

I WISH I KNEW WHAT

"NUCES TIBI" MEANT

CHUCK HARRIS

AFTER ALL THE nice things I've said about Madle too! In my LONCONFIDENTIAL thing I said that "he was a nice guy and I liked him." In CHUX OWN I hastened to agree with Bobbie Wild that he was a "square shooter." Coals of fire I heaped on him, and then, not only does he turn round and bite the fan that heeds him, but he even goes so far as to head his diatribe with this nuces tibi thing. Erudition is all right, but this is scandalous --- as well as Latin. We already have an OMPA rule that all fanzine titles must be in English, and I think it only fair that this should apply to derogatory fanzine articles too, -- and especially so when my complete Latin vocabulary happens to consist of "Kyrie Ellison" ... which means, oddly enough, "Christ have mercy on us."

Now, I know that other members have also taken part in this argument, and that, by rights, I should try to answer everybody, and get every single point thrashed out. I don't have the time necessary for a job like that so, instead, I am concentrating on Madle's effort. I would like to mention two other people first though: I agree, on reflection, with Bob Pavlat that I was harsh on Don Ford. I wouldn't vote for Ford in a TAFF election, but, to give him his due, he did work hard for TAFF in his own way, and I'd be a mean-minded swine if I didn't say so. Next, I have carefully studied Lynn Hickman's comments on the TAFF fracas and I would say this: I have long considered Hickman to be the pimple on the arse of science fiction fandom and I couldn't care less for his opinions, his comments, or his helpful advice. I am sick and tired of trying to argue with Carr type mentalities, and I haven't the slightest intention of wasting either stencils or paper on this one.

Okay, now the nuces tibi thing..... I'm not really concerned about Madle's opinion of me either. I never really expected him to become a Founder Member of The Chuck Harris Appreciation Society, and he didn't even ask me to autograph his VARGO STATTEN MAGAZINE (Vol 1 No 3), when he was over here. I didn't start publishing my own thoughts about TAFF until every other means of influencing people had failed. Madle doesn't get around to mentioning that long before I published a single word on TAFF I wrote to him privately, told him why I thought he was wrongly nominated, and offered a few suggestions on how to prevent abuses in future. I never expected any reply, -- and in this he fully lived up to all my expectations, -- but I did at least try to keep it on a personal, amiable basis. I don't really expect to make him See the Light with this effort either, but I am trying my damndest to convince the rest of the OMPA people who will see it.

I think it might be best if I quote Madle in little boxes and then try to answer each point afterwards. Like this.

"The statements....made in FAPA and OMPA are statements loaded down with half-truths and outright lies. They are full of the bitter hatred of the sorehead loser. They are disgustingly insulting to many people."

Well now, I've never been called a liar in fandom before and I don't much like it. I don't see why I should have to take that sort of crap from anybody, --even somebody endorsed by Forrest J Ackerman, -- and it seems a dreadful pity that none of these "outright lies" of mine happened to get quoted. Prove it buster, -- quote one of these lies from my FAPA or OMPA stuff and let's all have a good look at it. If you want to slobber that sort of bilge you'll have to be lots more precise. I have NEVER written a deliberate lie in fandom yet. I am opinionated. I will argue until I'm black in the face on each and every subject under the sun, ---but I don't lie. Now all you have to do is QUOTE one of these FAPA or OMPA lies.....

And balls to your bitter hatred and sorehead loser too. I don't hate anybody, ---I don't think I could summon up enough energy, -- and if I wasn't a candidate, how in the ever-loving world could I be a sorehead loser, hmm?

"...just who is "our" group...And don't try to kid anybody about that '25 of us.' Ford, as you are well aware, was far too generous with his estimate. Eight or ten would have been more like it."

How wonderfully convenient for you to discover now that Ford over-estimated the opposition, but how on earth am I supposed to be aware that he did over-estimate it? Telepathy, anybody? You want to lay off that crazy science-fiction stuff. Make me out to be No.1. on your Pariah Dog List if you wish, but don't, for heaven's sake try to make out that I'm a mind-reader too. All I know is what Ford made public. In his TAFF Report he says, "It seems that in the British area there are about 25 or so fanzine publishers....When their favourite candidate did not win the 1957 election they somehow felt cheated." Silly me,--I thought in my ignorance that when the man said "25" he meant "25." But, hell I'm easy. If Donald has now re-checked his figures and discovered that he counted us all three times, then I am happy to accept his revised arithmetic.....and breathe a silent prayer of thanks that this embryo Einstein didn't do the counting this year.

"...if you are implying that British fandom -- in general -- agrees with your ultra-fuggheaded statements, then I must accuse you of outright prevarication."

