

Askew#22

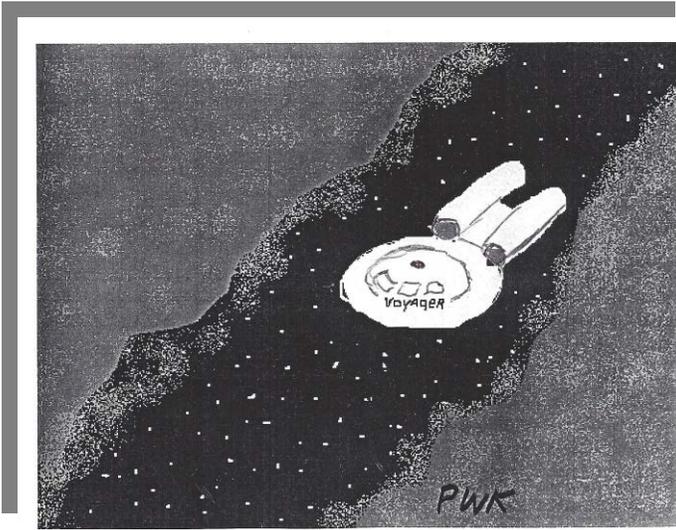
December
2017

The personalzine of John Purcell, a resident at
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So hard to say goodbye

I don't think anybody in science fiction fandom, especially fanzine fandom, will deny that the recent loss of Randy Byers (1960-2017) has been a kick in the gut. We have lost so many fans this year, but the loss of Randy at the age of 57 is very hard to take. Consider this brief listing of his accomplishments, courtesy of Mike Glycer's *File 770*:

- Randy won the 2007 Best Fanzine Hugo with co-editors with Lee Hoffman and Geri Sullivan for *Science Fiction Five-Yearly*.
- He co-edited *Chunga* with Andy Hooper and Carl Juarez, a fanzine that won four FAAn Awards and garnered two Hugo nominations. He also won a FAAn Award in 2012 for his fanzine *Alternative Pants*.
- Randy was the 2003 Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund delegate. He attended Seacon '03, the 2003 British Eastercon in Hinckley, and wrote portions of a TAFF report with a working title of *The King of TAFFland's Bent Sprog*.
- Randy was also a conrunner, part of the Corflu Zed leadership in 2009, and ran the Worldcon apa WOOF in 2011.

There are many other things that Randy was as well, such as being a connoisseur of craft beers, enjoyed the theater and opera, and he was an excellent writer. When Corflu, the fanzine fan's convention, was held in Austin, Texas in February of 2007, I naturally had to go, and that was when I met Randy for the first and only time. It didn't take long at all to appreciate his intelligence and sense of humor. Since then, our paths only crossed in fanzines and assorted correspondence. We wrote for each other's fanzines, and I always enjoyed reading his LiveJournal entries, *The Dry Ice Factory*, where Randy wrote about his travels, books read, movies seen, concerts heard, and then his battle with cancer.

If there is one thing I can take away from knowing Randy as little as I did, it will be this: face the events of your life with everything you have and never be afraid to share how you feel about the experience.

I think Marcus Aurelius describes Randy Byers perfectly in this quote: "When you arise in the morning, think of what a precious privilege it is to be alive — to breathe, to think, to enjoy, to love."

Godspeed, Randy. It was indeed a precious privilege to know you.

skewed

Here we are again: the lettercolumn. Once again, there were a handful of responses, which can happen when one is trying to produce a fanzine with a fairly compressed and regular schedule. Well, that's the theory behind fanzine publishing. I do try, y'know. My responses will be in Calibri size 12 font in this brown colour. Yeah, I'm still writing in Global English format; it may be awhile before I am cured of this literary malady.

Rich Dengrove
2651 Arlington Drive #302
Alexandria, VA 22306

26 November 2017

skewed

This is in answer to Askew #21 October 2017. The only problem is how you can be askew when you seem to have your act together. How could you be anything but together when you won TAFF; and, having done so, you obediently traveled all the way to Finland and around Europe? And then there is a matter of the 5,682 photos you took while in Europe. So when you say you have to get your photos under control, I have confidence they will be organized alphabetically by subject in no time.

Another virtue of yours is that you are direct. You admit that we will have to read your TAFF report to get the lowdown on your trip. Other TAFF winners would have hemmed and hawed about why the details of their trip was missing; but you come right out with it. It makes sense to do that too. You want to make money for TAFF; and you can't unless it is the source for the real low down on your trip.

