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SPA FCN

ANOTHER CYCLE: Welcome to the "new" EGOSCAN. The old fanzine of that name
perished last fall, a victim of the unparalleled unpleasant-
ness which erupted from the insignificant island of Puerto Rico and two of
its nameless (they've gotten all the attention they'll ever get from me)
occupants.

At the time I wrote and published #8 I honestly thought that the situ-
ation was one which could be salvaged and that at bottom all the partici-
pants were individuals of good will and basic decency. Subsequent events
disabused me of that naive notion. I found that my support of Avedon Car-
ol and my refusal of support to her attackers was taken by her attackers
as a declaration of war, and that more than twenty years of friendship and
(I thought) mutual respect were scuttled overnight. Subsequently my honesty
and honor were snidely attacked and I was publicly vilified. It appears
that in fact my attacker had absolutely no qualms about rearranging facts,
ignoring inconvenient facts, and telling outright lies in his campaigns
against Avedon Carol, Rob Hansen, Patrick Nielsen Hayden and myself... cam-
paigns which appeared to multiply to include each new fan who objected to
what he was doing, and has included by now Dave Langford, Chuch Harris,
Arthur Thomson and others equally unlikely.

The effects of all this were to significantly diminish my interest in
fanac while simultaneously involving me in reams of correspondence, much of
it devoted to chasing down and rebutting the slanders being circulated. In
the process my plans for a post-LACon issue (devoted to anecdotes that re-
volved around the con -- which was one of the most enjoyable Worldcons for
me in years) were disrupted and my memories (despite the notes I took) grew
faded and too vague to be relied upon for all those swell punchlines.

It's been pointed out to me that it's an ill wind that blows no good,
and that in fact this entire situation has sorted out the Good Guys from the
Bad Guys and shown us where our true sympathies lie. And so forth. But I
could have done without the pain and disillusionment, the nastiness and
pettiness, and the general pollution of fandom as I was enjoying it. It seems
to me that with one calculated act that fan in Puerto Rico destroyed much
that he and we had built in the past five years, and with it his own cred-
it. He perished, metaphorically speaking, in the truck bomb he exploded
at the foot of the tower of the Enchanted Duplicator, a victim of his own
fannish terrorism.

For the past four months this typer has sat idle, a half-typed stencil
waiting to be finished in it. That stencil was page five of REALITY CHECK,
a one-shot I proposed to publish, devoted to publishing the Basic Documents
in the attack on Avedon, principal among them Patrick Nielsen Hayden's let-
ter of July 13th to that fan in Puerto Rico. Patrick's eleven-page letter
answered all the charges against Avedon in a sensible, straightforward man-
ner, in a friendly tone. Patrick too believed then that he was dealing with
a basically decent man, and that all that was involved were a few misconcep-
tions or misunderstandings -- and that if he explained the facts of the sit-
uation they would be understood and the misunderstanding would vanish. He
was, as he subsequently found out, wrong. There was never any honest misun-

derstanding on the part of the author of WIZ #11, and his reaction to Patrick's letter was to mock it and to scorn Patrick for having bothered. Bear in mind that Patrick's letter of July 13th reached Puerto Rico before WIZ #11 was written and published (Patrick was reacting both to WIZ #10 and to personal correspondence with its author) -- and that the points it made were ignored and the "misunderstandings" were repeated in WIZ #11, the first sign that what was occurring here was not the work of an honest person.

When I returned from LACon in early September I was greeted by the first of a series of semi-publications (mostly xeroxed letters to half a dozen or more people) from Dave Locke and Jackie Cosgrove. I was then in the middle of one of Dave's "Conversations" (as published in OUTWORLDS) -- a back-and-forth correspondence-interview sort of thing.

To my amazement I found that Dave had linked my defense of Avedon with Eric Mayer's senseless attack on me (in a publication he called TEDSCAN) -- somehow coming up with the notion that I was responsible for everything.

Giving Dave the benefit of the doubt initially, I responded with a long letter, minute portions of which have been taken out of context (a favorite trick alike for Puerto Ricans and Eric Mayer) since then in places like HOL-
IER THAN THOU, despite a clear "Not For Publication" emblazoned on the top of the letter. Fannish ethics appear to mean nothing to these people.

I told Dave I wouldn't nitpick or engage in ongoing arguments on the subject; my letter would have to stand on its own and he could accept it or not as he chose. He chose to reject it, and has since embarked on an amazing campaign to pick up where the original attack left off, angering and alienating a wide variety of people (like Malcolm Edwards) whom he has accused of lying when their ideas of what was going on failed to gibe with his own.

As a consequence, I have written Dave Locke off as a man who is either intellectually dishonest or a complete fool -- it doesn't matter which -- and I shan't continue the "Conversation," which I had already become aware was tainted by this characteristic of Dave's.

Other things occurred last fall. After about six months of living together, Linda Blanchard and rich brown discovered that while they liked each other no less each had traits the other found difficult to live with. (Rich has never discussed any of the specifics with me, but I know he snores terribly, a fact my daughter -- whose room is next to the Green Room -- often complains about....) So, in October they agreed to part amicably, and rich came to live for a while once again in my Green Room while Linda set off on a cross-country trip. We will miss Linda and we regret her departure.

Although Eric Mayer's TEDSCAN was devoted largely to dishonestly slagging me (by quoting passages out of context and in reverse order from a long letter I'd written Eric), it took some passing shots at rich brown as well. (Oddly enough, Eric never had the courage to send either of us a copy.) Rich decided to respond with something he called GROTTY, and not long after he had moved in here he got a postcard of response from Eric's wife, Kathy. This is what it said, in full:

"I thank you & the parakeet thanks you too. The supply of paper you sent fits the bottom of his cage perfectly.

