

# ETTLER ONE

[illegible]

Fandom has had many feuds in its past. Little has resulted from any them except some sore feelings, ruptured friendships, and the meaningless death of hundreds of trees used to make the paper they were waged upon. If anyone benefitted from those fannish fusses, it was the Postal Service.

Many issues concerning the operation of TAFF (or of any Fan Fund based on an election) have come up as a result of the discussions within, and generated beyond, the feuding parties. As I've seen it, there are two essentially opposing viewpoints about the appropriateness of debating TAFF reforms:

- If you support the first position, you should make your views known. If your ideas are valid, others should be exposed to them. I offer to supply an audience if you'll stand up to be heard.

- How can such guidelines be established?
- What should such guidelines consist of?
- In what way could they be implemented?

As TAFF is currently operated, previous winners of TAFF elections -- the most recent from North America and the most recent one from Europe or the United Kingdom -- have a host of obligations to assume upon their return home. They:

- (1) Maintain the Fund's finances
- (2) Hold open nominations for new candidates
- (3) Certify such candidates and release the TAFF ballots
- (4) Disseminate the ballots



- (5) Certify the validity of and tally incoming ballots
- (6) Announce the winner and final vote count
- (7) If the winner is from the same side of the Atlantic, surrender duties, control of funds, etc. to the incoming Administrator.

That looks like a tremendous amount of \*work\*. But is it? Handling the funds (1) should use up very little time. A notelook, kept for the purpose, listing donors, contributions, dates received, TAFF expenses and dates paid, with a running balance to show current totals should take but a few minutes a week to maintain in the periods between Campaigns. During the time of a Campaign, that could increase to an hour or so a week during the 12-16 week balloting period.

Posting the fact that the nomination period for the next Race is open (2) requires that editors of newszines and frequent, widely-distributed fanzines be notified. A few postcards would provide sufficient notice, entailing perhaps an hour's work.

Certification of nominees (3) is done mainly on the basis of the nominators' names. A letter of inquiry or two would be the most that would be needed; say another hour of work at most. The form of the ballot is predetermined by Tradition. Pertinent dates, addresses, and such must be changed, but basically it's an hour's worth of copy-typing.

Disseminating the ballot (4) again requires the contacting of fan-editors to gain cooperation in distribution. If the Administrator handles the duplication of the ballots, extra time would be needed, but if reprinting is done by the fan-editors, contacting-time should take about an hour.

Certifying and tallying the incoming ballots (5) may take a number of hours of work if the vote is heavy or the Administrator is unfamiliar with many voters' names. When balloting falls within the range of 100 votes or so, 2 hours should be sufficient to handle the job. It is then necessary to contact the Overseas Administrator to merge voter lists, vote tallies, and other business. Say another hour or so.

Announcing the results (6) should take no longer than the aforementioned call for nominations or ballot dissemination. Add another hour.

Passing on of the fund accounts and allied paperwork (7) should entail another hour or, at most, two.

Adding in the extra hour a week it takes to maintain the Fund's finances during the Campaign periods, we're looking at --at the most -- 45 hours per year (much less for years when no Campaign occurs). Two Campaigns -- minimum 2 years, maximum 4 -- means each Administrator would have to do between 90 and 110 hours of \*work\* in the 24-48 month period of their administration. In return (and up-front), the Burdened Fan receives a free vacation to a foreign clime for as long as time-off from one's work can be arranged or the cash won will permit. Not a bad deal for the winner, overall.

#### Of Written Rules and Oral Traditions...

How is TAFF currently guided/ruled? Mostly by Tradition, and that is, in the main, oral and passed on from Administrator to Administrator. The only written document pertaining to the management of TAFF is what's on the ballot. Despite fear of boring you to sleep, this is the text of the reverse of the current ballot:

What is TAFF? The Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund was created in 1953 for the purpose of providing funds to bring well-known and popular fans across the Atlantic. Since that time, TAFF has regularly sent North American fans to European conventions and European fans

to North American conventions. TAFF exists solely through the support of fandom. The candidates are voted for by interested fans all over the world, and each vote is accompanied by a donation of not less than 50p or \$1.00. These votes, and the continued interest and generosity of fandom, are what makes TAFF possible.

