

# askew #28

May 2019

The paper only (well, most of the time), personal fanzine from John Purcell, who is now the out-going North American TAFF Administrator. Contact information, should you desire it, is provided below:

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Art: clipart (1, 5, 7); photo by David Dyer-Bennett (6) and that's it!

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**Additional Disclaimer:** We will serve no beer before 10:00 AM. No shoes, no shirt – no problem.



## IT HAS BEEN AWHILE SINCE I HAVE BEEN HERE

Since this past December, to be precise. As I finally begin writing this issue, it is Saturday morning of April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019, and while it is highly doubtful that this issue will be mailed within the next three days, it should be completely written and printed by then. The plan is to have it mailed out during Finals Week, which begins on May 6<sup>th</sup>, so this will be a mercifully brief issue, or so I hope.

So what happened over the course of the four months since the 27<sup>th</sup> issue graced your mailboxes? A fair amount. Spring Semester was very busy for me (six classes: one was a 12-week overload course added on in early February), two professional conferences, one science fiction convention (AggieCon 50) at which I was one of the guests, and helping to pick up our daughter's yard after a tornado bounced down on their acreage this two weeks ago (they have four acres) in Kurten, Texas, which is not quite a half-hour drive from where Valerie and I live. Their house fortunately was not damaged, and nobody was injured, but the chicken coop and the large, expensive wooden playset were completely obliterated, and stuff was blown hither, thither, and yon all over their acreage, plus into their neighbor's property. The chickens are fine, as is their horse (the fence enclosing Eli's pasture was wiped out), and their three dogs are good, too. All in all they got off easy. It so easily could have been much, much worse.

## TAFFISH THOTS

As indicated in the above colophon, later this year – the end of August, to be exact – I will be replaced as the North American administrator of the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund. The winner of the 2019 race to send a North American fan across the Pond to attend Dublin 2019 – an Irish Worldcon is Geri Sullivan. I know that she will enjoy her trip and perform her Fan Fund delegate duties admirably, and also that Geri will be a very able administrator for the next two - or possibly three – years.

Why do I say “possibly three”? Well, the normal way TAFF works is that the race alternates direction from year to year: odd numbered years it is West to East, and even numbered years it is East to West. Since the usual destination for the eventual destination is that year’s Worldcon, when this major event is not held in either North America or Europe, changes need to be made to the destination convention, which is typically Eastercon for Europe, but that might be changing now with Eurocon becoming just as desirable a convention to attend as the de facto British national convention (Eastercon) or some other event that could be a potential target. I am thinking such an alternate event could be either Swecon, Finncon, or possibly another European science fiction convention that a North American fan might be interested in. The Asylum, which is a huge Steampunk event in London held during August, could be a possibility, too.

These mental musings are because of the 2020 World Science Fiction Convention is going to be held in Wellington, New Zealand, in August of that year. Paul Weimer, the 2017 DUFF (Down Under Fan Fund) race winner, announced that there would not be a 2019 DUFF race because of CoNZealand (the name ascribed to the 78<sup>th</sup> Worldcon <https://conzealand.nz/>), in order for a North American fan to attend said 78<sup>th</sup> Worldcon next year. That decision makes a lot of sense, and I believe that next year’s DUFF race will be very good for that fan fund. It needs a booster shot, that’s for sure. (This is easily another topic for discussion for a future issue, so stay tuned.) Perhaps TAFF should do the same thing for 2020: take the year off since the 2021 Worldcon would most likely be in Washington, DC.

Which reminds me. Here is the listing of Worldcon bids as of now, copy-pasted from [www.worldcon.org](http://www.worldcon.org), the site where one can go to learn such things:

**2021 Worldcon Bids**

[DC in 2021](#)

**2022 Worldcon Bids**

[Chicago in 2022](#)

**2023 Worldcon Bids**

[Nice, France in 2023](#)

[New Orleans, USA in 2023](#) (Facebook page)

[Chengdu, China in 2023](#) (Twitter)

**2024 Worldcon Bids**

[Glasgow, Scotland in 2024](#)

**2025 Worldcon Bids**

Seattle, USA in 2025

[Perth, Australia in 2025](#) (Twitter)

**2073 Worldcon Bids**

[Minneapolis in 2073](#)



An interesting listing of potential vacation spots, eh wot? My choices would be DC, Chicago, France (tough decision because New Orleans is a mere 7 hour drive from home), Scotland, and Perth. Minneapolis is right out: I should be long dead by then. As it has been said before, science fiction fans can plan out their vacation trips for at least two years in advance. And now I hear there is a nascent Israel Worldcon bid in its infant stage. Much whisky was employed as encouragement, I understand.