"It was no surprise Linda left you. We had been informed of this possibility months ago. Glad to see she returned to her senses.

"Ta

/Kathy/

"P.S. Heard there is a herpes epidemic in Falls Church & environs. Is it true? Maybe this accounts for some peoples 'Mind Set'. Again many thanx."

This card, was followed up by a second (postmarked Dec. 4), on which Kathy

addressed to "Rich Brown...Alias...Ted White." Here it is in full:

"Darlings, Congratulations! Just heard about your imminent marriage. It's about time you both tied the knot & came 'out of the closet.' I can't think of any other no talent, insecure, pompous, old fart losers who deserve one another more. I'm also sure you'll be a great comfort to each other with your Herpes/AIDS problem. You won't have to live in isolation, insulated by your illness. You'll have each other.

"By the way, do you think you could do something about the smell of the things you send. It's really bad. The mailman complained of the stench recently.

"Arivederci, /Kathy/"

You know, I don't think I've seen poison-postcards in fandom since George Wetzel's heyday in the fifties. As Rich remarked to me after the second postcard arrived, "I think I know what's been making Eric sick...."

While I don't take Kathy's postcards at all seriously, I do take the mind behind them seriously. It disgusts me. Back in the seventh issue of this fanzine, in a section titled "Fandom At The Moment," I commented on a sick fan who was so obsessed with vilifying me that he was willing to sieze upon the most proposterous pretexts as justification -- and I related an example. Several people wrote to me after receiving that issue to ask why I hadn't identified the fan. The reason was a simple one: if he was doing this stuff to gain attention I was thwarting him; at the same time, he knew quite well who he was and I was in effect giving him a public warning to cease and desist, as well as showing him how foolish he was being.

Well, that unnamed fan was Eric Mayer, as he admitted in TEDSCAN, and I feel no further need to shield him from the consequences of his actions. However, I want to make clear that this is in no sense a "feud" between us, since I have no intention of responding further to his outrageous slanders, none of which appear to be rooted in any reality whatsoever. I think Eric must have a serious problem in some aspect of his personal life which has led him to make fundamental errors in his perception of me and what I have written (in particular my "Lost in OZ" in SIKANDER). I wish him luck with his problems and I disassociate myself from him and them. Goodbye, Eric. See you in another world.

I have yet to finish stencilling REALITY CHECK, although I intend to. It seemed, in late October, the only sensible thing to do in the face of the garbage then being widely circulated: to document the actual things that were said and when they were said, to give the lie to the stories originating in Puerto Rico which had somehow made over the aggressor into the victim, and portrayed the actual victim's defenders as the aggressors. When Marty Cantor made the unfortunate decision to offer up HOLIER THAN THOU as the newest (and widest-reaching) forum for these fictions (and in addition circulated the scurilous WIZ #12 to the entire HTT mailing list), I felt I had little choice but to publish the facts. I was disgusted by Marty's sycophantic attitude toward his columnist, an attitude which equated the outraged response to the attack on Avedon with the attack itself.

(I might add that I am equally disgusted by Paul Williams' glib sophistries on the subject in TRAP DOOR. But Paul has a history of equating victims with their attackers and of accusing the victims of authoring their own attacks. Paul Williams has moments when he's a real jerk.)

Now, in late January, the storm has subsided somewhat. Despite the efforts of both that fan in Puerto Rico and Locke & Cosgrove (see my comments on TAFF which follow), the Nielsen Haydens won TAFF. People like Rich Coad and Victor Gonzales have spoken up. It's becoming apparent that in fact very few fans were really sucked in by the attacks in WIZ and HTT -- and that most of you would sooner put the whole thing behind you, and some of

you are already professing boredom with the subject.

I find it hard to understand how anyone, no matter how removed, could be bored by the sight of several major fans self-destructing so colorfully, but I can understand that they'd prefer to see something else occurring on the fannish stage.

In any case, I finally pulled that half-typed stencil from my typer and replaced it with the first stencil for this issue. I'll finish REALITY CHECK, although I propose to distribute it only to those who request it. In the meantime, I want to redo EGOSCAN. To begin with, the macho-fannish challenge of writing every issue on stencil has paled for me. Portions of this and future issues may well be first-drafted, whenever I feel like it.

Along with that I've made other changes in the format, most of which are self-evident. The monthly schedule is gone. So is the specific page-limit. What remains is that EGOSCAN will be largely editor-written, as before, and will continue to echo my preoccupations and fascinations. So, welcome to the "new" EGOSCAN.

SO WHAT ELSE IS NEW? Sitting across from me on this desk as I write this is an Apple IIe computer, with a Compumate 2100 daisy-wheel printer. I have a stack of manuals four inches thick to read, and not a huge desire to do so; the computer is here primarily for my daughter.

But.... But I made sure to get a word-processing program, so not only will I be eventually producing my own address-labels on the thing, I can do a lot more. I'm under the impression that the printer can cut a stencil, for example, and if it can't, well, Terry Hughes (who lives about a mile from here and who has been making noises about de-gafiating) just got an electrostenciller.... So one of these days I may use the Apple to produce a fanzine, maybe.