Sire! you impugn me! My thirds will call on you in the morning, -- my seconds are, unfortunately, en route to Gert Carr. (This joke is used without permission of Walter A Willis too.) Seriously though, I speak not for Boskone, but for Chuck Harris. I am nobody's mouthpiece: opinions expressed in my fanzines are, curiously enough, my own. I haven't noticed many of them flocking to the Madle banner, but it wouldn't make all that much difference to me if they did just as long as they give me five minutes to put my side of the business. But, if you read through the OMPA mailing you'll be able to see how the rest of Anglo-fandom react.

And dad, try not to write so pompously. Phrases like "I must accuse you of outright prevarication" (no less!) died with Queen Victoria, and I'm surprised that Pavlat allowed you to soil his fine fanzine with such empty twaddle. You certainly wouldn't have got away with it in any of mine.

"...you are to be excused for not knowing this since you are a comparative Johnny-come-lately...."

Gosh, Mister Madle, Sir! And is that genuine verdigris on your beanie propellor?

Tell us again about Neanderthal fandom, and what Jules Verne looked like in short pants. Sure, I've only been around eight or nine years or so, -- I'll be damned if I can remember exactly how long it is anyway, -- and I know that this would count as a mere fly-speck on your long-service medals, but you might have mentioned just one small point. I've been active, gov'nor. I helped found OMPA, help co-edit a fairly big international fanzine, and SURPRISE! SURPRISE! SURPRISE! I helped found TAFF!!!!!! I have also contributed and voted in each election so far. You were saying, Madle my old guard.....????

Oh yes, I've also been asked to stand in each of the British TAFF elections so far, but have always refused to allow my name to go forward because I've never thought of myself as a suitable candidate. Humble and unassuming, that's me.

"...(Bobbie Wild)...your success in insulting her to such an extent that she has dropped out as a TAFF candidate."

This is a very interesting point, --but completely untrue. Bobbie dropped out because she has a serious internal complaint that precludes her from travelling. As I'd voted for Ron Bennett & Bobbie Wild it seems hardly likely that I'd want the girl to drop out, does it?

You want to watch that Gert Carr style of yours, -- it's liable to backfire and make you look a trifle fuggheaded at times unless you handle it skillfully.

"I was asked to run. He contributed money towards my entry fee. He did not vote on general principles."

Well, I wouldn't hurt Forry for worlds, -- I count him as a friend of mine, and know that he's had a rough deal from fandom over the years. But, what are these general principles that stop a man voting in a TAFF election? Look, Ford publishes his list of contributors: Ackerman isn't on it. The only assumption anyone can make is that he didn't vote and didn't contribute. And, if that's what you think of as an "inane statement" then I am Hugo Gernsback.

"Because you feel that everything that happened before the advent of Lee Hoffman and Quandry occurred during the dark ages -- and that 6th Fandom was the first TRUfandom -- and have orgasms at the mention of such immortals of fandom as Rich Elsberry and Max Keasler."

Well, I was active before all these people I think, but is nothing sacred to this man? Will the next mailing charge me with harbouring Unclean Thoughts about Marion Zimmer Bradley? I positively REFUSE to allow my reproductive processes to be used as a mere debating point in any argument. So there. Slander me if you must, deride me and point the fingerbone of scorn at all I hold to be true, but keep your nasty prying eyes well away from things that don't concern you. What are you after, -- a signed testimonial from the fairest flowers of Anglolfandom stating that my sexual reactions are reasonably normal, or are you all ready to publish photostats of the Valentine I sent to Everett last February, hmm?

"...I happen to know who the "assortment of all-American fuggheads" are. Why didn't you say Don Ford, C.L. Barrett, and Lou Tabakow?...I'll say this: the three "fuggheads" mentioned above are my idea of science fiction fans. You sure as hell aren't."

I guess we are all entitled to choose our own methods for separating the stefnic sheep from the mundane goats, but who are these faans that our boy Madle defends? Dave Newman and Ron Bennett have recently published a directory of SF fandom, and included most everybody in the microcosm. But, you'll find no mention of Barrett in it, and Tabakow gets in only by the skin of his teeth, -- his name is listed, but he is not classified as Active, Ex-Active, Professional or any other damn thing at all. They may well be hellish big noises Stateside when they dribble into their tape-recorders, but as far as I can see, when I termed them an "assortment of all-American fuggheads" it was a pretty fair label. Anybody who'd contribute a single word to the sort of tape these people sent us are automatically classified as prime fuggheads around here.

Let's get to the main issue though, or I'll never get this thing finished. You'll remember that, on every possible occasion, I have stood up and screamed that Madle should never have been nominated, that he was barred by the one rule of TAFF which states that all candidates must be fairly well-known on both sides of the Atlantic. Right, let's see what Madle has to say about his record....