Who may vote? Voting is open to anyone who was active in fandom (clubs, fanzines, conventions, etc.) prior to April 1983, and who contributes at least \$1.00 or 50p to the Fund. Contributions in excess of the minimum will be gratefully accepted. Only one vote per person is allowed -- no proxy votes -- and you must sign your ballot. Details of voting will be kept secret. 'Write-in' candidates are permitted. Postal orders, money orders and checks should be made payable to the appropriate administrator, not to TAFF.

Deadline Votes must reach the Administrators by December 31, 1984.

Voting Details TAFF uses the Australian ballot system, which guarantees an automatic run-off and a majority win. You rank the candidates in the exact order you wish to vote. If the leading candidate does not get a majority, the first-place votes of the lowest ranking candidate are dropped and the second-place votes on these ballots are counted. This process goes on until one candidate has a majority. It is therefore important to vote for second and third place and onwards on your ballot. It is also a waste of time to put any name in more than one place.

Hold Over Funds This choice, similar to 'No Award' in Hugo balloting, gives the voter the chance to vote for no TAFF trip should the candidates not appeal to him/her, or if he/she feels that TAFF should slow down its trip frequency. 'Hold Over Funds' may be voted for in any position you wish.

Donations TAFF needs continuous donations of money, and material to be auctioned, in order to exist. If you are ineligible to vote, or do not feel qualified to vote, why not donate anyway? Just as important as donations is publicity -- in fanzines, letters, convention booklets, and by word of mouth -- to increase voter participation.

Candidates Each candidate has promised -- barring Acts of God -- to travel to the 1985 Eastercon in Leeds if elected, and has posted bond and provided signed nominations and a platform, which are reproduced overleaf along with the ballot.

That's it. That's all the 'rules and regs' there are. There ain't no more in print. Rob Hansen, the current UK Administrator, found that once there were written rules, but they have apparently dropped from fannish ken. Tradition, however, adds a few supplements:

- It is considered appropriate for the Administrator to maintain a position of neutrality regarding the Candidates.
- Final vote counts should be released within a reasonable time.
- East of the Atlantic (once-upon-a-time in North America) regular and frequent reports are made about the Fund's condition.
- Complaints are made loudly and clearly when Trip Reports are not published within a reasonable period of time.
- Administrators are expected to conduct an on-going general TAFF campaign: talk it up, write it up, doing whatever is within the scope of their own fanac to promote interest in the Fund.

That's where TAFF now stands. Superficially, nothing appears to have been skipped, but are there areas where additions/improvements could be made? For that we need to back-track into a bit of History....



### Of History, Rumor, and Opinionizing...

Previous TAFF races have shown remarkable inconsistency in the way they were handled. Some of the more striking screw-ups are never discovered; some have been reported in various newszines, TAFFzines, and elsewhere; and yet others are simply Common Knowledge -- which may or may not be accurate. Separating Fact from Rumor in TAFF is often an impossible task, so the following may not all be verifiable:

- In several TAFF races, the nomination period was extended by weeks (in one case, over 6 weeks) to allow revision and completion of platforms, overseas nomination letters, etc.
- In one TAFF race, a prospective Candidate wasn't listed on the ballot because one of the 5 nominations was 24 hours late.
- In one TAFF race, the 'Winner' didn't really win.
- In one TAFF race the voting-in-progress count was allowed to be known and a last-ditch effort to gain votes for the losing candidate was mounted. The effort was unsuccessful.
- In many TAFF races, trip reports were never done. Some were begun and never finished; others were partially published but left incomplete; still others simply Never Were.
- Some TAFF winners took their trips and immediately dropped from sight. How the pass-on was handled between Administrators was left to chance (and the results of mad scurrying behind the scenes).