More likely I'll use it first in my music. The IIe has interface capability with synthesizers (I notice Herbie Hancock uses one with his Fairlight), and I keep acquiring synthesizers. Most recently I got (from a friend who was selling his equipment) a Roland SH-101 and a Roland MC-202, both full synthesizers (with sequencers and prodigious memories) into which I can program extensive material, taking me one step closer to becoming a one-man band.

Speaking of bands, Barbara & The Bohemians has developed as a band considerably since last summer. We've made several demo cassettes, among them "Road Trippin' With Barbara & The Bohemians" and "Wind Surfin' With Barbara & The Bohemians" (both sixty-minutes), and we're about two months away from recording our first album.

As a music consumer I've been getting into Compact Discs. Those are those little four-inch silvery disks which are played by a laser. I bought a player that was on sale locally (for the surprisingly cheap price of \$250) last October and have since acquired almost fifty CDs.

The CD catalogue is still limited -- 75% are classical, but of those most duplicate the same basic repertoire (Stravinsky is represented by half a dozen different recordings of the same three pieces, for example), with little available by favorites of mine like Ives or Foulenc (but three versions of Janacek's "Taras Bulba/Sinfonietta" to choose between) -- but already exists in two forms: material released domestically (albeit manufactured in West Germany or Japan) and "imports." The "imports" cost more, for no discernable reason, and offer a wider variety. I have European CDs of classic rock albums like Genesis' Trick of the Tail and Pink Floyd's Wish You Were Here (on Famous Charisma and Harvest, respectively -- both British labels), and I have quite a few CDs made for consumption in Japan (with Japanese-only notes) by Yellow Magic Orchestra (AfterService, a live album, clocks in at over 71 minutes), Kitaro, and others.

I wasn't sure at first what I thought of CDs. I read audiophile magazines, where the argument is still strong over whether digital sound is "better" or "worse" than old-fashioned analogue-recording sound, and where some audio snobs claim to be able to tell the difference between CD players (which all meet the same standards). There was a lot of argument in the pages of those magazines. (But then, some audio snobs never accepted the transistor.)

I have an excellent stereo system, with 200 watts per channel. When I first added the CD player and tried it out, I wasn't that impressed: the sound was not an improvement over what I was used to. When I compared the CD of Prince's Purple Rain with the standard album, they sounded about the same, for example. But part of that is due to the sound-processors I use when I play a normal record: my Phase Linear Autocorelator eliminates most of the noise and restores the dynamic range that was lost in recording compression.

The more I used the player -- and the more CDs I bought to play on it -- the more I began to favor CDs. To begin with, there's the convenience. You put a Compact Disc in the player, push a button, and that's it: it plays straight through. You don't get up and turn it over. And when it's finished, the disc is as perfect as it was on first-playing: there is no wear, no deterioration. One hundred years from now these CDs will sound as good as they do now. Then you begin noticing the absence of things. There is no needle noise on the lead-in groove, for instance, no surface noise, no clicks, pops, or hiss. And no thunk-thunk at the end of the record. You notice the CD is over when you realize you're not hearing anything, and haven't heard anything for a while now. There is no sound of any kind when there is no music to be heard. The almost subliminal subsonics of a normal record, the sounds you hear when the music is silent, as between tracks, just aren't there. That's startling if you've gotten used to that kind of noise in your system.

My player has programming ability -- so that you can rearrange the order of tracks, skip some of them, or repeat some of them -- but I've yet to make any real use of it. What I find myself appreciating is the uninterrupted flow of a CD. A classical CD has no problems with breaks between sides in music meant to be unbroken. And an album is not heard as two sides (of perhaps contrasting character) but as a coherent whole. (CDs can also hold more music -- at least 70 minutes worth -- than conventional lps. Paul McCartney's Give My Regards to Broad St., already a long conventional album, has two additional tracks adding up to over seven minutes more on the CD. I tend to resent CDs that clock in with less than forty minutes of music, much as I used to resent thirty-minute lps.)

As for the digital recording process, I'm sold on it. It's cleaner, more dynamically realistic, and more transparent: you can really hear everything. That can be a problem when mikes are badly set up. I've got a CD of Henry Brant's "Angels and Devils" (for an orchestra made up solely of flutes) which is full of little extraneous sounds the mikes picked up -- key-clacks, sudden intakes of breaths, sheet-music being turned -- which are at times annoyingly obtrusive. But that's the fault of the engineers, not the process.

Naturally, I prefer CDs made from digital recordings (on tape), but many -- perhaps most -- are made from analogue-recording tapes, and this is not likely to change any time soon, since CD catalogues are being built up with material which was recorded years ago (like all the "classic" rock and jazz being reissued on CD). Some CDs consequently sound exactly like their lp counterparts (like Purple Rain), compression and all. But they're still worth having for their other properties, like never wearing out. A CD is a permanent recording. A few years ago I started buying Japanese pressings of my top favorite albums (like all of King Crimson's original albums), simply to have top-quality copies of those albums. Now instead I'll buy the CDs.

In addition to rich brown returning to the Green Room here, there have been other moves in the local fan community. Dan & Lynn Steffan have left World PONG Ho and moved into Washington.

This was a move made inevitable by the death of my grandmother, whose house they were renting. The house has not yet been sold -- closing was postponed from the beginning of December to the end of January, and my uncle has expressed doubts that it will occur then -- but the house and surrounding property will go for a quarter of a million dollars. In the meantime Dan & Lynn have moved to a house at 1808 Lamont St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20010, so you can stop sending us common mail (like fanzines addressed to Dan and myself) and save Dan the paranoia of wondering what happened to his mail.