One thing is fortunate: Baron David Romm didn't die on the trip. Still, it sounds like his life remained an ideal for us to follow. If you're right about him, you could consider him an Epicurean, an adherent to that Ancient philosopher of life. He lived his life to the fullest, a happy one. Though he died prematurely, that would not have mattered to the Epicureans. They, believed the quality of life wasn't reflected in how long you lived but whether you were happy. While they had a more ascetic view of happiness, I am willing to accept that Romm was happy during his life. As happy as the contemplative Epicurean gods.

Now we go from con fandom to literary fandom. Anyway to the books you're reviewing. I agree with you. I have loved Gail Carriger's novels in the Parasolverse, as I think she calls it. She has a sense of humor, a sense of wonder, and a knack for world-building. There's only one thing about her that makes me nervous. After having received her link filled tweets on Twitter. I have concluded that she is in danger of actually becoming Gail Carriger. Already she seems more comfortable in '30s and '50s fashion than she is with the 21st Century look. Also, she's definitely more comfortable in harlequin glasses.. Gail is the last subject I wish to pursue here.

Now we go from you John to the people who have written to you, in your Skewed Results section. Which, this time around, is completely composed of Lloyd Penney. From him, we learn that he has marked his 40th Year in Fandom. I am closer to 30 years. In addition, he is ahead of me in having gotten into convention fandom earlier; and into cosplay earlier, i.e., the new name for costume fandom. For these reasons, I am impressed with Lloyd.

I guess that's it for *Askew* #21. I hope I have my stuff as together as you in *Askew* #22. In the meantime, cheers to TAFF.

RICH DENGROVE

*Thank you, Rich, for approving of my Evil Plan for writing this TAFF Trip Report. So far only a couple small segments have appeared, but by the end of this year I should have at least a couple more written. First up is the end-of-year deadline for **Exhibition Hall**, followed shortly by one part of our London stay for **Banana Wings**. As they say, no rest for the wicked. In the meantime votes are coming in for the 2018 Westbound TAFF race, which means I have a new issue of the newsletter imaginatively named **TAFF News** to finish this weekend (almost done, for that matter). Sleep? What's that?*

Graham Charnock

1 October 2017

Hey, Purcell, what's going on? Your zine is becoming far too frequent. Are you trying to encroach on my paper-only super regular amd absorbent fanzine *Vibrator*? Strange I had to print out your paper-only fanzine on my own paper to read it. Can I have my money back? What do you mean, what money?

Your headline "While I was gone..." suggests you've been away. I can't say I'd noticed. Somewhere nice, was it? Sarasota, perhaps? Anyway, welcome back. Hell, if I'd known you were going to be away from home for 38 days I'd have been round to rifle through your book and fanzine collection. But at least I would probably have junked all the mail I found on your doorstep so you weren't bothered by it. But I probably would have been scared to burgle you because I know that like most rich Mericans you probably employ a daily cleaner (Mexican or Puerto Rican obviously) so I would have been scared of being discovered.

I look forward to reading your TAFF report when it is finally published, heaven knows I feel starved of all those details having been unable to follow you on Facebook while you were away (insert irony hash-tags as required).

I was sorry to hear of the death of your close friend Dave Romm of course, especially after Jim Mowatt had negotiated the use of one of his Helsinki photos for me in *Vibrator* 43 featuring someone who looks remarkably like you. Pure coincidence, of course. He often seemed from what little I knew of him as someone who lived perhaps vicariously through his photos, but it's good to be remembered that he had a healthy social life among his friends, albeit tinged with sadness that it then ended up with him dying alone.

You still read books! That perhaps is the most amazing insight on your character to be gleaned from this issue. And not only science fiction! I am doubly amazed.

I haven't had a loc from Lloyd Penney for *Vibrator* for some time now. Phew (breathes heavy sigh of relief). Only joking, Lloyd (please insert irony hashtags as required).

So where *do* you go from here, apart from trying to emulate *Vibrator's* rigorous publishing schedule. I don't know. But I hope lots of chocolate and coffee are involved.

Lots of love,

Graham

Lloyd has been gainfully employed for a few months now, which probably explains why he hasn't located your delightful fanzine recently. He will again.

*Yes, I do read science fiction, and non-fiction from time to time. In fact, now I'm reading a recent publication from **Popular Science** with the title "Our Future on Mars: Where We'll be in 2035." So far it's damned interesting, and with a lot of their patented excellent photography, diagrams, and drawings.*

So far a fair amount of coffee has been imbibed while working on my fanzines and trip report. One must sacrifice for the cause, you know.

