



Coloured pencils not included.

January, 2017

# Askew #18

Another TAFF 2017 fanzine from John Purcell  
Collect the whole series!



The mostly paper-only fanzine from the undersigned:

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**Art credits:** cover by Steve Stiles. TAFF Logo on page 2 pilfered from [www.taff.org.uk](http://www.taff.org.uk); Nic Farey – 2;  
Alan White – 8.

## Well, the race is on, and here comes pride down the backstretch...

As promised, here is yet another issue of *Askew* to promote myself for this year's Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund race to send a deserving North American fan to attend the 75<sup>th</sup> World Science Fiction Convention in Helsinki, Finland on August 9 – 13, 2017. The other two candidates are Sarah Gulde and Alissa McKersie, and I wish them the best of luck in this year's selection process. To learn more about Sarah and Alyssa, go to [www.taff.org.uk](http://www.taff.org.uk) to open the current official ballot; it contains all three candidates' platform statements. Both of these young ladies are also on Facebook, so that is another way to learn about them, if you wish. Of course, I am including the two-page ballot with all paper copies of *Askew #18* being mailed. Remember, the voting deadline is March 4, 2017.

Not much has changed from my side of things, except for getting artistic contributions from the likes of Steve Stiles, who sent in that marvelous front cover artwork, and promotional memes that are appearing on Facebook from Jim Mowatt. I have tried my hand at this, too, with piss-poor results, but hey, I'm not an artist. The caricature on the right came from Nic Farey. I am not sure exactly who originally drew this, but it makes me look like the bastard child of H. P. Lovecraft and Mister Spock. \*sigh\* What's a TAFF candidate to do?



This fanzine supports John Purcell for TAFF. Big surprise, eh?

### **Books – in the order they were read**

**Bova, Ben. *Power Play*. New York, NY: Tor Books, 2011. 352 pp. HC**

I have always enjoyed the science fiction of Ben Bova. His work is always grounded in solid science that is presented as a central character of each story. When I say that, I mean the story cannot function properly or make sense unless the science driving the story is not essential to the plot. In the case of *Power Play*, the science is a new form of energy production called MHD, or magnetohydrodynamics, which becomes a central issue in an election year as candidate Frank Tomlinson attempts to unseat the incumbent US Senator from Nevada, Chris Leeds. The poor schmuck caught in the middle of this senate race is Dr. Jake Ross, a relatively young astrophysicist who is one year out from losing his wife in a car accident, and is essentially sucked into the race via his love for science, his altruistic views about saving the planet, and is used by a beautiful aide to Tomlinson, Amy Wexler. *Power Play* moves along at a brisk pace with a believable cast of characters, even if some of them are very predictable and static, and Bova does a fine job of blending the science into the dialog without slowing the pace down. That is hard to do, and is a hallmark of Bova's writing. *Power Play* is not one of Bova's best novels – I recommend his Grand Tour series or the standalone novels *Colony* (1978) and *The Multiple Man* (1976) – but it is a fun, thoughtful read. There is a second book in this Jake Ross series, *Power Surge* (2015), that may be worth procuring *One Of These Days*.

**Moore, C. L. *Doomsday Morning*. First published in 1954. This e-book published by Diversion Books (September 2015: downloaded November 15, 2016).**

I know, I know: reading a book on my cellphone sure does not feel right to a bibliophile like myself, but I like a good story in any format. Many people have described Catherine Lucille Moore (1911-1987) as one of science fiction and fantasy's finest writers, and her collaborative work with her first husband Henry Kuttner (1915-1958) under their own names and assorted pseudonyms (such as Lewis Padgett) resulted in a body of work that any writer would be proud of. Moore's Jirel of Joiry stories are still eminently readable. *Doomsday Morning* is a novel that, quite frankly, I find very disturbing and analogous to what could be happening in the United States in the very near future: a fragmented nation, run by a corporation rather than a political government, needs to quell a rising rebellion that threatens Comus (the Communication Arm of the United States), so they recruit Harold Rohan, an alcoholic actor, to infiltrate the hotbed of the revolt (centered in California) via a traveling acting troupe to help Comus put down the rebellion. Naturally, Rohan's affiliation shifts during the story, and you can deduce what happens from there. Again, a thoughtful, relevant story for 21<sup>st</sup> century America for its depiction of what a Corporate-run nation would be like and what this Corporation would do to maintain its power. A bit of a downer topic, but I think *Doomsday Morning* is worth reading.

