

Askew #30

July 2020

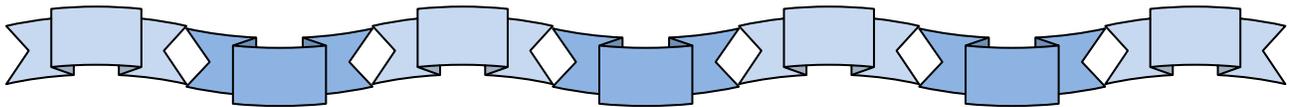
July 2020

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The world – especially America – keeps getting worse. Daily assaults on our mental and emotional abilities to understand and accommodate the various major events here on planet Earth dare us to rise to the basic challenge of human existence. Pandemics, wars, politics, deaths, and ... I could make a considerably long listing here, but don't want to do that. However, recent events have really hit home, and I would like to expand upon the following posting I made to my Facebook page on May 28th, 2020. Yes, this regards the protests and rioting in Minneapolis following the death of George Floyd on May 25th.

When getting political gets personal

As a Minnesota native, seeing what happened in Minneapolis broke my heart. Yes, I have a lot of friends living in the area of the city where all this went down - my brother included - so the rioting and property destruction caused me to worry for their lives and homes. I hope that everyone is safe now that this appalling situation finally seems to have calmed down in the last couple months.

The state has definitely shifted in its overall attitude since I've left. Growing up in St. Louis

Park - a suburb affixed to the western edge of Minneapolis - I have always considered the Twin Cities a fairly progressive, prosperous, and relatively quiet and decent metropolitan area. As a teenager, my political heroes were senators Hubert Humphrey, Eugene McCarthy, and Governor Wendell Anderson; later in life Senator Paul Wellstone joined that list. When I was in high school I went door-to-door around my neighborhood handing out brochures for Dr. B. Robert Lewis when he was campaigning for the Minnesota state senate; the same year I canvassed for state Representative Pete Petrafeso. Both



were members of the DFL (Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party). All of those people I just mentioned believed in and worked for equal rights and civil treatment of everyone.

All of them would be appalled at what is now happening in Minneapolis and around the country. We should be much further along than this unlawful mistreatment of blacks or any other members of our communities. This greatly saddens me, and it hurt to see my hometown in flames.

My hope is that the police officer who committed the initial act of excessive violent restraint that resulted in the death of George Floyd be brought to trial quickly on the charge of murder. It is not right that one overzealous police officer brings such destructive anger and property loss from his actions. He must be held accountable, and for any kind of progress to be made in bringing racial hatred to an end, the authorities in Minneapolis and the state of Minnesota must act swiftly and firmly. The Minneapolis police commissioner's office needs to act accordingly to the law and not protect one of its own.

Additionally, the rioting doesn't help matters either. While I certainly can understand the anger over the constant mistreatment of black Americans, I don't think rioting helps at all. Peaceful protesting, yes: get the word out that this behavior by police against blacks is wrong, that it must stop, and is unacceptable by officers of the law. For that matter, I can't stand rioting either. Like I said, I can understand the anger, feeling the need to strike back, but violence begets violence, and delays any chance for civil discourse. I do not condone violence on either side of this issue, but in order to make it stop, everyone must open their eyes, their minds, and their hearts to see what we are doing to each other.

It is the year 2020. In the midst of a planetwide pandemic claiming hundreds of thousands of lives and infecting millions more, maybe - just maybe - the human race might just get a clue that we need to pull ourselves together, not pull ourselves apart.

The weekend immediately after this tragic event saw the nighttime rioting and looting that would burn down Uncle Hugo's and Uncle Edgar's Bookstores in Minneapolis, which were properties of longtime fan Don Blyly; Dreamhaven Books, owned and operated by Greg Ketter, was also broken into, suffering damage from that and the aborted effort of someone trying to set fire to the store. There is now an official GoFundMe page on Facebook for the Uncles Hugo and Edgar stores, so here is the link for this:

https://www.gofundme.com/f/let-us-help-save-uncle-hugo039s?pc=em_dn_postdonateshare_o&rcid=r01-15913113013-66e2c39eb5b5402a&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook&utm_campaign=p_email%2B5102-48hr-donor-share&fbclid=IwAR29IbGnx8HHxIajrMrLqTk7QwvYVaB2T7r-r-Hz4rc2SvflEg7ukbEeOA