"...science fiction and fandom have been my primary hobby since I was twelve years old....I rejoined the Philadelphia SF Society in 1946, the club that I had helped organize way back in 1935; edited PSES News, a bi-weekly clubzine, edited progress reports and program booklet for the 1947 World Convention, served as an officer practically every year I was a member of the PSES, left Philly in 1953 after serving as an officer of the 1953 Worldcon; formed Carolina SF Society in 1954; sponsored two Southwestern Conferences....Publicity Chairman of first, Chairman of second; now V-P of Washington S-F Association. In addition have written for such fanzines as Varioso, JD, Transuranic, Spacewar, Stellar, etc. Also, and I know this will impress you not one iota, but I have authored "Inside Science Fiction," a fan department which has been running in RW Lowndes magazines since 1953 and is probably the longest running professional fan column of them all.

But why the hell do I waste stencils explaining to you that I am too a TRUfan. Can I help it if your knowledge of s-f fandom is so extremely restricted that you don't know what the hell is going on outside "our" group? If a person with an s-f background like the above is not "fairly well-known" to any goddamned fandom, be it British, American, or otherwise -- then it is the fault of that segment of fandom, not the person involved."

Yeah sure, blame the segment of fandom if you wish, ---but can you STILL not understand that it was this segment of fandom, in which you were NOT fairly well known, that founded TAFF? It was this segment of fandom, in which you were NOT fairly well-known, that actually specified that all candidates MUST BE FAIRLY WELL KNOWN ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC. To me this seems so simple that I am honestly amazed that not everybody is able to grasp the point that either candidates are active in international fandom or they are not eligible to stand for TAFF. Madle and his mob can scream blue bloody murder about it, but that's just too bad. We made this one-rule when we began TAFF, and it will take more than Madle telling me that I'm a liar, a fool and a fugghead before I'll stay silent and see it flouted.

Damnit, taking his own record as evidence, how could he have been "fairly well-known" over here at the time he was nominated? How many of the British part of the audience can say that they have even heard of the Southwestern Conferences or The Carolina Science Fiction Society? How many can give the name of any Worldcon Officer for any past Convention that was held abroad. Sure, it's all

very laudable, -- but just how does it help to make him fairly well-known over here? Clubs and societies are essentially parochial affairs and have little or no publicity in international fandom. No matter how big a fish you are in club-fandom on either side of the pond, you cannot justly claim that local fame, even national fame, is also international fame.

You see, the only real link, (disregarding tape-recordings), between English and American fandom is the written word, -- the prozines, fanzines, and letters, --and every would-be candidate's claims must be judged with this in mind. Book-collectors, convention-goers, local club members etc do NOT automatically become suitable TAFF candidates just because they have a connection with science-fiction. If they are not known overseas then they are not eligible candidates.

So, let's look at the stuff Madle has written that might make him eligible.... "Varioso, JD, Transuranic, Spacewarp, Stellar etc...." First, ignore the "etc" we need something more definite. Something like "Spacewarp" for instance, -- which was a superb fanzine when it died in the early fifties. We are concerned with the period when Madle was nominated and was campaigning for TAFF during '56/'57. At that time Spacewarp was dead, buried and damn near forgotten. TAFF was intended for actifandom, not as a resurrection agent for the fannish dead.

"JD" and "Transuranic" are new ones to me, -- I've never seen either of them, and I'll be more than surprised if you can turn them up in your files and discover that Madle was churning out stuff for them during the crucial period. "Varioso" and "Stellar" are still with us, thank ghod. My files are not complete (yes, I'm trying to be fair), but I've checked what copies I do have and I can't find anything at all by Madle in either of them until after he'd had the TAFF trip. And as for his prozine column, -- just how many of the Lowndes magazines circulate over here? I may be wrong, but I've never seen Madle in a Lowndes BRE yet. But does anybody, even Madle himself, honestly believe that this prozine column or the rest of his record reasonably allows Madle to qualify as being "fairly well-known" over here?

The hell it does. If he had been reasonably well-known then surely at least one solitary English vote would have been cast in his favour. Was it?

Enough. I've got to finish this off or I shall miss the mailing, but I want to say just one more thing.

Ignore the charge and counter-charge stuff, the insults and the screams and whatnot. Believe, if you wish, that I am an ultra-fugghead, a poor deluded fool, even a liar. Leave it all and turn back to re-read Madle's record, -- either as I have quoted it, or, if you think I might be acting real sneaky and have omitted a couple of tasty bits, read it in Pavlat's fanzine. Now try to balance this record with the TAFF rule that candidates must be FAIRLY WELL-KNOWN ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC.

Well, do you think he was?

Chuck Harris

P S And write me -- plain sealed envelopes only -- with a free translation of that nuces tibi thing. Ta.

