



The Sixty third issue of a sort-of letter substitute, kinda thing. Maybe weekly, maybe not. Available from:

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Available via the World Wide Web, or as an email attachment. I recommend the Portable Document Format (pdf) or, if you insist, a word or Rich Text Format (rtf) can also be emailed. Get in touch and we'll sort something out. You are going to [TorCon III](#), aren't you? Dated, already, 14/11/02.

Americanization.

'They have a famine day in Buffalo; they take things that seriously in the states' The Brother.

Drawing in through my nostrils, I smell that scent that means only one thing. I am on a sniffing mission, to sniff and ponder at what I can find.

So this is my final piece on the subject of WorldCon. I am looking at why there is negativism among some UK fans about WorldCon, and I have decided to deal with a most difficult subject, it isn't easy, it would be easier not to write on this subject, but then that would be a bit cowardly. So with that thought in mind, I surge on.

It appears that at times, during a British WorldCon, misunderstanding occurs between UK and US fans, sometimes, that's all they are, sometimes, a bitter taste is left in the mouth.

Unfortunately I know little about America.

Well that's not totally true, I have read Hunter S. Thompson, Joe R. Lansdale, Michael Herr, Phillip K. Dick and Frank Miller, to name just a few. I love comics; movies, TV, Southpark and I have a PC. So I suppose I appreciate what the country produces, so I know a little bit, perhaps.

So I went to the brother, who is not into SF at all, but who lived and worked in the US for some time.

Immediately I remember a story the brother told us all.

'I got off the phone, I was at work, in the bar, it was pretty busy', 'Mom was just on, and I was missing home a lot, so I must have looked a bit glum'. 'Hey Andy, what's wrong?' said one of the regulars, I thought a moment, my mind working on overdrive, 'bad news from home, Mom was just on, and its really terrible'.

'What's wrong', the punters were always interested about home, 'well the donkey died last night', 'Shit, that's real terrible' one of them said. 'yeah I agreed, and I went out to sort out some stock, hiding a cheeky laugh as I went. When I came back in, the guys are all looking cheerful. 'We've set up a donkey fund for ya'. 'They had too, would you believe it. We eventually drank it, all of us, and had a laugh'

There is a message to be learnt from that story, never trust my brother.

So at times there can be friction between US and UK fans in regard to the running of WorldCon, so I explained this to the Brother, as best I could, and he wasn't surprised.

'Americans are not thick', well I didn't think they were actually but this is how the brother starts his advice, 'and although we say they aren't sometimes we think it'.

'They are really focused, committed, forthright, aggressive and usually get what they want'. 'If you met a driving instructor, from the states, they would baffle you with their knowledge on the subject, this stems from their education, whereas you wouldn't be quite au fait on your job, cause 'its just a job', you could also talk about your SF stuff, or comics or whatever, a broader range of subjects these wouldn't be of interest to that guy, he is a driving instructor.'

Well that made sense, American fans are focussed, and that's for sure.

'Your average American will expect a certain quality and if he doesn't get it, he wont be short in telling you what you are doing wrong', he continued, 'He'll want to fix the problem, and will be very strong willed about the situation, will not take no for an answer and will do everything to make it happen'

Well that would account for the occasional rubbing up wrong, if our State side cousins are coming to a WorldCon, well that's what they expect, and if it is a bit different because its 'European' well, perhaps he doesn't see it that way, perhaps he just sees it as being wrong and then making this clear.

'So explain what you are trying to say, bro' says the brother. I explained my thoughts, about the clashing of fans, which may go unnoticed to some, can be an upsetting experience, and went on to give my solution about making it clear that a European WorldCon is different.

'That wont work, you see if you tell the Americans that 'hey this is a European con and its going to be different' well he just will look at you and say, 'No this is a WorldCon' and he will feel fairly patronized.' 'Wouldn't you if I said that you don't know what you are talking about even if you knew the subject like the back of your hand?' and when I thought about it, I would be.

Its an interesting point, so we chilled out for a moment or two and we started thinking of solutions, the brother suggested parallel cons, one for Americans and then one for my freak friends, 'nipple piercing, street rocket lugge's and all that other shite ye get up to'. I didn't think that would work, and questioned silently whether my brother had any idea how serious the matter really is.

Eventually we came up with a few solutions.

So, first off either the con is a WorldCon or it isn't. If it isn't that's cool, if it is, it should resemble and be similar to other WorldCons, including US WorldCon's, with European eccentricity complementing the experience.

That's right, complementing, so its core, its base should have all the things that one should get at any WorldCon, and then that little bit extra, to add the European flavour.

At the end of the day, it is the American co-operation that makes a European WorldCon happen. It was American votes that surely won the day, an unspoken policy where the Americans don't contest the vote and their pre-supporting which made this WorldCon viable. They are surely in for a penny, so denying them their pound is difficult.

Volunteers are so precious I'd have thought that committee's would take them from anywhere, and seek them anywhere as well.

So provide for the American needs, are they really that different than our own, I honestly do not believe so, I think they want to have a great con too, and I imagine, that they are also prepared to help it along. I

have heard wonderful reports from James Peart, Ireland's envoy, with Rod O'Hanlon to WorldCon's since 1995. So they must be doing something right.

If the con is going well, and run well, will there still be complaints?
I don't think so.

Which brings us to the next part, get them involved.

If I was worried that I would have an American giving out about how Europeans run a con, I would have Americans on hand, who were involved at all levels, just waiting to tell him forthrightly to fuck off.

Ok admittedly Ben Yallow is on the board, and Mr. Yallow is and has been on many boards, and is well respected and appreciated for all his tireless efforts for fandom, and I expect is doing a similar role to the one I suggest, perhaps, but I think a few more American faces wouldn't go amiss at all levels, a good and interesting mix, who would give 'constructive and positive' feedback now and in the planning stages, and be prepared to put their money where the mouth is and roll up the sleeves and get involved.

Rather than bitching at the con.

I don't see anything wrong with saying 'What do you think of this idea?'

The link that brings us Taff, Corflu's in the UK and fanzines flying across the Atlantic, surely must be strong enough to admit that there may be a divergence of opinions, but perhaps bouncing ideas among each other, may just get a solution that makes everyone happy well before the con even happens. Make it work, make it fun and make it compatible.

If they are involved, they also share the blame.

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This is James Bacon's final piece about WorldCon, but I have convinced him to come back at a later stage to follow up on his writing, as I know much interest has been stirred by his words. James has also said if any editors are interested in paper publication of these articles, to just drop me a line.

Next issue Linda Krawecka responds to James' writing in a feature length letter which is one of her increasingly rare fannish writings. More please Linda.

I'll be back shortly after that with some much delayed fanzine reviews as well as a more personal article for Christmas. Talking of which I'm putting together a fanzine with the best of my more personal writing in TommyWorld to be issued shortly before Christmas as well. Full colour cover and featuring half a dozen articles. Let me know if you want a copy by sending an email with your address to: tw@tommyworld.net.

Talk to you all soon

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