Please know that by posting this GoFundMe link I am not minimizing the loss of George Floyd's life and the cause that these protestors are fighting for: equality not only before the law, but simply to have a decent chance to live a life in which every human being can provide and care for their families. It boggles my mind that in this day and age that not everyone gets it: we are all here together, and differences in color, race, religion, sexual orientation, or cognitive abilities should never blockade another human being's rights to live a decent life. What is so damned hard to understand?



Virtual Conventions

Well, since Valerie and I both did not bother to pay for supporting memberships for the upcoming Virtual CoNZealand Worldcon, we don't need to worry about voting for Hugo Awards and other such nonsense. I do admit to being curious as to how this massive experiment will work out, but I have my doubts that it will be as successful as an in-person, real world sf convention. I wish the committee all the best of luck in this endeavour, though.

Then during the last week of June I learned that ArmadilloCon 42 will indeed be happening, but online. So, since that is a much smaller effort than a Worldcon – although it's still a technical marvel to me – we are going to do that over the weekend of August 28-30, 2020. If anybody else is interested in partaking of the online festivities of Austin, Texas' annual literary science fiction convention, it is on Facebook, and you can even Google the convention and find the homepage. Or you could even click on this link:

<http://armadillocon.org/d42/> This is the latest word as of June 24, 2020, and I would not be surprised that updates will be forthcoming Real Soon Now since the projected virtual con is now one month off. My plans are to partake of this opportunity, and I hope many of you will do likewise.

skewed results

*This is the section where letters from readers are shared and commented upon where applicable. Since the previous issue contained the Fanzine Activity Achievement (FAAn) Awards listing and vote tabulations, that was a major topic covered, which is to be expected. In fact, there was a significant conversation in about these awards in general – category definitions, voting methodologies, etc. – in Nic Farey's Best Perzine winner **This Here...** for a while, and that's good. I strongly recommend readers go to efanzines.com and read through that zine's most recent issues (April to July 2020) for the discussion. Lots of good idea sharing in there.*

*Once again, correspondent's content will be in regular Calibri size 11 font like this, while my comments shall be in **italicized bold Times New Roman size 12 font like this**. Onward we go!*

Steve Jeffery
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31 March 2020

Thanks for sending *Askew 29* with the Corflu Heatwave voting figures, which put Nic Farey's comments in *This Here... 27* into perspective.

I'm not going to get too involved into the whole argument about categories. I've already replied to Nic on this and pointed out, as you say that here, that in hindsight you can always recast some of the votes cast into other, equally eligible, categories and get a slightly different final outcome. It's hardly a surprise, and someone else could equally do the same thing and come up with yet a different prospective outcome. It's not so much the fannish equivalent of a VAR (Video Assistant Referee) appeal, as it doesn't overturn the original decision, but perhaps more like the pundits at the end of a game disputing the referee and linesmen decisions after the event.

Anyway, the results are what they are, and it's good to see the numbers.

I am though, rather disappointed at the number of voters being quite so low this year again. An improvement on last year's voting, but not by much, especially given the number of people who attend Corflu. I'm really sorry now that I couldn't make it, but who could predict the shit that would hit the fan so shortly after. In fact, just as it was wrapping up. I spend my birthday this year in lockdown, having been sent home to work remotely a few days before. I hope no one ended up stranded and unable to get home. *{Everybody did, thank Ghu. Let's hope Corflu 38 gets off the ground, too.}*

What I did want to pick up on though was the tone of some of your comments (at what I perceived as the tone of some of your comments) to and about Nic at the end.

"and as far as I'm concerned, when they're all done diddling with the numbers, they can diddle with themselves", and later "I don't care where you put your award, as long as you stick it where it belongs."

OK, so you and Nic don't agree on which of several categories some of the votes should go in, and Nic himself would admit that he does not shy away from robust and sometimes abrasive comments in his own zine (and should therefore be prepared to get as good as he gives) but this feels unduly personal. Maybe I'm wrong, and I'm misreading it (and maybe I'm a snowflakey wuss) but it's one thing that puts me off fandom (yeah, we're a family, and not all families love each other unconditionally) and leaves a sour taste.