Early last year Dan went to see the editor of a new weekly newspaper, THE WASHINGTON WEEKLY, to see if he could sell a comic strip. They bought the strip, then hired Dan as assistant art director, and then killed the strip. In the course of the next few months the editor fired the art director and Dan became "acting art director," and then the editor quit (just ahead of being fired) and Dan was retained as "acting art director" until late fall, when he was summarily fired.

In my opinion the problem was and is that the paper's publisher and acting editor are incompetant -- and the paper, to which I had a charter-subscription, is almost useless and rarely worth reading (I shan't renew). Although Dan significantly improved the paper's graphic design and did a fully professional job as its art director, he was fired for two reasons: First, he was seen as left-over baggage, the employee of the ex-editor (himself an incompetant); second, the publisher wanted someone with more impressive "credits" despite Dan's proven abilities. The new art director has, predictably, done a poorer job. I gather that the actual job done is not important to the paper's publisher. Most observers expect the paper to fold within the next few months.

In the meantime, Dan's work with the paper brought him fresh professional contacts, and he's successfully freelancing as an artist and designer.

While he was working at the paper Dan was putting in 60 and 70 hour work-weeks and had precious little time for anything else, including fanac. That this fannation coincided with the Recent Unpleasantness From Puerto Rico was coincidence, but that Unpleasantness certainly did nothing to encourage Dan to return to fanac after he left the paper. Dan shares my own view of the situation, with an added insight brought about by his own frustrations in communicating with the author of WIZ back last spring. (He is not and never was "D. West's #1 accolyte," and has protested that characterization in WIZ, to little avail, provoking only sneers from Puerto Rico.)

Dan & Lynn hosted the Annual Halloween Party at their new house, attracting both Patrick Nielsen Hayden and Larry Carmody from NYC, as well as much of local trufandom. The costume theme this time was movie/TV stars or characters. I went as Dr. Zarkov, in a shirt, tie, and labcoat.

"Dr. Zarkov...what is he from?" one of the more mundane parties would ask, and I'd say that he was the scientist-sidekick of....

"Oh, yes! Flash Gordon!"

"Did you say...flash -- ?" I responded, and then whipped up my lab coat to reveal that the pants legs that showed beneath it went up only to my knees, and, hanging ponderously below my shirt-tail was...an 18-inch thing which was in fact a stuffed stocking, but looked for that momentary flash a bit more, ah, organic. I did this rarely (perhaps a dozen times in the course of the entire night) and to stunning effect.

My daughter, Kit, now fourteen, came as Lolita, complete with heart-shaped sunglasses, and had to fend off the advances of one partier who refused to believe she wasn't at least a half-dozen years older.

SO, HOW'RE YA DUNE? Avedon, Kit and I went to the premier of Dune, at the D.C. Kennedy Center. I wore a tuxedo for the second time in my life (the first was the Stiles wedding), and Kit collected the autographs of the film's producer, director, and major stars.

It was a fun evening, the least enjoyable part of which was the movie itself, which suffers badly from the fact that neither Frank Herbert nor director David Lynch count storytelling as a strong suit, and if you haven't read the book(s) the movie may be incomprehensible to you. As I experienced it, Dune consisted of a number of visually fascinating scenes, connected almost randomly by scenes which were either tediously long or pointlessly short (Lynch hasn't the foggiest idea how to shoot action scenes, with the consequence that the direction of the final parts of the movie suffered even in comparison with the old Republic Rocketman serials of my youth), whole relationships taking place off-camera and in voice-over synopses. Dune worked as a book (to the extent that it did -- I thought it tediously over-written and full of ponderously pointless interior monologues when I read it as a serial in ANALOG in the early sixties) largely because of the ideas in it, which could be seen as proto-ecological. As a movie it fails, in part, precisely because the plot-trappings which surround those ideas can be seen for the pot-boiler cliches they always were -- and the ideas themselves never make it to the screen.

But the fun only started on the night of the premier. What followed was the schisming of the Washington SF Ass'n over the way invitations to the premier were handled.

I had noticed a surprising number of WSFans there that night -- not just those members who have some claim to professional status, but a variety of club fans for whom even fanzines are too esoteric. This, it turned out, became the focus of a feud between Somtow Sucharitkul and Doll & Alexis Gilliland, conducted in the pages of the WSFA JOURNAL, a narrowly circulated clubzine, and has resulted in Somtow creating an insurgent group which holds its meetings on the same night as those WSFA meetings held at the Gillilands'.

It appears that the movie-promotion people wanted members of the DC science fiction community to be invited to the premier, and to this end contacted several people. Among those they turned to first were the proprietors of Moonstone Bookceller, a tatty store which claims to specialize in sf and mysteries (but whose owner remains amazingly ignorant of both fields), and to Michael Dirda, the Washington POST book editor who has published many skiffy authors in the Sunday Book Review. Dirda sent the movie people to Somtow, who apparently gave them some names and addresses (mine among them) and recommended the Gillilands for additional names.

At this point it gets muddy, but apparently Doll Gilliland passed on the only list she had (a Christmas list) which listed a variety of WSFA members. She indicated which were sf professionals or were otherwise deserving of an invitation.

Apparently Somtow felt that WSFA was taking advantage of the situation -- although WSFans disported themselves well at the black-tie affair -- and made a number of charges against the Gillilands. They in turn responded with charges of their own. The crux of it all appeared to be a question of "Who let all those fans in?" and who was defending "those fans" as deserving of invitation, with both sides claiming to be defending "the fans" against the elitists.

