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Items will crop up now and again, that deserve the widest possible distribution we can give. Items such as the present question of how votes should be counted for TAFF. And rather than restrict the dispensation of information to readers of CONTACT, we have taken this way of 'special supplements' to inform all the fen on our lists. As a secondary feature it will remind you that CONTACT is still being published and that you haven't let us know anything. You can still get your copy if you sub now, as we ran off sufficient copies to go round.
May we now draw your attention to:

T A F F

A change has been made by DON FORD in the method of counting votes for TAFF, without any mandate from fandom for it.

Previous ballot forms, drawn up by Walt Willis, carried the following note:

"The method of counting will be as usual in this type of election -- i.e., your first choice will get 3 points, your second 2, and your third 1. This type of proportional representation is equivalent to a series of eliminating ballots and is designed to ensure that if your first choice doesn't win your vote won't have been wasted. However, it is of course open to you to 'plump' for a candidate by not using your second and third votes."

It was thus made clear that a voter could vote only ONCE for ONE candidate.

The new ballot form, drawn up by Don Ford, however, reads:

"Your first choice will be awarded 3 points, your second 2, and your third 1. Smartest way to boost your favorite candidate is to write his name in all three choices for a total of 6 points."

THIS MAY BE SMART, BUT IT IS ILLEGAL AND UNFAIR.

In the first place, it in effect allows a voter to vote twice for the same candidate. This is illegal in any kind of election.

In the second place, it would give greater weight to the votes of people who do not know enough about the other candidates to choose 2nd and 3rd choices among them, or who do not care enough about TAFF to bother. This is unfair because it would tend to help the less suitable candidates, those for instance who may whip up votes from local non-fans or fringe fans or college mates. Don Ford has refused to lay down any criterion of those qualified to vote except that if they're not known in fandom they may give reference to a "club"; so anyone can call his friends a "club", and the double votes of a couple of dozen of these strawfen, obtained for the outlay of a few dollars, will outweigh those of discriminating fans who try to place the candidates in order of merit for long services to fandom.

One result of this indiscriminating voting would be that, in order to counterbalance the blind power of these machine voters, the fans who would normally exercise their knowledge

and discrimination will feel bound to "plump" for their favorite candidate by giving him their six full points. This will destroy the whole purpose of allowing people to express first, second and third preferences, and reduce the election to the primitive form of one vote for one candidate. The evils of this are obvious. Sensible voters will be forced to "plump" for a candidate who they think has the best chance, to keep out someone whose election they might think to be a disaster, even though he might not have had their first choice if they had been free to express themselves. Candidates, especially those who represent what some people call "fanzine fandom" will feel forced to withdraw to avoid splitting the fanzine fandom vote... and people like this might well be the most deserving candidates. If you would care to read Contact One again for instance...

The way will be open for all kinds of political deals, intrigue and chicanery.

Don Ford has been approached about this by both Walt Willis and myself, with the suggestion that he should change his mind. He says he can't do this because he counted some votes this way last time and because he has already distributed this year's voting forms.

Against this I say that the fact that he counted illegal votes last year, doesn't mean that he has to make the same mistake deliberately this time. (It's unlikely that in fact it made any difference to the result of last year's election.) As for his second point, there is no need to alter his ballot forms, just his method of counting, which he will not have to employ for some time yet. All that he is being asked to do when the time comes is to count only three points for any one candidate from any one voter, as has been the accepted practice in TAFP all along.

This whole matter is not one that calls for long-winded debates from either side of the fence. It is basically a YES/NO affair. But it is also one of the utmost importance.

Please react. Send us an avalanche of answers, just a slip of paper with yes, or no, and your signature will do. But react! US fans to John Hitchcock, 300 E University Pkwy, BALTIMORE 18, Maryland. Europe & UK direct to Janjan.

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