Hopefully I'm wrong. I just don't find reading this sort of stuff either entertaining or useful.

That said, I'm immensely pleased that so many of my own votes came home to roost in the top three slots of so many categories. Well done.

Steve

Thank you for the positive comments about seeing the numbers for the 2020 FAAns, Steve. Overall, I am very pleased with the results. The questions that Nic raised in his zine – and through an extensive email exchange we had – are valid because of the very nature of fanzines. Sometimes the lines of definition blur between categories, and that was one of the problems: is such-and-such-title a perzine, apazine, both, or what? When tabulating the votes I had to make some decisions – as described last issue – that might have resulted in slightly different totals, but that was then and this is now. The “robust” discussion in This Here... for the past few months should hopefully result in clearer categorical definitions, which is fine by

me. I am all in favor of that. () As for my attempt at being snarky-funny with those comments, it definitely fell flat. That type of attitudinal fan-writing is not my usual writing voice, and I apologized to Nic for my snippiness. Sadly, that sort of thing happens from time to time, and mostly I try to avoid such situations. However, I did feel a bit insulted at some of the things Nic wrote, so I tried getting snarky-funny back at him. Like I said, it did not go over very well. Mea culpa.*

To wrap up, we can't go back and change this year's results, but learn from mistakes made to ensure they don't happen again. Natcherly, these being the FAAn awards we're talking about, there will ALWAYS be differences of opinion about them. Such is the nature of the beast. So it goes.

Lloyd Penney
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CANADA M9C 2B2

7 April 2020

Many thanks for *Askew 29*. Take it from me, it takes a lot of time to recover from running any convention. The after-con responsibilities are huge. Taking equipment back, meeting with the hotel to see if there were any problems and taking the temperature of the attendance to make sure they like what you served up for their membership monies. So far, everyone sounds happy, a minor miracle in itself, so congratulations on a successful convention. And, happy belated birthday, too. *{Thank you very much, Lloyd.}*

I know the COVID-19 quarantine is driving most people up the wall, but most fans I know have a myriad of videos, books, projects, etc. available to them to while away the hours. (As I write, we have been dealing with a neighbourhood-wide power failure for the past 17 hours. We expect that power will not return until about 8pm, so having those other projects will also help. I will write up this letter, get it ready to send to my Bell.net account, and then fire it off to you from there.) *{Got it!}*

The FAAn Award results...hey, I got 3 votes this year! I received not a single one last year, so I am pleased. I have not voted the last couple of years, just not motivated, but somehow, I must get that motivation back. I see you subscribe to a number of SF magazines... I will add here a terribly subjective plug for *Amazing Stories*. I think it's been an excellent product, and I am currently working on another *Amazing Selects* novel.

Next year in Bristol? Have fun, guys, but I will need to build up our transporter credits again. We really want to go back to England, but our trip last year cost close to Can\$20k, and that kind of funds is out of reach...for now. I have some hopes for some work once the quarantine has been lifted.

Once the power returns, I will get this ready to send to you. Take care, our best to Valerie and the family, and see you with the upcoming and promised *Askance*.

Lloyd

{Your getting votes for Best Letterhack does not surprise me, Lloyd; you have walked off with that award a few times over the years, leaving no doubt as to faneditors and fanzine readers greatly appreciating your steady contributions year after year. We all thank you for ongoing support. Hopefully Corflu Concorde will go on as scheduled, but we shall see. }

Leigh Edmonds
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16 April 2020

Just a quick email to thank you for *Askew 29*. The figures included therein were interesting and I agree with you that the results came out well. Of course, I would think so since, as I recall, I voted for most of the winners.



I may be an early riser but don't put me on any programming before I've had my coffee.