# I AM NOT A NUMBER. I AM A NUMERAL!

Just for shits and giggles, since I've been buried underneath spreadsheets and assorted other data for the past four months, this past weekend I reviewed the past TAFF races for the largest margins of victory in this fan fund's history. Why I do these things, I don't know. Well, maybe I do.

Even though I am not very good at doing the maths, I still had to pass a graduate level statistics class for my Master's Degree and then a Behavioral Statistics course for my Doctorate, and I literally amazed myself by discovering it is actually kind of fun to play with numbers. In fact, it really was interesting to do arcane computations like regression analysis, covariants, differentials, standard deviations, and spotting patterns as the figures began magically saying things to my sleep-deprived mind. Therefore, it doesn't surprise me that as this year's votes started rolling in I noticed a distinct trend emerging. By now everybody should know the final vote counts – they have been posted on both the *File 770* and TAFF websites – and that Geri Sullivan won on the first round by a simple majority. In fact, the numbers surprised me so much that this year's TAFF numbers released the statistical nutjob lurking inside my head out of its cage and created the following chart of the top ten margins of victory (first place compared to second place) in TAFF history, which dates back to 1954. Please note that this is simply a matter of statistical curiosity and not meant to reflect badly on the other candidates in the 2019 race. I just wondered who had won past TAFF races by large margins, and thus desired to put this year's race in a historical perspective. Ergo, here is the Top Ten listing, with one Honorable Mention:

Lee Hoffman	185 points (1956)*	Geri Sullivan	106 votes (2019)
Robert Madle	170 points (1957)*	Don Ford	100 points (1959)*
Steve Green	135 votes (2009)	Sue Mason	96 votes (2000)
Martin Tudor	129 votes (1996)	Terry Carr	93 votes (1965)
Vincent Clarke	123 points (1954)*	Jeanne Gomoll	90 votes (1987)
Honorable Mention: Peter Weston 89 votes (1974)			

The asterix (\*) denotes when point values were assigned to first, second, third, etc., place or preference voting. That practice ended in 1960.

Now I don't know about anybody else, but this struck me as being significant because of the people listed in this Top Ten + One listing. Early in TAFF's existence point values were assigned to first, second, third, and so forth, preferences, and the winner was determined by the total votes accumulated. What profoundly struck me was the history and significance of what this fan fund means to science fiction fandom. This is quite humbling to think that your name, should you stand for and win TAFF, DUFF, or GUFF, your name will stand alongside some of the most legendary names and characters of our community. It really is overpowering and humbling. My hope is that I have done honor to TAFF, and the fan funds in general, as being a representative of them, and I am positive Geri will likewise do her best to continue this tradition.

Has anybody else besides me noted that the two most recent North American TAFF winners were both active in Crazy Minneapolis Fandom?

# skewed results

*Letters. I actually received letters in the mail! Well, one. Goshhowboyohboy!*

*For the sake of sanity, I have edited out most of the comments from readers about last fall's election cycle here in America mainly because those seem a bit outdated now. Oh, well. It happens. Even so, my response comments will be in Calibri, size 12, rust-colored italicized font.*

Jerry Kaufman  
P.O. Box 25075  
Seattle, WA 98165

*2 February 2019*

Thanks for another issue of your paper-only zine, *Askew*. I read your thoughts on the Republicans and their processes with some interest. I wonder why they didn't try to get a budget passed, including the Wall, before the end of the term. Could it be that most of them didn't really want one built? Of course, I primarily read magazines and other news sources that agree with my point of view, so that thought is probably wishful thinking.

There have been a few issues on which both major parties can agree, like the imprisonment reform bill that was agreed to and signed by Trump late last year.

My own ideas about a compromise on immigration and border security are as follows: 1) Give Trump more for border security than previously offered, but not as much as he requested. 2) Require a detailed budget to show how the money will be spent. (I get the impression, possibly false, that Trump asked for a specific amount but not how it would be spent, except a broad "build the wall.") 3) Make DACA status legal and permanent, and help the Dreamers qualify for citizenship. 4) Get legal status for all former and current workers at Trump properties. That's as far as I've gotten.

I'm sure I've read the first two of the Dahlquist series, and enjoyed them. I wasn't aware there were more, and will keep an eye out for them.

I see you've included Leigh Edmonds' address in the letter column, which ought to be very helpful to me, as I need to mail something to him and Valma. Except that I looked at Valma's Facebook page and see that they are about to move! (Leigh looks very professorial in that photo.)

Good on you for continuing the paper zine tradition. I hope the responses you get make it worthwhile.