What strikes me as funny is the sheer fannishness (in a base sort of way) of the whole squabble -- which propoerts to be between sf "professionals" (Tim Sullivan taking Somtow's side against the Gillilands) but is conducted in terms familiar to anyone who has ever witnessed a fan feud.

As a friend of both Somtow and the Gillilands, I have remained neutral in this one.

TALKING TAFF: 1984 is now behind us, and if the year failed to live up to its Orwellian billing in most respects, it was certainly a bad year for TAFF despite the resolution of the current race. The scurilous attack on Avedon Carol was ostensibly (if not really) motivated by a TAFF race (and it took the unethical publication of her DNO letter to That Puerto Rican, in HTT, to defuse the attack: the "smoking gun" turned out to be an unfired cap pistol), and in the following race several mid-western fans tried to subvert TAFF to their own ends. But despite such efforts, the Nielsen Havdens -- the overwhelming choice of British fans -- did win.

If it is possible to find a silver lining in the great cloud that hung over fandom last year, that silver lining might be the increased interest in and discussion of TAFF which has been generated more or less as a by-product of the general unpleasantness. Unfortunately, thus far most of that discussion (to use a polite word) has been pressed into the service of one of the Partisan points of view, and too little has been spent on the institution of TAFF itself.

My own background in TAFF is as follows:

I was an active fan when TAFF was created and in 1955 I met and partied with the first beneficiaries of TAFF, Ken and Pam Bulmer. In 1958 I organized Terry Carr's nomination for TAFF and was inadvertently plunged into the center of the controversy that erupted when Bjo, initially one of Terry's supporters, decided to run against him (and third candidate Don Ford won). In the early sixties I planned to stand for TAFF myself, but my candidacy was disqualified when my nominators' paperwork arrived less than a day after the deadline. (No one bent over backward to accomodate my candidacy; I was told "Tough luck, félla," and for better or worse a precedent was set which I accepted more readily than Martha Beck's nominators did this year. When asked by both current TAFF administrators about precedents, I had no trouble recalling this event.) When, the next time I could stand for TAFF, Terry Carr told me he intended to try again, I stood aside and he won. I have not sought to run for TAFF since then, inasmuch as I have attended two British worldcons anyway, and I felt my status throughout the latter sixties and seventies as a professional in the sf field in some measure disqualified me. So much for me.

TAFF was formed under circumstances now almost alien to fandom: the organisers were Don Ford and the Cincinnati Fantasy Group, in the U.S., and Walt Willis and Chuch Harris in the U.K. The genesis of TAFF was a private fund gotten up by Ford and the CFG to bring a British fan (Doc Weir? My memory fails me now) to a U.S. worldcon, a successor of sorts to Forry Ackerman's Big Pond Fund (started in the late forties to bring Ted Carnell over to a worldcon), and the much more successful 1952 WAW With The Crew fund. When the British fan selected by the CFG could not (for reasons I no longer recall) make the trip, Ford wrote to Willis to offer the funds already raised for someone else, and TAFF was put together to select the new recipient by vote.

Thus TAFF was born out of midwestern U.S. fandom and the Belfast-London axis of the time in the U.K.

Fandom was different in those days. The stratification that would ultimately separate fanzine fandom from convention fandom had already begun, but fandom was still so much smaller that it was still possible to personally know the majority of fans of all types. Most fans participated in all the areas of fandom: they collected, they went to what cons were then extant (when possible -- there were fewer cons and fans had less money), and they had some involvement in fanzines. Even those fans who specialized in only one of these activities remained aware of what was going on elsewhere in fandom.

Thus, Don Ford, who was more active in con-fandom (the 1949 Cincinnati Worldcon, and the subsequent establishment of the Midwestcon), nonetheless knew and did not hesitate to contact Walt Willis, a very active fanzine fan, in order to set up a fund that not only bridged the ocean but also the growing gaps between fanzine fandom and con fandom. After all, the object of TAFF was to enable a fan to attend a foreign convention, but the means by which a fan became known to his foreign hosts was by fanzine activity.

This created a paradox which has yet to be resolved.

In the mid-fifties the paradox was not yet obviously apparent. At that time it was accepted that fans who themselves bridged both aspects of fandom were the best and most appropriate candidates to stand for TAFF.

But this common-sense notion was shattered in the 1957 campaign in which the winner would be a U.S. fan who would get to attend the 1957 London worldcon.

The winner was Bob Madle, and I gather that a few long-time Brit fans still resent his win. But Madle, who was only one of five or six candidates that year, was by no means a bad choice, albeit he was not well known to then-contemporary British fandom. Madle had been active in fandom since the thirties and was the author of one of the better prozine fan-columns (for Bob Lowndes' FUTURE and SF QUARTERLY) in the fifties. (He is still an active attendee of today's conventions, although I usually see him sitting behind his huckster table. But at least he sells books and magazines, unlike the majority of today's hucksters.)

The preferred candidate that year was Richard Eney, then only a year away from the publication of his massive FANCYCLOPEDIA II and probably riding the crest of his fan career. (Within a couple of years he would be involved in a variety of nastinesses, climaxing in his participation in the 1964 Boondoggle from which his reputation never recovered.) No doubt some British fans held it against Madle that Eney had not won. But I think others confused Madle's win with the nearly successful tactics of another candidate, Stu Hoffman.

Ves, that's right: Stu Hoffman.

Who?

Hoffman -- no relation to Lee Hoffman -- was a Wisconsin fan who attended midwestern conventions, collected books and magazines, and was otherwise without fannish distinction. (He was best known for having ersatz manuscripts typed professionally from his favorite books. He had these pseudo-manuscripts bound and then asked the authors to autograph them, thus creating Instant Collectors' Items.)