I caught a few sessions of Corflu on the interweb, mostly well after the event because of the time difference. You are right, Bill Burns presentation was mesmerizing. In my experience of conventions, the best ones I've been to have had no more than fifty members and Corflu was an excellent convention from what I've read. That was the feeling that came over the interweb too. And, of course, you may go down in history for running the last convention before the Plague hit. I'm glad that I didn't attend; if I had I would no doubt have been stuck somewhere in the US and then, when I finally got back here, end up stuck in a hotel room in

Sydney (of all places) for two weeks with a guard at the end of the corridor to make sure nobody had any fun. What an appalling thought.

So, on top of running a convention, tallying up the votes of a major fannish award and converting your teaching over to on-line, you also read all those books? If there was a 'Human Dynamo' FAAn award you would win by a landslide.

Leigh

*{Golly! Thank you so much for the long-distance feedback, Leigh. I was wondering about the quality of the Livestream during the convention, so this is good to hear. The weekend after I went to Rob Jackson's YouTube page to watch some of the programming and was pleased with the recordings. Well, not exactly *all* of them; my little "concert" is best enjoyed by turning the volume down to nil. Turn it back up when Howard Waldrop gets up to tell his story. When he's done, back down goes the volume for my last song. Other than that, the recordings turned out great. Many thanks to Rob Jackson for making this possible.}*

Ray Palm

raypalmx@gmail.com

3 May 2020

This caught my attention:

“Therefore, I stand by these results, and believe that all the winners are worthy of their awards. That includes Nic Farey’s *This Here...*, which obviously impressed a lot of the voters. It is a damned fine personal fanzine, and he deserves the honour because he has worked very hard on that zine. So enjoy the plaque, Nic. Hang it proudly on your wall at home. Or in your cab. I don’t care where you put your award, as long as you stick it where it belongs.”

Gee, did you ever consider a career in international diplomacy? On the rare occasion that someone really irks me I pass on the mealy-mouthed politeness. *{See my comments to Steve Jeffery above regarding this.}*

But what really fixated my attention was your mention of auctioning off your dentures. Now that’s the type of story perfect for my ezine. Any chance of a short interview via email about the event possibly with photos?

Ray

*{The latest issue of your fanzine, **The Ray X X-Rayer #150** now on efanzines, has the story of how that auction item came to pass. That was a bit of silliness that made Corflu Heatwave fun.}*

I ALSO HEARD FROM

Leybl Botwinik, Pat Charnock, Nic Farey, Jerry Kaufman, Guy H. Lillian III, Ian Millstead, George Phillies, Andrew I. Porter. Thank you, one and all.

Well, that should do it for this issue. The last page is an unabashed advert for the upcoming WOOF collation at this year’s SF WorldCon in New Zealand – sort of – asking for contributions to this annual WorldCon APA (amateur press association). I have a short contribution in the works (two pages, most likely) to send to Guy Lillian, who is apparently this year’s Official Editor. The deadline is fast approaching (August 6th), so if you’re interested in doing so, act fast.



W.O.O.F.

45: *Pub your ish!*

Guy Lillian III / Worldcon Order of Fan-Eds / Aug. 2020 CoNZealand

GHLIII,O.O.F.yahoo.com

GHLIII Press Publication #1284

The World Science Fiction Convention approaches – and so does collation of the 2020 edition of W.O.O.F. – the Worldcon Order of Fan-Eds! Like the Worldcon itself, W.O.O.F. is on-line this year – but like every year, we want *every* fan editor and fan writer to contribute!

So do a fanzine – tell us about your year, your quarantine, your cons, your clubs, your books, your movies. Review last year’s W.O.O.F. and respond to the zines there! (I’ll Dropbox a copy to you on request.) Do whatever you want! W.O.O.F. has been described as fandom’s yearbook – so be part of it!

The deadline is ~August 6, right after CoNZealand. We’re hoping to include the con newsletter, announcements and “oneshots”; **Daniel Spector** will collect zines done on site and scan them for the mailing. Earlier zines and publications done outside of CoNZealand’s bailiwick, e-mail them to the address above. An e-copy of the completed disty will be en route to you ASAP (print copies *will* be available).

If you can’t avoid hard copy and must submit a physical zine, the address is **1390 Holly Ave., Merritt Island FL 32952**. No problem scanning your pages, but please mail extra early. For time’s a’wastin’! W.O.O.F. wants you! *Pub your ish!*

Illo by the great Vaughn Bode.