

SWAN SONG

NO. 2

EVERY ENCORE FINAL

You know, I can almost see the dazed look of incredulity struggling up to the light of day from the lowest level of the Clarke beard; I can see the palsy ruining those fine ATOM illos and hear the muted "Begorrah" forced from the Willis lips. I can almost picture Madeleine and Joy and Pamela all rushing off to Sainsbury's to corner the market in fatted calves, whilst a sigh like an anthem rises from the despondent ranks of the Waiting List: "Chuck Harris in almost two consecutive mailings, and exceeding his yearly page requirements. Bloody hell."

Hactually this is just a stop-gap slash-out-a-stencil affair. (You've noticed that?) I had all sorts of firm resolves and good intentions a couple of weeks ago, but I had trouble with both my typer and the duper (I sometimes think I am the unwitting host of a poltergeist) and more or less abandoned hope of doing anything at all this time. However, I remembered what Viné told me about oiling the duper occasionally and, after nearly drowning the thing in "Castrolite," I got it going once again.

You remember I had rather a lot to say about TAFF in my last SWAN SONG? I was most indignant about the rules being changed, and I slammed into both Bob Madle and Ron Bennett. I tried to tell the truth as I saw it and I spent a lot of time checking my facts against various fannish accounts before I published them.

Since then I have heard from both Bennett and Madle. I've been in extensive correspondence with Ron, but neither his letters nor my replies were written with the primary intention of subsequent publication, and I don't intend to quote from them directly. And, Bob Madle sums up things admirably in his letter, and I think it will be fair enough to quote that in full, and let it speak for both of them.

Before I do that though I want to get a few things cleared up as regards Ron. I said (referring to the good rules that Bulmer published) "...Ron Bennett didn't seem to care for them either." This was incorrect. Ron had no idea that they existed. He holds them in as high esteem as I do myself, and they are still in force and being used by him. This trouble arose from the fact that in the STEAM editorial of the issue which contained the rules, Ken mentioned that Ron was sitting by him as he typed it. I assumed from this that Ron was aware of the idea behind the fmz and of its contents. I was quite wrong, -- he wasn't.

Furthermore, that infuriating phrase that they used in the GAMBIT quote, "if you are reading this, you are eligible" was not meant to be taken literally, and was only used with the intention of brightening up the piece.

Fair enough. On my part I'd like to say that I'm sorry now that I said he was stupid or that he must have been mentally ill or violently drunk to have signed the piece.

Next...the letter from Bob Madle:

Dear Chuck,

I recently had the pleasure of reading Swan Song # 1 and I think it was very well written, and well mimeod. However, I believe many of your statements in the section pertaining to Ron and I are, unfortunately, quite weak. But there is no question that you sincerely make certain accusations and assumptions. While I realize that just about everyone is thoroughly fed up on this TAFF hassle, I thought it only fair that certain facts be brought to your attention. Incidentally, for the statisticians in the crowd, this is the second and last published piece of TAFF defense by one R A Madle. I have but several statements to make. They follow:

1. In answer to your statement in "I wish I knew what Nuces Tibi Meant" concerning the total lack of Anglofen who voted for me, and also in response to Joy Clarke's statement in "The Lesser Flea" that she has a letter from Don Ford saying I won the election with Midwestcon votes, the following letter has been received from Don Ford.

"Dear Bob,

Your request for voting results from British fandom in the 1957 election has been noted and finally checked. You know, of course, that details of the voting are kept confidential; therefore, no names will ever be mentioned by me.

There were 24 ballots from England, Scotland & Ireland. Of these ballots you received 2 votes for second choice and 4 votes for third choice.

There is no letter from me stating you won the election due to the Midwestcon votes. There is a letter from me, dated September 3, 1957, sent to all persons voting in the 1957 TAFF election, giving a report. However, the first paragraph on the second page will set the record straight. (Note: this paragraph indicates I was leading all candidates as the Midwestcon got underway --RAM) Of the approximately 60-70 votes received at the Midwestcon you certainly did not get all of these. I distinctly remember ballots voting for other candidates than yourself being turned in at the Midwestcon.