But he almost won TAFF.

How? He used a simple, time-tested method: he canvassed club meetings and regional cons and gettogethers. He was accused of "buying votes," although technically he did not. What he did do was to ask a fan (often a fringe-fan with no knowledge of TAFF or of the other candidates) to vote for him and then pay the voting fee himself.

He did this quite a bit. Attending a club meeting where, even then, many or most of the club members were ignorant of fandom beyond the confines of their club, Hoffman would pass out ballots to the dozen or so attendees and ask that the ballots be marked for him. Then he'd collect the ballots, discard any which did not carry a vote for him, and mail in the rest with a check to cover the voting fees. (It was a lot cheaper than paying for a transatlantic trip....)

It's a wonder he didn't win (and I suspect the only reason was that Bob Madle was even better known to those club fans, many of whom owed their discovery of fandom to Bob's columns). There has always existed a fringe-fandom which is ignorant of larger fandom and can easily be exploited.

As a result of this near-fiasco, the rules were strengthened and a voter

was requested to list some well-known fan who could vouch for him if he was unknown to the TAFF administrator. But I doubt this rule would have significantly slowed any would-be successor of Hoffman's, since any determined fan can come up with a dodge to get around it. (And in 1984 determined fans did just that, circulating a flier described as "a list of fans whose names can be used on the ballot's reference line by voters unknown to the administrator." While this may maintain the letter of the rule, it certainly violates its spirit.)

Hoffman's campaign and his near-win shocked a lot of fans. Most fans are, after all, idealistic about fandom: they believe in fairness and decency in the conduct of one's fanac. They see a TAFF win as an honor to be bestowed upon the deserving. Few fans were happy with the idea of someone exploiting the fringes of fandom in order to win TAFF, effectively buying the honor.

This innate decency in fans -- more than any specific rule -- held abuses of the TAFF process in check for many years.

Indeed, in the anarchy which is fandom, rules will never themselves prevent an abuse; only our individual decisions to play fair can guarantee that.

And what happens when some fans decide not to play fair? I think the events of last year answer that question. (But I am anticipating myself; let's resume the chronology....)

Since 1957 fandom has undergone many changes. Convention fandom, once the socializing tail of the main body of fanac, has exploded in size. Fanzine fandom has probably not gotten any smaller, but neither did it grow appreciably (there are inherent limiting factors involved, principally in the number of copies any faned will produce). Thus fanzine fandom has been dwarfed by convention fandom.

TAFF has known moments of triumph -- such as the broadening of its scope to include non-British Europeans like Tom Schluck -- and moments of malaise -- during which the tradition of "trip reports" or "TAFF reports" withered in favor of the "tradition" of their non-completion or non-existence. (The coercive efforts of Craig Miller and IACen II -- which proposes to give each fan fund \$500 for every trip-report published, but only up to a maximum of \$1,000, because after all most of the \$150,000 in profits are needed for the LASFS clubhouse... -- may reverse this "tradition;" Terry Hughes tells me he's working on his trip report precisely in order to raise money for TAFF this way.)

By the seventies TAFF was in eclipse, and it began to appear that winning TAFF signalled the end of one's active career in fandom. But as the TAFF race itself seemed to slip from fannish attention, achieving almost the status of an esoteric discipline for the few who still kept up transatlantic contacts, it simultaneously became caught in the amber of confan tradition: the TAFF/DUFF auctions.

Even as legions of confans adopted unthinkingly such traditions as the obnoxious "smo-o-o-th" routine (in which a roomful of twenty or thirty people pass around a bottle, ostensibly Jim Beam but these days as likely to hold iced tea, and after each person sips and passes on the bottle he or she raises up a hand and holds it upraised until the last person has sipped, at which point all chorus loudly the refrain, "sm-o-o-o-th!" while swooping their raised hands down and out -- and ghod help any poor fool who refuses to join in) which grew out of something Bob Tucker used to do twenty-five years ago, so also the TAFF/DUFF charity is accepted without being understood.

Are the confans who, for whatever reasons, contribute to and help raise monies for TAFF (and DUFF), being taken advantage of by the "elite" who actually participate in TAFF? Or are they, like their mundane counterparts who work in United Way fundraising drives, gaining the basic pleasure of

Doing Good Work, irrespective of whether they themselves ultimately benefit from the funds raised?

This question becomes relevant in light of the point now raised by Jackie Cosgrove and Dave Locke in their recent campaign for Martha Beck as a write-in candidate for TAFF. In their mimeoed "Open Letter to Rob Hansen" (a copy of which they neglected to send to Hansen himself), they state: "Hundreds, probably thousands of fans from all over the world donate to TAFF, and a lot less than 200 vote. The fund-raising is widespread, the ballot distribution is not." Amplifying on this point, they add, "Why press for more participation? Because that's the way TAFF is set up. Because non-voting convention fans ... do most of the funding. Because a convention fan or a club fan is just as much a fan as a fanzine fan. Because it is wrong to take their money and discourage or disparage their vote."

That is, on the surface, a high-minded appeal, but it conveniently ignores a major point: the "convention fan or club fan" is not necessarily "as much a fan as a fanzine fan," when it comes to judging the merits of TAFF candidates, or indeed even knowing who all the candidates are.

We need look no further for confirming evidence than the statistics on the fan Hugos. The Hugo votes are drawn from the Ultimate Pool of Fandom: everyone who is a member of the current worldcon (between five and ten thousand people). This pool certainly includes the vast majority of confans.

