situation was no better in London.

However, my sister and I arrived at the right time to watch the television debut of the new ATV series "Sapphire and Steel". The series was given much hype and publicity in the newspapers and it sounded awfully juicy to this science fiction fan; two aliens get called to Earth to sort out problems in time. Joanna Lumley is back on TV, this time as Sapphire, and David McCallum has also returned, this time as Steel.

Then, disaster struck. London's independent TV channel, a channel shared by Thames (on weekdays) and London Weekend (the LWT that brought us "The Professionals" - on weekends) didn't show anything. At Thames, three film editors had refused to work on the same programme (they wanted only one editor to work on it because they thought that would help continuity) and the trio had been fired. This resulted in a strike at Thames, neatly blacking out London's ITV channel.

Unfortunately, it occurred just before the debut of "Sapphire and Steel". But on the Tuesday morning before the debut, Thames was still showing a depressing white caption on a blue background saying that services had been disrupted. Thinking that Thames would still be on strike, we made no effort to return to our temporary residence by 7 pm. When

we finally did arrive we discovered that the strike had ended... we had missed the first episode of "Sapphire and Steel"!

Missing "Sapphire and Steel" was bad enough. Finding out we'd missed Patrick Macnee at Heathrow Airport was worse! We saw his picture in the paper. The caption under the photo of him and his daughter Jenny said he had arrived on Monday, July 9 (we could have seen him!!) to play in "The Grass is Greener". Naturally, the play must have started after we left Britain.

"Night and Day" was playing in London, but Diana Rigg had been replaced. We hope she recovers from her back injury or whatever else may have plagued her.

Our luck changed on the Thursday after the strike. "Sapphire and Steel" was on twice a week, so we raced and ran (quite a hard thing to do in the London Underground) to our uncle's house in Edmonton to watch the second episode.

The series is for fans of the eerie type of science fiction. It seems that the parents of two children have disappeared into a room. Elements sapphire and steel (in the shapes of Joanna Lumley and David McCallum) are sent here to investigate. They can talk to each other telepathically and Sapphire can reverse time. One notable scene has her making Rob (Steven O'Shea) open the door for a policeman over and over again. Then Rob talks to Sapphire while another image of Rob opens the door repeatedly for the policeman... and all in the same shot!

Later, in episode three, Sapphire disappears into a painting and can't escape. She senses that a girl had been killed in that house before, and it turns out to be her! Soldiers from the English Civil War enter the house and are about to kill her when Steel brings Sapphire back into our world and time. Unfortunately, the soldiers follow her. The cliffhangers are unbearable, especially when you leave the country the next day, never to return!

Next surprise; right after episode two, a Nescafe commercial starring Gareth Hunt was aired! In this commercial, he shakes his fist to produce more coffee

beans in his palm. Eventually he makes a jar of Nescafe coffee.

I found a magazine called "Look-In" which has a beautiful colour centrefold of Joanna Lumley and David McCallum from "Sapphire and Steel". They hold a clock which is set at 7.00, the time the show goes on.

My sister found a magazine about "The Professionals" with interviews with Martin Shaw and Lewis Collins. There are plenty of colour photos and the overall tone of the magazine is not that of a scandal sheet like the Hollywood magazines.

The last chase, finally, was after a pair of Dinky Toys - Steed's Jaguar and Purdey's TR7. A gift set of the two cars exists in the Dinky catalogue with a figure in a yellow shirt included. Unfortunately, every store we entered either didn't carry the cars or had sold out.

We left England carrying a centrefold of Joanna Lumley and David McCallum, a magazine about "The Professionals" and a pile of newspaper clippings. And harrowing memories of rushing to see Joanna Lumley in "Sapphire and Steel".



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LOCs of Gold

STEVE ERAMO, Stoneham, MA:

Patrick Newell has been appearing in a British
comedy series, "Benny Hill".