\*Opinion\* Too much is "behind the scenes" in TAFF. The Fund, particularly in the U.S., seems to be in such a precarious position from year to year that open disclosure of its various woes when they occur strikes such fear among its supporters-in-principle that it's deemed Best to keep such problems In Family, away from the public (Fannish) eye. This seems to me to be a foolish notion, overly Macho in the unstated assumption that it is better to let TAFF die than to call for help. ✱

Years ago TAFF attracted as its income only a few Free-Will donations -- more when a particularly popular candidate was running -- and the voters' fees. Amounts seldom totalled more than a few hundred dollars. Most winners had to add money of their own in order to make the trip they'd pledged to take if they won. TAFF acted more-or-less as a Supplement. Nowadays the situation is different. Though the income from voters' fees has not appreciably increased, other donations have.

- Wilcon, a house-party-cum-con, was formerly held over 4th of July weekends at the Wisconsin home of Jon and Joni Stopa, near Chicago. With attendance in the 70-100 range, cash was raised for TAFF, DUFF, and various other Fannish 'Charities' by use of gag auctions, a Poker 'Troll' (a cut from each winning pot put into the kitty), a Pun 'Troll' (a fee assessed from inveterate punsters), and other nefarious means. Donations to TAFF ran between \$100-\$200 most years, sometimes more.
- On an irregular basis, Worldcons donated portions of their profits --amounts varied from \$100 to \$500 or so -- to TAFF and DUFF.
- Regional conventions chipped in with various donations; \$50 here, \$100 there, with some gifts in the over \$200 range.

- Auctions, held on behalf of TAFF and DUFF, are handled at dozens of regional conventions through the auspices of Rusty Hevelin and Joyce Scrivner and a mini-host of other volunteers. Amounts raised vary widely from con to con, but on a yearly basis seem to be in the \$500 range.
- The juggling act, Cosmos & Chaos (Steve Leigh and Ro Lutz-Nagy) raised over \$1,000 between judging periods at the Chicon IV Masquerade in 1982. \$500 was given to TAFF-US, \$250 to TAFF-UK, and \$250 to DUFF. Thanks were made by the UK and DUFF recipients; the US TAFF Administrator never bothered to even acknowledge receipt of the cash.
- Various gifts have been made by numerous individuals and groups through the years. Seldom have they received a note of acknowledgement, much less a word of thanks.

In 1982 (prior to the Worldcon in Chicago of that year), Dave Langford noted in his zine, ANSIBLE 23 (Jan-Feb '82), that there were funds in excess of £1,000 in the UK and \$3,000 in the US. The UK Administrators, at least in recent years, have regularly notified British fans of the Fund's standing, giving thanks for donations, listing donors, and posting the financial standing of TAFF-UK. The cash in the accounts of TAFF-US is generally higher, yet no disclosure has been made in years. There is no way to track these amounts.

**\*Opinion\*** There is simply no excuse for not posting notice, by informing newzines or through a TAFF-specific zine, of the Fund's standings. I don't see how asking that such notices be given on a quarterly basis is beyond reason. At the very least, postcards of thanks to donors of sizable sums should be sent. Someone who gives, say, \$50 or more deserves that much\*\*

The period when TAFF is open for nominations is sometimes announced clearly and timely, sometimes late and muddled. The current race's nomination period was made via FILE 770, a California-based newszine, which was mailed out on August 21, 1984, giving a deadline for nominations of September 15, 1984! Many people didn't receive that zine until the Labor Day weekend, when Worldcon and other fan-gatherings were underway: in effect, there was less than two weeks notice given.

**\*Opinion\*** The date when the nomination period will close should be announced at the time the voting results for the previous race are given. In cases where it is found that additional time to round up candidates will be needed, any extension of the nomination period should be at least two months past the time it is announced. The fannish communication system may be irregular and not tightly scheduled, but it operates better than it has been used for this past year. Two weeks notice is just Not Enough.\*\*

Currently the TAFF ballots are sent to a handful of faneds. Approximately six zines carried them for the past race which ended in April of 1984. A greater attempt to disseminate ballots to a wider audience could be made, and has in some past years. More fanzine editors should receive copies, and ballots sent also to clubs and conventions. As it is, while the pool of contributors widens, the circulation of ballots seems to narrow.