Paul Skelton
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United Kingdom SK2 6BY

26 October 2017

Askew 21 was received here the other day. Of course I had already downloaded it from *efanzines.com*. What this says about *Askew* being a 'paper-only fanzine' I can only leave to Branes more Gianter than mine to grasp. Let me just say that I would far rather get *Askew* as an e-zine if possible, because that makes me feel less guilty about being unable to respond adequately to it. It would also save you the postage. The thing is; slim and frequent zines just seem to skitter across the surface of my mind and then are gone before my torpid intellect can grope sluggishly after them.

Askew 21 is a perfect case in point. Let's see, you visited the UK on your TAFF trip. OK, but we already knew all about that. Dave Romm died. Interesting personal reminiscences, but we never knew Dave. Worldcon snippets, but you already told us about them. Book reviews – *Waistcoats and Weaponry* doesn't sound like my kind of book. *Leviathan Wakes* sounds like mundane SF, whereas I want to read about FTL, star-gates, wormholes and exotic galaxy-spanning alien cultures (which might explain why we've just returned from strolling down to Stockport and back [a mere four miles or so] and picked up Alastair Reynolds' *Revelation Space* from a Charity Shop in the process), *Waiting in the Wings* reminds me that we've already told you about Cas' role in The Beatles rise to fame, whilst *Neverwhere* makes me recall that every time I pick up the two Neil Gaiman books I own, and read the blurbs, I put them down again whilst asking myself "Why did I buy these?" There is of course Lloyd Penney's LoC, which is all

steampunk this and steampunk that. I don't, I hasten to add, have anything against steampunk; it has always struck me as something potentially really interesting for other people to get involved with.

I mentioned walking back there, which is something of which Cas and I do quite a lot, regularly managing (weather permitting) a couple of 6-7 kilometre walks each day. No, I haven't really changed the subject; just stick with me and all will become clear. So, one road we regularly walk of a morning, to a local park where we use to walk Bestie, is usually littered, being regularly travelled by schoolchildren on their way to/from the schools at the end of our road, with empty soft-drinks cans and plastic soda bottles. As it happens, at the far end of this road there's a car-park, along one edge of which stand several recycling bins, so the other day we decided that in future we would carry a plastic carrier/shopping bag with us and pick up cans and bottles as we walked down the road, popping them into the plastic carrier bag as we went, then dump them in the recycling bins as we passed them. It would be our good deed for the day. So I grabbed a plastic carrier bag out of one of the bags of same hanging on hooks down the side of the cellar stairs.

Minor segue here – Major stores in the UK are now compelled, by law, to charge 5p for every one of those flimsy single-use carrier bags that they 'provide' to customers. In theory the 5p goes to charity, but they are allowed to deduct the costs of purchasing the bags and reasonable administration, and knowing how some companies manage to inflate costs to suit themselves when it comes to paying tax (think Google, Amazon or Starbucks) it wouldn't surprise me if they ended up charging the charities 10p for every 5p bag they sold.

So, knowing these charges were coming in, we started saving plastic carrier bags. Well, they can come in handy: for taking surplus paperbacks to the charity shops, collecting leaves out of the back garden, as handy receptacles for moss and pigeon shit from your gutters when they get cleaned out, and all sorts of stuff like that. You never know when a plastic carrier bag will come in handy, especially if it is tightly folded up like this:



I was taught to fold them this way by a work colleague, a white South African called Strydom. I was never sure whether this folding was something peculiar to South Africa or to Strydom himself. It does make the bag perfect for slotting into a back pants pocket, where it leaves no bulge whatsoever. It also means that you can get an awful lot of them in each carrier bag that you hang up down the cellar. One drawback though is that there is a natural reluctance to unfold them, so that when the charity shop (exempt from the compulsory charges) from which I am buying books asks me if I need a bag, I invariably answer in the affirmative, leaving the one in my back

pocket available for some untold future use. The Charity-Shop bags usually don't get folded and just get jammed into the tops of the cellar bags, along with any other bags that are left by visitors.