And speaking of "Benny Hill", I saw the "New
Avengers" take-off he did - dumb but funny. Benny
Hill plays Steed. At one point he's looking down
at an accident victim and instead of paying attention
to the case he notices the x-ray and says, "You have
a kidney shaped like a dining room table." Cute??
And the girl who plays Purdey looks incredibly like
her while Gambit is played by a 70 year old man
with a black wig in karate suit.

The fight scene with the Chinese agent is
something else and at the end a man comes out and
says, "What a team! What courage!" It's actually
their boss and the 'courage' is shot when they want
to hang about a bit because it's raining out.
Something that has to be seen... funny!

((concerning N/L #10)) ...fabulous! The
interview with Patrick was very well done and most
interesting as well as informative. I was most happy
to hear of Linda's marriage, of course, and thank
you so much for putting the blurb in about my
yearbook.

Susan Glynn's questions on Emma Peel's past
were most intriguing and difficult! I ran through
my tape of "House That Jack Built" just for the
heck of it and it didn't answer any of those
questions. They never really went into her past in
the series. On a guess, I might say Emma and Peter
were married maybe five years? I doubt she was ever
pregnant, no reference was ever made to this. Steed
must have known the basic details of her marriage
I'm pretty sure. At the end of "Forget-Me-Knot"
their conversation about it seemed casual enough.
And I have no details on the marriage. I know, not
much help, but I thought I'd throw my snippets of
info into the pot. Oh, and Emma's maiden name was
Knight...

From my info, America will be getting "Licensed
to Love and Kill" even before Britain does. It making

it to Britain depends on it getting a good response here. Actually, it's suppose to be catering to Americans with the James Bond bit and all. There is a paperback out on the movie itself in Britain, published by Corgi. I've seen it... the cover is nice and that's almost it. Two friends who read it said it's a bit trashy and extremely violent.

KAREN ESIBILL, Baltimore, MD:

As a new member of the Network, let me compliment you on Newsletter #9 - just super. As one of the 'old timers' in the realm of "Avengers" enthusiasts, I thoroughly enjoyed "Something Old, Something New". You soothed my slight resentment of Mike Gambit. Oh, I think Gareth Hunt is excellent in the role and certainly attractive enough. But for me "The Avengers" is Steed... and Steed's success lies solely in the charm, style and wonderful screen presence of Patrick Macnee. Regardless of his co-stars through the years, Macnee is the spark that ignites. So, my only bone to pick with "The New Avengers" is that there is not enough of Steed, and poor Gambit has caught the brunt of my displeasure. Formal apologies to Gareth. It is not his fault that I can't get enough of Patrick Macnee and I agree with you that his character does compliment that of Steed and Purdey.

The special issue on Pat Macnee was such a delightful treat. The interview just heightened my regard for him. He is such a warm and gracious man. Liked the photos of him, too.

"The Avengers" is being shown on a syndicated channel here on Sunday evenings. Most of the episodes are, I think, the very first ones with Diana Rigg. Anyway, they are a treasure to see again. There was such a rare chemistry between the two of them. I do wish they would work together again.

SALLY SYRJALA, Centerville, MA:

Bill Bradshaw's description of the Patrick Newell commercials makes me wish they would be shown here. The British humor is precious. It would be a welcome change from learning that relief is spelled in a way completely different from that which one would think.

The Pat Macnee commercial sounds rather like "The Emperor's Clothes". Of course, the people who recognize the merit of the product are the discerning folk. Somehow I think that commercial would sell a bit of Right Guard on U.S. airwaves as well as British. Maybe in addition to Colibri lighter commercials this one could be added?

It was interesting reading the transcript of the interview with Pat. The allusion to the character of John Steed being somewhat nebulous as to whether it was good or evil in character does make one think of Count Iblis' portrayal in "Battlestar Galactica". Again, the audience was kept guessing as to the true being of the character. I wonder if that was purposeful or not.