Take a look at how these fans demonstrate that they "are just as much of a fan" as fanzine fans: For more than ten years the Hugos for Fan Writer and Fan Editor (and usually for Fan Artist as well) have been awarded to people who are far from the best fandom has to offer -- but who are best-known to the confans ignorant of most fanzines by virtue of their publication of (or in) semi-prozines with circulations in the thousands. The vast majority of the votes cast in the fan Hugo categories are votes cast in ignorance by people too arrogant (or foolish) to abstain from voting because of their ignorance. It is hard to think well of such people, since they are implicitly practicing a form of dishonesty. In this fashion the fan Hugos have been badly devalued. Votes cast in ignorance have overwhelmed those cast by knowledgeable fans.

It appears that Cosgrove & Locke wanted to bring this devaluation to TAFF. And were (like Stu Hoffman) almost successful. To this end they were part of an active campaign which sought to exploit the insularity and chauvinism of modern midwestern club and confans. At each step their actions were unethical and skirted outright dishonesty.

It started with the deliberate distortion of a statement made by another confan -- Ben Yallow -- concerning an amendment of the worldcon rotation plan. Yallow spoke of "eliminating the possibility of a wimpy zone" by giving the U.S. only two, rather than the current three, zones. He was referring to the possibility of few or lacklustre bids in a given year from any U.S. zone, but midwestern confans, apparently unaware that his plan would deprive them of nothing, thought he was calling for the elimination of a midwestern zone per se, as the elimination of "a wimpy zone."

I've heard a number of fans point out that this misreading of what occurred confirms the midwest as "a wimpy zone" populated by illiterate dorks. Be that as it may, Cosgrove, Locke & Co. siezed upon the "wimpy zone" line as one they could exploit. They appealed to midwestern fans to rise up and retaliate for this "insult" by electing one of their own to a TAFF trip.

This was orchestrated with "wimpy zone" fanzine covers and t-shirts, and a talking campaign designed to alert those ignorant club and confans to the Terrible Insult They'd Suffered, while offering them TAFF as a handy weapon for revenge.

There was a lot of coverup nonsense about how the midwest hasn't been "represented" in TAFF, and about the need to broaden the base of participa-

tion in TAFF, but what it really boiled down to was as cynical a job of manipulation as I've seen since Phil Foglio was block-voted two Fanartist Hugos by Chicago-area trekkies and confans.

Those who lack the ignorance of midwestern club and confans know quite well that TAFF has never been a contest between regional-area fandoms, although it has sometimes boiled down to a contest between fanzine fans and club fans. (Significantly, in the latter cases the fanzine fans almost always lost.) Most well-known fans have moved around during the years of their fanactivity anyway. Cincinnati fan Dave Locke, for instance, was better-known for years as a west coast fan.

Only the ignorant would think of TAFF as a race between regional areas. Knowledgeable fans see any TAFF race as a race between individuals valued as individuals and not as symbols of any area or type of fanac.

But suppose for the moment that (unlikely though it is, since as a recipient of EGOSCAN you are a high-quality trufan) you lived in the midwest and had never heard of SPACE JUNK or IZZARD, and somebody told you that the east coast has a TAFF candidate, and the west coast has its candidate, but you have no one running for TAFF to "represent" you. Then suppose you were told that it's a plot by the elitist fanzine fans to keep you disenfranchised, that they called your area a "wimpy zone," and that you could strike back just by writing in a name, "Martha Beck," in this blank space on this sheet of paper and coughing up a buck, the price of a candy bar in a movie theatre.

One hundred eighty three midwestern fans did exactly that.

It didn't stop there. One Chicago-area fan protested that his name was not on the list of voters in the just-concluded TAFF race. Upon checking it was found that no ballot had been received from him. "Oh," he said. "I gave it to the Martha Beck people -- Rusty or Joni or one of them." But, it turned out, he hadn't voted for Martha.

They threw his ballot away.

Yes, definitely a revival of the Stu Hoffman Gambit.

I see no point in speculating on the motives of Cosgrove, Locke, & Co. Their actions have thoroughly discredited them. But what about their true victim, Martha Beck?

I've known Martha in a vague way ever since I started going to cons in the mid-fifties -- hell, I've even gotten Sercon with her at Midwestcons in the seventies -- and I have nothing whatsoever to say against her as a human being. Had she won TAFF I think she would have done her best to be a good TAFF representative. But that would have required a lot of on-the-spot education for her, since at the outset she confessed almost total ignorance of TAFF's traditions and requirements. It was not her idea to run -- either as a legitimate candidate or as a write-in candidate -- and I get the strong feeling that her promoters cared little about what they were doing to her in the process of their campaign. She was their pawn, their tool. They used Martha Beck, and used her shabbily. Had they succeeded, Martha would probably have been subjected to even more humiliation and ill-feeling. One hundred twenty British fans signed a petition to deny her use of British TAFF funds, for instance, and I cannot imagine their greeting her with more than bare civility, at best.

British fans felt the Beck campaign was a direct insult to them and to TAFF, and I have to agree. While Martha Beck is a perfectly fine human being, as a fan she has done even less than Stu Hoffman to distinguish herself, nor is she a commanding social presense. In a crowd of overweight, past-middle-aged midwestern fans she blends to the point of invisibility. If she was a suitable TAFF candidate it is obvious that we could do as well by substituting a blind lottery.