**Jerry**

*Funny you should mention Leigh Edmonds moving. In the letter he sent – an actual, real, honest-to-ghu paper letter! Ooh, the wonder of it all! – Leigh included the new address. I will include that at the end of this brief letter column.*

Ray Palm

Boxholder  
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Plattsburgh, NY 12901-0002

5 February 2019

What's this in my PO box? Not a bill, not junk mail -- why it's a paperzine: *Askew #27!*

On the topic of Crying Kavanaugh: he hired only women for his clerks, a first for the Supreme Court. Advancing women in the legal arena or leaving it open for him and Clarence Thomas to make jokes about pubic hair on a Coke can when hanging out with "the gals?"

Resident Trump: His border wall would be nothing but another monument to his ego like a Trump Tower. But look at the bright side: He's a uniter. Look at all the women elected to congress.

Bedside Bookshelf: How do you find the time with your job, family, and other interests to read? You sleep only four hours a night? Me, I've been having trouble (over) sleeping which eats up a lot of time. Of course I am getting old (and cranky.)

Ray

*Yeah, I've been getting old and cranky, too, but I try to keep it under control. I read about for about an hour before turning off the light at night – which means somewhere between 11 PM and midnight – so I can get as close to six hours of sleep. See? I am actually getting a bit more sleep these days, which is a very good thing.*



Leigh Edmonds  
119/29 Stawall Street South  
Ballarat East, Victoria 3350  
Australia

21 February 2019

A paper fanzine deserves a paper response. This will be inconvenient, but since you've gone to the trouble of putting your fnz in an envelope and going to the post office to send it to me, I will do the same.

When the paper version of *Askew 27* arrived I didn't have any planned trips to Melbourne (during which I do all my fannish reading) so I put it somewhere safe where I could find it. Naturally, when the time came I couldn't find it and was thore forced to read the latest *Trapdoor* instead. (Not that this was a great inconvenience, you understand. Then I found your fnz again and, making the trip down to Melbourne again yesterday, finally got to read it. Much pleasure ensued.

As it turned out, I was on my way to Melbourne this time to interview some teachers for my current project. Three of them were English teachers, and they seemed a generally inspired and happy bunch, so I hope Valerie falls in to the same class. The first one had his well-thumbed paperback copy of *Romeo and Juliet* with him and he off to a class on it after he'd talked to me. The last one for the day brought in her workbook from a production of the same play that the school had put on in 2006, which Valma and I had seen and thought was the best staging of that play we'd ever seen. It's interesting to see the passages from the original text for that production and the notes on rehearsals. Just as interesting was the research because this production was set in Shanghai in the interwar period, and there were copies of all kinds of things about that city during the period...

Discussion of stf, eh? Contrary to my customary practices, I've read three and a bit stf novels in the past three months. Two of them I've read completely and the third is made up of a bit of books that've started and not finished. Octavia Butler seems to be considered a decent writer, but she's a bit too serious/complex/deep and meaningful for my liking. Strangely, so is the Fred Pohl that I started reading. This flurry of stf reading started when I spent a few days in Sydney for a



From Minicon 28, a fanzine panel with (L-R) me, Steve Perry, Jeanne Mealy, David Emerson, Elise Matheson (perched), Victor Raymond. Photo by David Dyer-Bennett.

conference and my hotel was just around the corner from the famous Glebe Bookshop. I walked past a couple of times, like an alcoholic walking past a pub, but eventually gave in to temptation. Their stf range was extensive, so I bought something relatively cheap. All I can remember now that the writer is apparently a well-known British wrtier with the surname of Tchaikovsky. It was a fair read but once I'd figured out the plot gimmick (by about page 20) the rest of the story was a bit pedestrian. The other trouble with this book was that it was too big to fit into my jacket pocket so I could conveniently take it around with me, so I'd finished that one I went back to the bookshop looking for something that was 'pocketbook' sized, and the only one that I could find there that didn't cost an arm and a leg was Asimov's *Caves of Steel*. I must have read that over fifty years ago, so I had a vague memory of the whodunit that is revealed in the final few pages. I enjoyed that story a bit more than I expected.

Then there were a couple of false starts before Robin Johnson presented me with a box of duplicates from which I selected the fourth book in Asimov's Foundation Trilogy, *Foundation's Edge*. Talk about tedious! So much talking in circles and so little action. I keep it in the car so it goes with me to medical appointments and other places where I have to wait for things to happen. I've grown so bored with it that I tried flipping through to the final page or two to find out how it ends, but that is so unclear that it looks as though I'm going to have read the entire thing just to make sense of it all. Still, I have to admit that it's better than having to thumb through those old issues of *Better Homes and Gardens* or *Home Beautiful* that find in waiting rooms.