Also, the reason Ruth Berman gave as to Mrs. Peel's name change makes sense. Mrs. Peel always was a liberated person. She would be one of the first to make her own identity known. Indeed, "The Avengers" was ahead of its time and perhaps that phone call with those intriguing words were just another reminder of how far ahead of its time it really was.

Also, liked the idea brought out in the interview of the pre-Linda Thorson sexuality in the series as being 'implied' rather than displayed. I agree completely as to the former's being more titillating than the latter. All revealed leaves no mystery and the unknown is what attracts and holds attention. If all is revealed, there is naught for the imagination to grab hold of.

DAVID LUBKIN, East Lansing, MI:

I publish a 'monthly' (hah!) zine devoted to Anne McCaffrey called "Crystal Singer". If you have any interest in her works, you might like to try us or at least write for more info.

Eileen Roy and I are coediting a zine tentatively titled "By Hook or By Crook" ((retitled to "Paladin")). Large gobs of "UNCLE", appreciable amounts of "The Avengers" and "The Prisoner" (I have a lovely Emma Peel and John Steed meet Napoleon and Illya story). Lesser amounts of "Alias Smith and Jones", "Mission: Impossible", "Honey West",

"The Persuaders", "Wild, Wild West", "The Magician", "Modesty Blaise", "Lou Grant", "Secret Agent", "The Paper Chase" ...

There will be future issues and there is still time to submit something for the first issue ((hint!)) so you can say so in your Newsletter. The original deadlines we had were with the vague hopes of getting something out in time for Townsley's NY Trek con. Now that this is impossible, we have extended deadlines. Basically, the moment we get enough material for 100-120 pp, we go to press. ((Note: see the "Garage Sale" section for details on ordering "Paladin".))

CHARLES BRADLEY, New Orleans, LA:

Saw Patrick on "Dinah" about two weeks ago and she kept referring to him as Johnnn Steed. Patrick seemed delighted to be on the show and commented on his roles in "Billion Dollar Threat" and "Stunt Seven" and how he enjoyed holding Elke Sommer for ransom in the latter.

As I read through issue #10 for about as many times, I was particularly interested in what Patrick thought of each of his karate chopping ladies. Although he treated each of them with a kind of sincere admiration, one could not help but read between the lines when he spoke of his enjoyment in working with Diana Rigg. I can't help but feel that had Patrick been in complete control of "The Avengers" they would have been and would still be John Steed and Emma Peel.

DAN HELMICK, Hudson, MI:

I avidly read through the back issues of the Newsletter and just picked up #10 at home. About which... well, what can one say about twenty pages of Pat Macnee?! "Sapphire and Steel" sounds rather intriguing, too.

Do you read Marvel's X-MEN comic? Normally I don't, but boredom induced me to pick up the latest issue. I was surprised to find a reference to the Hellfire Club, but thought it an historical reference from which Marvel merely intended to shoot off on a tangent of its own. Not so! The club's Black Queen was

depicted in black corset, boots, gloves and spiked collar... plus, a cape with a red rose pinned to it! Coincidence?

LENI SOMMER, Greeley, CO:

I've given much thought to the question you posed at the end of the last regular issue (#9, I think it was) and there really isn't any one particular scene I would want to change. However, I wouldn't mind a little 'mood altering'.

"The New Avengers", I feel, take themselves a trifle too seriously. I miss the 'schtick' from the good old days when "extra-ordinary crimes against the state required the services of extra-ordinary agents", when every episode started with "Mrs. Peel, you're needed" and ended with some little commentary, in a humorous vein, on the goings-on. I had my hopes when in the first episode I saw Gambit dump Purdey out of bed with the line "Duty calls, Purdey, and you're not answering." But except for the all too rare exchanges between Gambit and Purdey, usually concerning the former's affection for the latter, humor was almost non-existent.

In later episodes there was more, but except for "Medium Rare" I felt that I'd been left hanging at the end of each episode.