So now we return to the plastic carrier bag that I grabbed to help recycle the empties from our walk. It bore the legend 'Galeries Lafayette'. "Bloody Hell!" said Cas, "That's what was printed on the bags of clothes my ex in-laws used to send over for the kids, when they lived in Paris." Some of those kids' clothes had 'Dior' labels but, getting back to the plastic carrier-bag, there was no way this had hung around for 30+ years. We could only conclude the bag was something you'd left with us after your visit to Paris. So whilst I can't LoC your fanzine, I can certainly LoC your used plastic carrier bag. Actually, this is a 'FIRST' for me.

SKEL

Well, mystery solved. That was not our plastic carrier bag, but I do thank you for writing such a lovely letter telling me all about something that I knew nothing about. Much ado about nothing? Sounds like there's a story there that needs to be told.

Leigh Edmond
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Victoria, 3350
Australia

27 November 2017

A quick note to let you know that I found *Askew 21* on efanzines.com and decided to have a look. It is, however, a little too short and although I took it to a doctor's appointment today I had finished it before the doctor was ready to see me and had to turn to the magazines in the waiting room for entertainment. As usual, I amused myself looking at old home maker magazines in the hope of finding interior shots with book shelves with books on them. Not a one in the magazine I look at this time. What do these people do to enliven their drab but tastefully decorated lives. Is that what we invented the word 'mundane' for?

Your comment that you have 5,682 pictures to sort from your TAFF trip this year reminds me of the advances in technology over the years. When Valma and I visited the US for my DUFF trip in 1974 I took about ten rolls (maybe less) of black and white film, which probably added up to no more than 240 pictures. Because making prints from negatives was so expensive I only printed the images that I needed for my trip report and while I think I still have the negatives in a filing cabinet in the garage the rest have never been printed. One of these days I must buy myself one of those gizmos that scans negatives and perhaps put some of those pictures on the interweb. But it's not likely to happen for a while yet.

Good luck on getting your TAFF report written and out there. It took me a year and I reckon my report only scratched the surface of everything that we did and saw and the people we met. I saw recently on Facebook a picture of Samuel Delany at HP Lovecraft's grave. Don and Sheila D'Amassa took us to the same spot too in 1974. Talk about time binding, having met Delany at a Readercon we went to a couple of decades later. All good memories. Which leads me to your thoughtful comments on Dave Romm. I

don't know that I ever had any contact with him, but your writing makes me wish that I had.

And since your ish was not quite long enough this afternoon's waiting room session, so is this email of comment, EoC?

Best,

LEIGH

Actually, Leigh, emails of comment have been shortened to Emoc, or e-MoC, or eMoC, or whatever. I give up.

Maybe these short fanzines need to have a more practical purpose than as reading material for physician waiting rooms. Drink coasters come to mind, but that leaves circular watermarks on fanzines, and I prefer my paper copy zines to be as pristine as possible.