I hope this information will be satisfactory to you. (Don Ford.)"

O.K. I realize that being on six ballots isn't anything to brag about. But, considering the fact that only 24 voted, and of these 24, a total of 6 placed my name on the ballot surely proves that I was "...fairly well known to both British and American fandoms." ((Yes, I guess it does too. It would have been a big help if Ford or one of the six silent Anglofen had spoken up twelve months ago too. It would have saved a helluva lot of time and trouble and bitterness and might even have halved the casualty rate in "-" editors.)) Also, you must remember there were eight candidates with a big hunk of the 24 going down the line for Eney.

2. I agree with you completely about the Troetshels and the Hartnetts. I am firmly opposed to family groups voting. In fact, I don't even think most wives should vote. However, voting wives has been established so there isn't anything I can do about that. However, you may rest assured that I have and will continue to toss out such obvious ballot-box stuffing as this. Also, none of these voted for me -- in fact, I never heard of them. Don't know why you feel that only the unknown fans voted for me. ((Where did I say that they did?)) Ever hear of Bill Berg, Phyllis Berg, Elizabeth O Cullen, John F Hurley, Joe Vallin? They voted for Dick Eney: they are among the group that Dick supported to such an extent that he even picked up the tab for each of them. (This is per his statement in a recent issue of Phenotype. Of course, I've known all along of this rather innocent infraction of the rules, but saw no reason to incriminate Dick. ((Now look here, it was you who accused me of telling half-truths and being the insinuation expert. I'm falling over backwards to be fair to you and everyone else, but there must be a limit. First, I want to point out that you have damn all to incriminate Eney about. There was NO infraction, -- innocent or otherwise -- when Eney paid up so that these people could vote. That election was fought under the original TAFF rules which stated nothing to forbid such action. And, secondly, you might have stated that not all the people in that group whose votes he financed actually voted for him. He told them they could vote for who they liked: at least one of them was so overcome by Eney's generosity that he promptly voted for you or Hoffman or somebody and left Eney to foot the bill. I remind you of this because I am sure you wouldn't want to incriminate anybody, least of all Eney who was one of the people who nominated you and, -- from what I hear from third-hand sources, -- was even mug enough to vote for you.))

3. I think Ron is going to handle the statement concerning Bulmer's rules. However, allow me to add to anything Ron says that I never saw Ken's rules until sometime in late October. And Ron didn't see them until after he returned to England. It should be obvious that anything mimeod on the 16th of August wouldn't be in America on the 9th of September -- unless it was mailed immediately. Which, of course, it wasn't as it was meant for the TAFF mailing. I helped write the rules and agree with them 100%. Also, I followed them 100%. Some people may even think I was a little too rigid. What you made such an issue of was a news release to FANAC and GAMBIT. And I feel pretty certain that any reader of these two inner-circle fanzines is eligible to vote. However, I will concede your point that I should have said, "In brief, if you subscribe to this, you are eligible" rather than "if you are reading this...." I wonder if Terry Carr and Ted White feel that any of their readers are not eligible to vote?

4. "Now, neither of these two administrators seem to have shown the slightest interest in TAFF prior to Madle's election, etc." Chuck, you really goofed on this one. I don't know how long Ron has been interested in TAFF -- but if it has only been two years he has certainly done a hell of a lot for it. As for me, my interest dates back to the original Big Pond Fund in 1947 when I was editing the Progress Reports for Philcon II and wrote some of the publicity for the Fund. Also, I purchased raffle tickets for TAFF as far back as 1954 from Don Ford. I didn't vote in 1954 because ballots, so far as I know, were not distributed to American fandom in general. However, in 1955 I was nominated for TAFF -- but declined. The official ballot clearly indicates this. Hoo, boy! Did you goof! ((But did I? I stated specifically that I'd "searched through the voters and contributors lists published over the years but can find no mention of their names prior to the Madle election." I did search: I couldn't find either of you mentioned: to say so in print seem fair enough comment to me.)) Also, I voted 3

in this election which was won by Lee Hoffman. ((Accepted of course, -- but is it fair to say I goofed when your name doesn't appear on the official list of contributors and voters?))