And then there's the matter of Steed standing around like a pep club member while Gambit gets beaten to a pulp. Now anyone who's 'clever little fist' can dent a cybernaut can obviously take care of himself, but that's no reason for him to have to get creamed when all Steed would have to do is lend a hand, or bowler, for that matter, and Purdey a foot for there to be a speedy resolution of the matter. Steed is by no means ready to be put out to pasture and Purdey "already knew she was liberated" way back when everyone else was burning bras, so they don't need to function as Gambit's cheering section.

But I am glad to see that our agents are still extra-ordinary, as evidenced by Gambit's proficiency with fists and firearms, Purdey's fancy footwork and Steed's legendary intelligence. And I appreciate the

added depth to the characters I saw. A director I worked with last fall said that characters do not develop, they unfold. I have really enjoyed watching Gambit, Purdey and even Steed unfold before my eyes - getting to know them as is the way with friends old and new, little by little. Being from Nebraska, I was absolutely delighted to learn that, as a young man, Steed had participated in a cattle drive. And, of course, we found out quite a lot about Purdey in "Obsession". Gambit still remains very much the mystery man except for his undying admiration for Steed and love for Purdey.

However, I do miss the Bentley and the sound of popping champagne corks!

RUTH BERMAN, Minneapolis, MN:

The interview with Patrick Macnee in #10 is interesting - he comes across as a friend. I think I see a mistake in the transcription at the bottom of page 5. "A woman, but one who runs like a man" is probably not "an aphrodite" but a hermaphrodite, a very different creature indeed.

I didn't like the "Galactica"/Iblis story, but the character of Iblis (until it dissolved into bogeyman bromide) as would-be messiah was interesting. If one were to ignore the 'surprise' of his being not what he seems, it would be interesting to imagine a confrontation between Iblis and the Apollo of "Who Mourns for Adonais" ("Star Trek"), both arguing hotly over what kind of paradise would be best for humans while the humans in the background beg for freedom from gods to work out their own destiny.

LYNN FACIANE, Slidell, LA:

As I was reading "LOCs of Gold" I came across a letter concerning fan clubs versus fandom. I have to tell you of my experience.

When I first joined the Network I had no idea what to expect. When my husband asked me who I had written to I almost didn't tell him. Then I broke down and told him I had joined a fan club... he was hysterical with laughter. He said, "What's next, the John Travolta or Shaun Cassidy Club?"

Well, I let him have his laugh and then I eagerly

awaited my first Newsletter. The day it came I was vindicated. After I read it he asked for my opinion. I just handed it to him with a sneaky grin and said, "See for yourself." From that day forward I was never kidded again about 'my fan club'. The only problem now is we race each other to the mailbox to see who gets to read it first!

etcetera....

And so ends another issue of the Newsletter. Since I started on this issue about three weeks later than normal, I had my doubts that it would be out on schedule... but things seem to be moving right along! My paste-up, proofreading, and mailing may be a bit hurried, so excuse any small errors here and there.

As mentioned earlier, Bill Bradshaw is coming up with an article on Laurie Johnson for some future issue. Also, I'm considering a little something on the "Diana" show which guest starred Patrick Macnee. You'll notice that I threw in an extra plot synopsis this issue... since there were none in #10. Enjoy! The synopses for next issue will be "Never, Never Say Die" and "K is for Kill". And, there's a good possibility that we'll have an interview with Gareth Hunt before too very long.....!

There are persons who have been asking me about membership count and so on. I keep forgetting to put an announcement in each issue, sorry. For those numerically inclined... we now have over 180 members in the Fan Network. Of those, around 70 subscribe regularly to the Newsletter. Several issues go out to dealers and bookstores, thus increasing readership. All in all, pretty good considering we started from scratch and most of our members/readers have been located by word of mouth! But there are a great many more "Avengers" fan out there, I'm sure... we just need to let them know we're here!

"At the top of the stairs. ...He likes his tea stirred anti-clockwise."