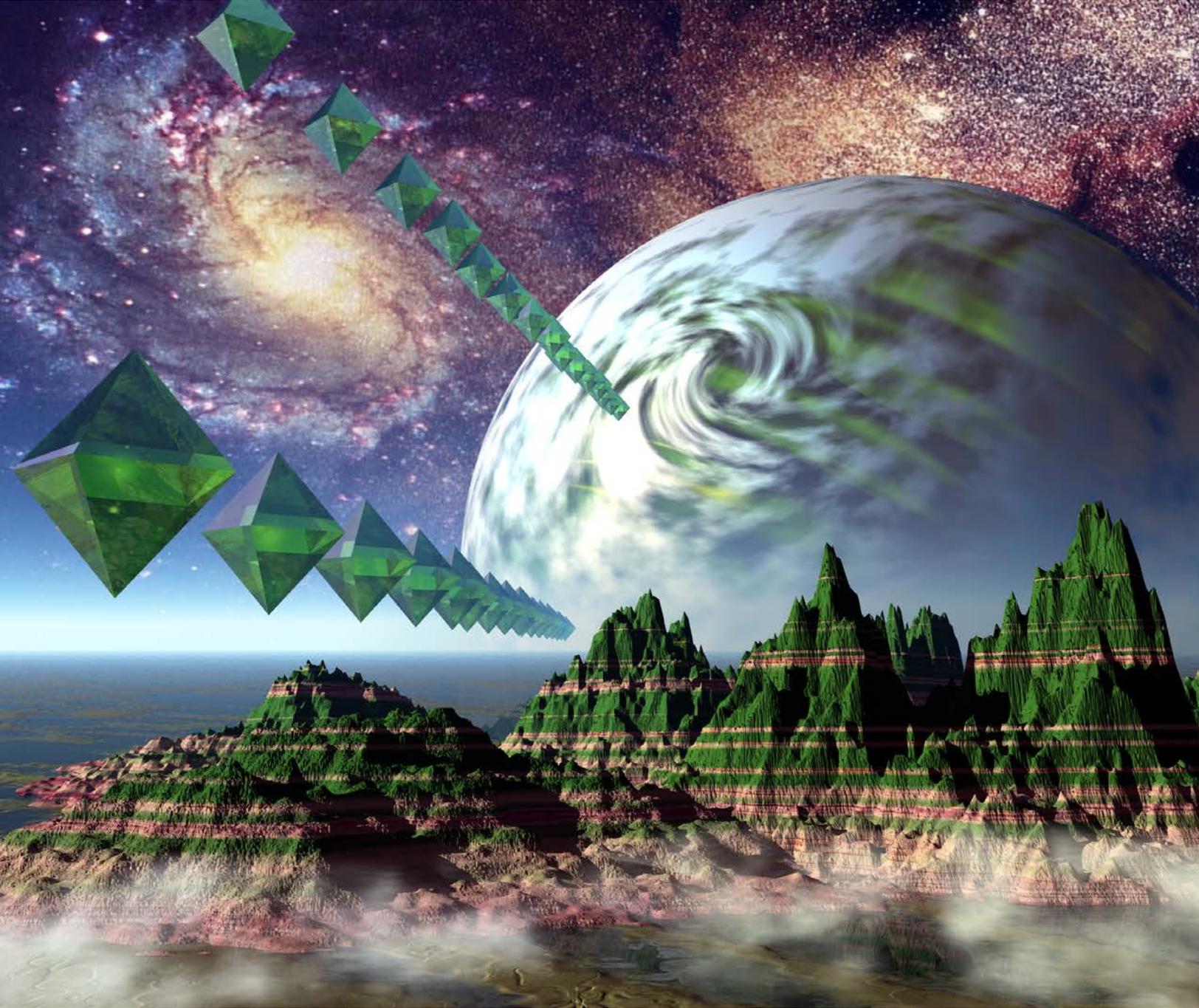
Thank you for your kind words about Dave Romm. If you were in Minneapolis during the mid-70s or at US-based world SF conventions, you probably saw Dave wandering about, taking pictures. The gent did get around to cons.

I ALSO HAPPENED TO HEAR FROM –

Ian Millstead, who made desultory comments about the books I reviewed in *Askew #21*.

Next issue will hopefully have books and more editorial type babblings included. Right now I want to get this particular issue “put to bed” so I can get back to working on TAFF News and working on that damnable trip report. You know, this FIAWOL thing can sometimes drive you crazy.





2018 TAFF Ballot - Europe to North America

Please read both sides before voting and send the entire sheet as your vote.

The Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund was created in 1953 for the purpose of providing funds to bring well-known and active fans familiar to those on both sides of the ocean across the Atlantic. Since that time, TAFF has regularly brought North American fans to European conventions and European fans to North American conventions. It exists solely through the support of fandom. That support, and the continued generosity of fandom, are what make TAFF possible.

Who may vote?

Voting in the 2018 race is open to anyone active in fandom before April 2016 who donates at least £3.00 (GBP) or \$4.00 (USD) to TAFF (larger donations are very gratefully accepted). Voting is by secret ballot: one vote per person, and you must provide your name on the ballot. You may change your vote at any time prior to the deadline. All votes must reach the administrators by midnight (Eastern US time) on Tuesday, April 3, 2018.

Donations:

TAFF gratefully accepts your freely given money, material for auction and other relevant donations; such generosity has sustained the Fund for more than 60 years. TAFF is fandom's longest-running travel fund - give early and often! Please contact your nearest administrator for details.

Candidates:

Each candidate has posted a bond of \$20 promising to travel, if elected, to the 2018 Worldcon in San Jose, California. Each candidate has three nominators on their side of the Atlantic and two on the other, each of whom has personally contacted the administrators with their nomination. Each candidate has also provided a platform of up to 101 words (published overleaf). Anyone active in SF fandom can run for TAFF as long as they fulfil these criteria for the relevant race; contact your administrator about future races!