As I said, Chuck, I only wanted to answer some of your more definite accusations. And I would also like to see this thing end once and for all. I realize we both have the best interests of fandom at heart -- even though we express them in different ways. I feel that it is not too late to bury the hatchet. TAFF can't afford to lose such a staunch supporter as you -- nor can fandom itself. Perhaps before you drop out it might pay you to go over the entire situation, point by point, especially since you are now in possession of many, many more facts than you had originally.

These are my finally words concerning my election to and administration of TAFF. "

(Bob Madle.)

And there you have it. To me, the most important part of it is the letter from Don Ford. My whole argument has been based on the fact that I considered that Madle was not "fairly well-known" and thus was not eligible to stand. I've no option but to accept Ford's word that no less than a quarter of the British fans who voted had not only heard of Madle but actually voted for him. Obviously then, I was wrong, and I'm saying so with as good a grace as I can muster. I guess sackcloth and ashes are not exactly my forte, but I do regret having ever begun this business and am sorry about all the unpleasantness involved.

Further, under the Bulmer rules I am sure that TAFF will be run honestly and fairly. I shall not vote in the election because I do not consider myself a fan, but I shall contribute to the Fund.

Next, I apologise to Madle and to Bennett and to Ford and to anyone else who happened to get in the line of fire.

And, finally, there are a few loose ends that I want tie up before I put the bundle away for keeps. First, the most astonishing phrase to me was when Madle said "it has been felt in some quarters over here that the voice of Chuck Harris is the voice of Walt Willis." It is not. It never was. I am still wondering which of us Madle imagined to be the other's puppet-master, but I'm more than anxious to reassure the congregation that there's no truth in the idea at all. Walter is my friend, not my ally. Along with Vincent and Arthur and Ken and Mal and Sandy he is entitled to my right arm on demand clear up to my elbow, but he is not entitled to my automatic approval of either his views or his actions. And, of course, the reverse applies. For the last time: Chuck Harris speaks on behalf of nobody except Chuck Harris. Everything under my byline originates in my own little pointy head. I speak not for Willis, or Atom, or Vincent or Boskone or any other goddamned person, cult or group except myself.

How many more times do you need telling!

Actually, Walter has disliked my attitude right from the very beginning and has said so. Frequently and forcefully. So did Ken. So did Madeleine, -- and, when she really wants to, she can influence me far more than Walter, Ken and the rest of Anglolfandom combined. It seems unfair that these people, -- who have done far more for Madle in England than Tabakow and Barrett ever did screaming down their tape-recorder, -- should be assumed to share my views as well as my friendship.

The same applies to Dick Eney. It's rubbish to suggest that he was In League

with me. I doubt if he wrote me more than a dozen times whilst I was in fandom, and never once has he said a word to me about TAFF. Sure, I voted for him. I like him and admire him enormously. He's one of the dozen Stateside people that I'd most like to be locked in a smoke-filled room with (the others? ... Hoffman, Tucker, Bloch, Grannell, Rotsler, Calkins, Larry Shaw, Moskowitz, Boggs, Carr and Ackerman) but he was never a co-belligerent.

Nor, for that matter, was poor John Berry. Madle dubbed him a Harris supporter just when poor John was fighting a TAFF election of his own, and it could hardly have improved his chances in the U.S.

Lastly, I wanted to say thank you to Joy Clarke, Ethel Lindsay, John Berry and a couple of other people who were good enough to speak for me when I was called a liar. I won't forget it.