I mentioned a petition to deny Martha access to British TAFF funds if she won. This petition was circulated (with overwhelming success) by Linda

and Greg Pickersgill after they saw a copy of the Beck campaign flyer being circulated in the midwest. The Pickersgills wrote in their petition-flyer, "The Transatlantic Fan Fund was instituted to assist personal contact between fans in the United States and Europe. It has always been assumed fundamental that persons standing for TAFF have taken an active interest in the fandom of the proposed host country, and are well-known there."

"This very essence of TAFF is presently being undermined in the United States."

"There is a campaign underway amongst convention-going fans in the midwest of the U.S. to block-vote a write-in candidate, Martha Beck. Neither Martha Beck nor the orchestrators of the campaign have any history of involvement with British fandom. Very large numbers of American mid-west convention fans are responding to this campaign; few of them have any knowledge or interest in British fandom." The Pickersgills, as British fans, were outraged, and, it turned out, 118 other British fans shared their outrage.

The Cosgrove & Locke response to the Pickersgills was their "Open Letter to Rob Hansen," which, as noted, they did not think it necessary to actually send to Rob. In this mimeod sheet Locke & Cosgrove spent considerable space in a largely unsuccessful attempt to rebut the Pickersgills.

Because theirs is a cynical campaign, their rebuttal employs strikingly cynical means. First, and perhaps most offensive, they totally ignore Linda Pickersgill and treat the flyer as entirely Greg's work. This allows them to quote Greg from his STOP BREAKING DOWN #7 (1981) in a bergeronish attempt to show that what was said four years ago is inconsistent with what is being said now. But the credit for the Pickersgills' flyer reads, "Conceived, written, and distributed by LINDA PICKERSGILL and GREG PICKERSGILL." From stylistic evidence, I suspect that Linda's is the dominant voice in the flyer, and that she typed the stencils. To try to discredit their message by quoting Greg's negative thoughts about TAFF, when he was explaining why he wouldn't himself stand for TAFF in 1981, is superficially clever -- in a debating-points sort of way -- but avoids the central point of the flyer. It would appear that rather than directly confront the fact that they are the cause of much anger in Britain, Locke & Cosgrove tried instead to discredit the spokesmen who articulated that anger. That tactic has been used in several fannish arenas lately -- and appears to have failed each and every time. Certainly it did not advance Locke & Cosgrove's position in Britain, and to the extent it had any impact (were any copies of the "Open Letter" sent to Britain?) it may have been negative, galvanizing a few more fans to sign the Pickersgills' petition.

The Brits had a good case. To them it appeared that American block voting would effectively disenfranchise them, the Brits. It's easy to understand that if you look at the recent voting statistics in TAFF. Until this race the total number of votes cast ran between two and three hundred. Typically, less than one hundred British fans voted. Had that held true this past year, Martha Beck's 189 write-in votes would have won the race for her.

Indeed, if you subtract the votes for Beck from this year's results, you will find that 324 other people voted -- a fairly typical turnout, although the British share (134 voters) is a bit higher than usual. British near-unanimity in voting for the Nielsen Haydens (117 votes) is about all that saved the day for the British franchise. (That's a typo for "franchise," but let stand; I like it....) (We might speculate about the outcome had the Brits reversed their votes, giving Rich Coad those 117 votes and the Nielsen Haydens the 9 which Coad actually received.... That would have resulted in Martha Beck getting 189 votes, Coad 159, and the Nielsen Haydens 153. Since there was no clear majority, a run-off of second-place votes would have occurred, but the possibility of the Beck block-vote winning was real.)

So, in a perverse way the Beck campaign got out the British vote, avert-

ing a Beck win.

How do I, one of Rich Coad's nominators, feel about this? Well, both Rich and the Nielsen Haydens are friends, and, more important, both were deserving candidates. I would have been happy to see either win. And I am happy the Nielsen Haydens (whom I've seen a lot more since they moved to New York City) won.

I would be happy for them in any event, but this race was fraught with overtones which increased my pleasure in their win. In addition to the Beck campaign (which may well have been mounted specifically against the Nielsen Haydens, since Rusty Hevelin was one of its behind-the-scenes movers and Locke & Cosgrove have expressed antagonism against the NH's support for Avedon Carol), there was the whole matter of WIZ #12, which existed for the sole purpose of denegrating Patrick Nielsen Hayden and sabotaging his TAFF candidacy, and which was massively circulated to fandom via HOLIER THAN THOU, a piece of business for which Marty Cantor has yet to be called to account. The injection of so much nastiness into the TAFF race from so many directions (albeit principally Puerto Rico and Cincinnati) is hard to countenance, but the fact that ultimately fandom saw through this crap and rejected it is reassuring.

So where do we go from here? Will the forces of chauvinism and divisiveness rise again to take part in the next U.S.-to-Britain TAFF race? Will we again have to deal with the cynical attempt to manipulate the ignorant in the transparent guise of "broadening participation" in TAFF?

There is talk of strengthening the rules, but I do not believe that is the correct way to go. Rules beget more rules. And those rules beget attempts to circumvent rules. Soon we are overwhelmed by red tape and bickering over the fine points. That is not what fandom is about and it is certainly not what TAFF is about.

I see only one clear path: the rule of fairness, goodwill, and basic fannish decency. TAFF has until now run on very few rules -- on an informality based on knowledge and experience.

Clearly some people wish to see an end to this. What they want to see in its place they have yet to reveal (except inferentially). But we must hope that whatever occurs will be better than stratigems devised out of petty meanness and a covert desire for revenge.

We can hope that the spirit of TAFF will live.

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