Voting System:

TAFF uses a preference voting system similar to the system used in voting for the Hugo Awards. Voters should rank candidates in order of preference. This allows for the lowest-ranked candidates to be eliminated from the race and those votes redistributed according to the next ranking until one candidate has a clear majority. A candidate must receive at least 20% of the #1 rank votes on both sides of the Atlantic to win. Any candidate failing to receive this minimum percentage on either side will be dropped, and the second-place votes on their ballots counted as first-place votes in the next ballot count. Votes will be counted according to a voter's contact address, not where they send their ballot. Votes from fans not resident in either Europe or North America will not count towards either side of the Atlantic for the purpose of this rule.

"Hold Over Funds":

This choice, like "No Award" in Hugo balloting, gives you the chance to vote for no TAFF trip this year, should you feel none of the candidates deserve your support. "Hold Over Funds" is exempt from the 20% requirement: if it receives a majority of the votes on the final ballot, no trip will be held this year.

"No Preference":

For voters who prefer not to choose between candidates, but don't want the trip held over.

How to Vote:

Either send a copy of this form with a check, or pay via PayPal. The minimum donation to vote is \$4 (USD) or £3 (GBP) or 3 Euros. In the US Checks should be made payable to "John Purcell" (for checks in USD) or to "TAFF" (for cheques in GBP or Euros). PayPal donations should be made to the email addresses below with your contact details and your ranked voting preferences in the comments section. If you do not fill in the comments section, your vote may not be counted! Send your signed and completed ballot form and donation to:

Europe: Anna Raftery - cheques payable to "TAFF" 13 Chatham House, 10 Melbourne Road, Wallington, SM6 8SB UK. Paypal using email: EUTAFF(at) gmail.com

North America: John Purcell - Checks payable to "John Purcell"
3744 Marielene Circle, College Station, TX 77845 USA.. Paypal using email: 2017taff2019(at)gmail.com

The 2018 TAFF Candidates

Johan Anglemark

I met fandom in 1983. Soon I was involved in con-running and I've never stopped; I'm on two concons currently. I've attended all European Worldcons since 1990, but never one in America; I would love to do that through TAFF, and write a trip report. I'm co-administrator of the Swedish branch of the Nordic Fan Fund and the chair of the Alvar Appeltofft Memorial Foundation, a fannish charity. When not on staff, I flog used books at cons. I live with Linnéa in a house full of cats, games, vinyl records, and books, and earn my living as a tech writer.

Nominated by: (Europe) Caroline Mullan, Ron Gemmell, Eemeli Aro. (NA) Ulrika O'Brien, Diane Lacey

Fia Karlsson

You can't spell FIAWOL without Fia! This wildling born north of the Arctic Circle came south bringing her friendly manners and passion for organizing with her. She lures you in with dill chips, but you stay for her genuineness.

She went from book-blogging to hosting a book circle, which grew into the fandom society in Malmö, Sweden. Fia has chaired two cons, worked as the Social Media Area Head for Worldcon 75, been adopted into the Finnish fandom, and was the 2017 Nordic Fan Fund delegate at Octocon in Dublin. She's now ready to Take on San Jose! Fia for TAFF!

Nominated by: (Europe) Jukka Halme, John-Henri Holmberg, Gareth Kavanagh. (NA) Lucy Huntzinger, Michael Lee.

Helena McCallum (Adela Terrell)

My name is Helena McCallum, originally from Scotland. In 2002 my partner left me at home to attend the San Jose Worldcon with his friend. Now, 16 years and 2 children later, I seek your assistance for revenge. It will also be just before my 40th birthday, which may come as a surprise to some who remember my first forays into fandom in the mid- 90s.

I was told people like me don't get to run for TAFF, so here I am. I'm friendly, out-going, and a fun person to have at a party, I'll bring a nice Whisky.

Nominated by: (Europe) Douglas Spencer, James Shields, David O'Neill. (NA) Pablo Vasquez, Tracy Benton.

Please rank candidates with 1, 2, etc. where 1 is your first preference:

[] Johan Anglemark [] Fia Karlsson [] Helena McCallum [] Hold Over Funds [] No Preference

Name:

Address: Email/phone:

If you think your name may not be known to the administrators, please provide the name of an active fan (not a fan group, a candidate, or one of their nominators) who is known to the administrators and who can vouch for you being an active fan, eligible to vote.

Name: _____

TAFF may contact you regarding your ballot or to send out newsletters. We do not publish your data or pass it to any other organization.

Reproduction of this form is encouraged. It is the official voting vehicle and must be reproduced verbatim.

All votes must reach the administrators by midnight (Eastern US time) on Tuesday, April 3, 2018.

Anyone reproducing this form should substitute their name here: John Purcell.