I guess I owe more than half of you people letters, and sometimes I Worry about this. At one time I used to be scrupulous and trufannish and answer every damn pactsarcd that fell into my letterbox, but things deteriorated until I find that I'm answering hardly anything at all. I'm not certain, but I think I even owe Walter a letter. We were arguing about TAFF or something, but, after he moved, I was able to put off replying because, after all, he'd be arguing from different premises now.

I did make a lightning tour on Sunday to see Bobbie, (who made tea for me and was perfectly charming and didn't even swear at me once), and Ken and Pamela (who had fled to Italy the day before). I left there and went on to Vincent's and had lemon squash complete with a young iceberg straight from the new fridge, (and I trust you have all noted that astonishing letter from the incredible Mrs. Ratican in the current APORRHETA), and then drove off to Arthur's where Olive made me some more tea. (I think I had the poor girl worried too: I refused a third cup.)

Now, I promised each and everyone of these people that I'd leave the fringes and visit The Globe tonight. Unfortunately, the gods of gafia intervened: I lost a filling and had to visit the dentist instead. I was sorry about this because I'd been looking forward to seeing the new, revitalised Elsie Horde. After reading in FEMIZINE about "a certain laxity of language which has been in evidence lately" in the boozer I could hardly wait to get there and look all shocked and horrified along with the rest of them. I had a wild, wild hope that somebody had been using Oaths and Swear Words and perhaps even Blasphemy, but if I know my Elsie Horde it will probably turn out to be nothing more than Burgess splitting his infinitives again.

But, I have by no means finished with fandom yet. I am going to tea next Sunday week with Arthur and Olive to introduce them to my girlfriend Sue. "Bring her over," said Arthur, "and let her see you have too got some friends."

Incidentally Sue is more than just a girlfriend in the usual sense. Just as soon as I can possibly manage it we're going to get married. Yes, MARRIED. All officially too in a church with bell, book, and candle and rings and everything. It will probably be sometime next summer. We're not getting officially engaged until Christmas, and after that we'll have to find somewhere to live.

Her name is Sue Bourne (and the first faan who says "the Bourne from which no man returns" will be sentenced to a year in the BSFA and four copies of VECTOR) and she's 22, naturally blonde, and a bit like Doris Day. She lives directly opposite Arthur Thomson, -- you could almost throw stones into his flat from her window, is busily reading through ERB at present, and thinks that APORRHETA is

fun to read but a bit hard to understand, and would be greatly improved if it had quotes on the bacover instead of the great white waste that it features at present.

You know, at times I almost suspect that this is all a plot hatched by Walter and Vincent to entice the black sheep back into the fold. I know she may have remembered it from some of my old HYPHENS that she'd borrowed, but it's still disconcerting when the best, completely unfannish girl I've ever met, turns round and says "No, not for all the rice in Burroughs," without even thinking about it. Last Saturday we went to "Thipsnade for the day. We got to the lion enclosure; she eyed my bag of bread, apples, and carrots disgustedly and said, "If we'd known there were lions here we could have brought some Christians..."

I shall have to consult Mal Ashworth and find out if Sheila said things like this right from the start.

"You haven't the slightest need to worry about being 31 whilst I'm only 22. Haven't you read LOLITA yet?"

And on this inspiring note I leave you.

SWAN SONG No.2. An unfannish fanzine published as a sort of reflex action by Chuck Harris, who is NOT a faan, and emanates from "Carolin", Lake Avenue, Rainham, Essex, England. It is composed off-the-cuff, on-the-stencil, and has no pretensions to literary merit or even syntax. All opinions and comments given herein are my own unless otherwise stated. I SAID OPINIONS AND COMMENTS GIVEN HEREIN ARE MY OWN UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED. It is circulated to OMPA and one or two other odd bods. Framed copies available at a slight extra charge.

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