My main reading at the moment is Alex Ross's *The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century*, which is about 'classical' music in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is extremely well written and endlessly enjoyable, but it runs to not quite 700 pages and I'm only up to Shostakovich and Prokofiev in the Stalinist era, a long way to go yet. Like a good bottle of bourbon, however, I sip on this one rather than gulp at it. That was interesting news about DUFF and the worldcon in New Zealand. News of these things does reach my ears in far off Ballarat, but I don't expect to have much to do with either. This year and the next two look like being particularly busy (and productive, I hope) so that's that.

## Leigh

*Thank you for sending such a wonderful and lengthy letter, Leigh. It was greatly appreciated not only for its content, but for providing me with extensive touch-typing practice as I read off the letter while rattling it onto this electronic document, which shall eventually be magically transformed into a proper dead tree fanzine.*

*I will have to find a copy of that Alex Ross book; it sounds fascinating. Shostakovich is one of my favorite 20<sup>th</sup> century composers, so I am definitely interested in reading what Ross has to say about his work.*

Lloyd Penney  
1706-24 Eva Rd.  
Etobicoke, ON  
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29 January 2019

Thank you for *Askew 27*, and it is time to move forward with it, and make sure some things are said. I feel I can say them for there are a number of right-wing supporters in this country, too, and what I see there beggars belief.

With that, I will make some remarks on the Kavanaugh decision, to let this child become a Supreme Court justice. The news is a little dated now, but with Kavanaugh making the SCOTUS more right-biased, the news becomes worse and worse. Discrimination against certain groups, based on gender, skin colour or sexual orientation is now legal, and backed and encouraged by the Supreme Court. *Roe v. Wade* is about to be done away with. American has always said it is not the world's policeman, but it has done so to cater to its own self-interest. Its government usually demands that it be seen as a moral compass. Right now, the world needs that compass, but it sure isn't coming from Washington. We all need to beat back the rise of tyrants in North Korea, Brazil and Venezuela, among other countries...



Another topic, for our own sanity... we may be taking the FAAn Awards a little too seriously, but it just shows that we care about them. A good number of us also realize that these awards may be the only awards we even remotely qualify for any more.

Hurray for rogue protein molecules, turning people into cannibal zombies. You can't go wrong with that! Wasn't there a Frankie Avalon movie with that idea in it? And, I will have to see if I can afford a TAFF

vote. Money is really tight, and the bills mount. Yvonne is also job-hunting right now, have been let go from the casino/racetrack to the north of us due to a lack of work.

Lloyd

*As it turns out, I am very glad that you were able to vote and contribute to the TAFF cause, Lloyd. Always appreciated. I also wish the two of you much luck in finding employable positions to stockpile fundage for your England trip this coming summer. (\*) Cannibal zombies. At first I read that as “cannabis zombies,” which would be a very different take on this genre. Any takers on writing such a story or three?*

### **I ALSO HEARD FROM THESE FOLKS:**

Jeremy Brett, Michael Dobson, Nic Farey, Joe Siclari, David Thayer

### **As previously mentioned, a COA:**

Leigh Edmonds: 46 Hocking Avenue, Mount Clear, Victoria 3350, Australia

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## **What else can I natter on to fill this last page? Oh, yeah. Corflu 37.**

I am afraid that I have really done it now. The vast majority of science fiction fanzine fans, especially those who were at the recently deceased Corflu Fiawol (#36 in the series) in Fairfax, Virginia (May 2 – 5, 2019, was its lifespan), know that next year’s Corflu will be held right here in College Station, Texas in either mid-March (which is preferred) or mid-May (which is summer here) at most likely the Courtyard Marriott hotel. To join as an attending member send \$40 USD (by check: payable to “John Purcell” and write “Corflu 37” on the memo line) to me at 3744 Marielene Circle, College Station, TX 77845 USA; this rate will end on May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019; attending memberships increase to \$50 USD on June 1<sup>st</sup> and will last until August 31<sup>st</sup>; \$75 September 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>; then an even \$100 from January 1<sup>st</sup> to either March 1<sup>st</sup> or May 1<sup>st</sup>, depending on the finalized date of Corflu Heatwave (the convention’s nickname). For those of you from England who might be attending, Rob Jackson has offered to be the repository of attendance monies: therefore, send your hard earned funny money to him at Nightingale Lane, Hambrook, PO18 8UH United Kingdom. For the above time-frames UK attending rates are £ 30 (until May 31<sup>st</sup>), £ 40 (1 June – 31 August), £ 60 (1 Sept. – 31 December), then £ 80 starting 1 January 2020. Supporting memberships are \$25 USD / £ 20 GBP until December 21, 2019. NOTE: If European fans plan on attending or supporting, convert Euros to USD. Thank you.

A proper *Corflu Heatwave* zine will shortly be appearing on efanzines.com and also the Corflu.org website (in the works right now) in addition to the Corflu 37 Facebook page. This has a lot of information about the convention as of now, and there will be changes very soon. Stay tuned.