**\*Opinion\*** If necessary, TAFF funds should be used to print and distribute the ballots. The cost of franking a sheet of paper through various fanzines can't be astronomical. Copies of ballots could be sent to con-coms for duplication by volunteers and distribution at conventions. The more ballots that are sent out, the more open the process and the more the Fund benefits.\*\*



Complaints have been made about the release of voting-in-progress details in the two most recent US-to-UK TAFF races. In one case, this revelation initiated a campaign for more votes to be given the losing candidate, the other involved a querying about the reasons why one ballot had been cast as it was. There seem to be two (at least) points of view about happenings like this: either release vote tallies on a periodic basis, or don't even count them until the balloting period has ended.

\*Opinion\* Announcing results-in-progress periodically is the more Open of the two procedures. But, considering the vagueries of fan publishing schedules and the length of time the voting is open, I doubt if up-dates would reach a wide-enough audience, soon enough, to have any balancing effect. Not counting the ballots places an onus on the Administrator -- but fans should realize that the person they elect to take the trip will also be responsible for running it, and vote accordingly. Perhaps this point could be made more clear to the TAFF electorate, many of whom are ignorant of the slightest details on how the Fund operates. I vote for the second option, with crossed fingers. In any case, I do not believe it should be proper for data about voting-in-progress to be given to one or a few others: tell everyone or tell no one at all.\*\*

Announcements concerning TAFF matters should be made at reasonable times. The ballots should be distributed early enough that one can reasonably be expected to have time to vote and return them by the deadline. The winners should also be made known in a timely manner, and that announcement should also contain the date for close of the next nomination period.

\*Opinion\* There seems to be no established time limit, even by Tradition, within which announcements of this nature are to be made. It's left to the discretion of the Administrator, and some seem to have more of that than others. I see no reason why results shouldn't be released by the end of the month following an election's closing date. It shouldn't take any longer than 30 days after the end of the nomination period to get ballots into the hands of fanzine editors and others. As it is nowadays, it is apparently expected that fans are telepathic, or pick up details by a process of fannish osmosis. Overseas voters have complained for years that they would not receive a ballot until the voting period was ended. In the current race, ballots were not sent to some faneds until only a mere 7 weeks before the election deadline -- a timespan which includes two Major National Holidays, Thanksgiving and Christmas. In order to speed up receipt of results, I think voters should be encouraged to enclose S.A.S.E.s with their ballots, so at least those who actually voted could find out who won in a quick manner. Swift dissemination of news about TAFF can act only as an encouragement to future participants.\*\*

The effort required from an Administrator more than offsets the benefits received; much more. In return for a gift (in recent years) of an all-expense-paid trip to a foreign clime, a person is asked to give up about one work-week's worth of time and energy. In a sense, TAFF is like a Sweepstakes: put up your bond, round up your nominators, and go out there and Campaign! In another sense, the winners are recipients of a short-term loan, to be paid back in time, not money. The benefits of winning are many, the potential for abuse is all-too present. There's a lot of money in TAFF, which offers motive for playing fast and loose with it when so little accounting is demanded. Fans are only Human, no matter how much we would prefer to pretend otherwise. I believe it is essential that some sort of Structure be given to the rather rickety skeleton around which TAFF is currently built. But it would not be wise to strangle the Fund with so much Red Tape and complicated procedures that fans would refuse to stand for election.



## Of Conclusions and Suggestions and A Call for Comment...

How much trouble is TAFF in? That, as always, depends on your viewpoint. There are those in fandom who have been against the whole idea since its inception, or who have come to that position since joining fandom. It is not so much to those I am addressing these comments, but instead to those who feel TAFF is worthwhile, a fannish ghodd idea in our midst. A ghodd thing which could be made better.

Doom knells have been sounded for TAFF before and the Fund has lived on, even thrived. The basic reason it has grown stronger in the past near-decade has been the influx of funds from convention fans which, to my mind at least, has far surpassed any increase in the numbers of voters. If TAFF had to survive on the income of those who cast ballots, and that alone, I have no doubt it would wither away to become a footnote in some future tome of Fan History.

Fans have shown that they care about TAFF. They feel good about donating to something they think has Worth; of value not necessarily to them as individuals, but something beyond immediate gain. TAFF (and DUFF and GUFF) afford fans the opportunity to take part in a larger community of endeavor, aiming for a goal which offers no reward but the good feelings engendered by sharing in the fellowship and enjoyment of other fans in an International bond.

Some have said it is no business of individuals like me and thee how TAFF is run. I disagree. Fandom is 'me and thee' and the Fund was begun by fans, is maintained by fans, and continues because of the good will of fans. Fans, you and I, have the only voice in TAFF that counts. Yet we also have the weakest voice in its management.

Returning to that first troublesome point on page 1, the establishment of guidelines, there are several routes that have been suggested. One is the establishment of a permanent Committee, composed of all previous TAFF Administrators who are willing to serve, which would be on hand to advise and counsel future winners. In one sense, this is what happens now, only it is usually only the most recent two Administrators or so who offer help and advice. Previous winners are ignored. Past winners have been through the mill already; with insight they have gained from experience of both the job and its aftermath it is they who should be best able to guide new, bewildered winners of one of fandom's finest honors.

Another suggestion has brought up the notion of a Teller, someone selected to count the votes, announce results, and generally oversee the pass-on of accounts and information. Two names have been mentioned in this regard, from three sources, but to my knowledge no one has spoken to the individuals concerned, so I won't bring their names up. It could cause them only embarrassment. Whether an unbiased fan could be found who'd be willing to assume that thankless task is a question that remains to be confronted, as well as how such a Worthy Person would be selected.

Yet another notion was that administration of the Fund be removed entirely from the winners. They usually have been selected by other criteria than their ability to manage accounts, and perhaps it is unfair to impose onerous duties on unwilling or unable fans. Many winners have returned from their trips utterly burnt-out by the rigors of travel and seeing so many new people and a strange country with different customs and foods. Maybe there's a Good Ole Joe out there willing to take on the day-to-day operations, and maybe then we'd see more Trip Reports. While this notion has its merits, I don't believe there are that many fans so unselfish as to want to assume a burden like that with no expectation of any reward but a bunch of complaints.

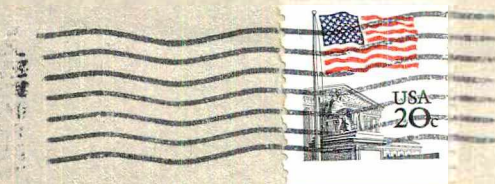


Regarding the matter of just what these supposed guidelines would consist, whether rules and regulations should be spelled out in complete detail or simply set down in general terms, or something Else altogether, is another point to discuss. For one thing, when it comes to details like release of voting-in-progress, would it not be possible for each Candidate to name two of his/her nominators who could be kept informed on voting progress on a monthly basis (as well as the Candidates themselves, of course)? It would allow the election to be more open while insuring that those most concerned would be certain to know the standings.

Perhaps publication of a Timetable for doing the various actions required of an Administrator could be made available, along with suggestions on how best to meet those goals. There are a multitude of ways and means, and I'm sure I've but begun to scratch the surface of the possibilities.

Let me hear from you. Please be brief (postage cost\$), but as explicit as possible. I offer ETTLE as a forum for those concerned with and about TAFF, but it will be a complete waste of time and effort without your cooperation. There is a stirring in the air nowadays, and perhaps there is no better time to attempt remedies for an ailing fannish institution. But unless YOU speak out, the time may pass on by. Even if you think everything I've commented on is a bunch of codswallop, that will aid the decision-making process (tone down any abusive language, though). It is a decision that fandom can make, but only if everyone gets to have their say. All I can do is urge you to write down your views and send them in. They'll get a fair hearing/viewing in these pages.

Thanks for your patience in wading through all this material. It is being presented in the hopes that fandom can be united behind TAFF and the other Fan Funds, and that once the gripes and observations have been aired a solidly-based and more participatory Fund will result. Help out; write in.



ETTLE ONE  
JACKIE CAUSGROVE  
6828 ALPINE AVE. #4  
CINCINNATI, OH 45236

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Jan Howard Finder  
P.O. Box 428  
Latham

NY 12110