*This fanzine supports Dublin in 2019, New Zealand in 2020, and Dallas/Fort Worth in 2021  
for hosting these World Science Fiction Conventions.*

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**Hodgson, William Hope. *The House on the Borderland*. First published in 1908. downloaded from [www.gutenberg.net](http://www.gutenberg.net) on December 12, 2016. Release date: November 10, 2003.**

This ebook is on the Nook feature of my Samsung tablet, and I was pleasantly surprised at how well it holds up. Many moons ago I owned the Ballantine Adult Fantasy edition of this book, and on a whim I decided to look it up on Project Gutenberg. Glad I did. It is more of a novella (on my Nook, it clocks in at 72 pages of text), so one can read it in a single sitting (it took me two half-hour sessions). The plot of this supernatural horror story is straight-forward: two friends on a fishing trip in the wilds of Ireland come across the ruins of an old house at the edge of a massive chasm and find a “mouldering journal” of the Recluse, who is unidentified, but had recorded what happened during the last days before this house was destroyed. That’s chapter one, and the rest of the story is the reading of this journal. This narrative device was quite common in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially in tales of fantastic adventure: Edgar Rice Burroughs used this methodology in relating the tales of John Carter on Mars and Carson of Venus, for only two popular examples. In any event, *The House on the Borderland* does raise the hairs on the nape of the neck; Hodgson’s descriptive passages are that effectively written. A fan of supernatural horror should read this as an essential grounding in the beginnings of modern horror literature.

**Nielsen Hayden, Patrick, ed. *New Magics*. New York, NY: Tor Books, 2004. 256 pp. HC**

This collection of twelve fantasy stories published between 1986 and 2001 is another fine selection that Patrick Nielsen Hayden, the SF & F editor at Tor Books, has assembled. Some of the authors are Neil Gaiman, Harry Turtledove, Emma Bull, Orson Scott Card, Ursula K. LeGuin, Jane Yolen, and Charles De Lin. Those names alone make *New Magics* a worthy read. In his introduction, Nielsen Hayden explains what he believes makes a good fantasy story work. That rule is “In fantasy, you can do anything; and therefore, the one thing you must not do is ‘just anything.’” In other words, don’t just add something in “just because you can”: each element must be essential to the story’s development and **make sense** (emphasis added). Like I tell my students in the composition and literature classes I teach, cohesion is massively important: if just one thing doesn’t logically follow given the setting and characters and dramatic situation, then the story is going to collapse. Keeping this in mind, the best stories, in my humble opinion, here are Gaiman’s “Chivalry” (which leads off the anthology), de Lint’s “The Bone Woman,” LeGuin’s “The Bones of the Earth,” Card’s “Hatrack River” (the beginning of the Prentice Alvin stories), and Andy Duncan’s “Liza and the Crazy Water Man.” The other seven are very good, too, providing a nice assortment of different kinds of modern fantasies, which is what Nielsen Hayden wanted to do. If you are looking for a sampling of contemporary fantasy short stories, *New Magics* is a good place to start.

**Polidori, John. *The Vampyre*. (1819) downloaded to my iPhone from [www.gutenberg.net](http://www.gutenberg.net) on December 20, 2016. Release date: July 2004.**

Not quite as well-known as that “other story” to arise out of Lord Byron’s challenge to write a ghost story, John Polidori, Percy Bysshe Shelley’s physician friend, wrote this early vampire novel, arguably an influence on Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897). Because it is such a product of its

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time, the language is over-blown and flowery to the point of barely carrying the plot. Nevertheless, an astute reader will recognize the parallels between the folk-tales of vampires, as relayed generation to generation in Romania, Hungary, Bavaria, and other eastern European cultures, right on through James Malcolm Rymer's *Varney, the Vampyre* (serialized in 1845-1847, published in book form in 1847), J. Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872), and *Dracula*: common tropes like the curse of the undead, how a vampire is defeated, the hunger for human blood. Polidori's *The Vampyre* reads more like a series of loosely related journal entries rather than a coherent story. However, from a literary historical perspective, *The Vampyre* has merit for being one of the first true vampire stories in Western Literature.

### **It's Award Season in fandom, again.**

Murray Moore has sent an email out announcing that it is time for nominations for the 2017 FAAn (Fanzine Activity Achievement) awards, to be presented at Corflu 34 in Los Angeles, California, over the weekend of April 28-30, 2017. At this point it does not look like I will be attending CorFlu since most of my efforts and fund-saving is going towards a potential TAFF trip to Europe this coming summer. Details about where and when Valerie will be winging our way over to Helsinki, Finland for the 75<sup>th</sup> World Science Fiction Convention are still being researched, so nothing has really changed since the initial plans were outlined in *Askew #17*. Stay tuned for further information. The deadline for voting in the 2017 TAFF race is midnight of March 4, 2017, so please keep that in mind.

Therefore, I am including with the mailing of *Askew #18* another copy of the 2017 TAFF ballot. As for the FAAn's, the sooner fanzine fans get their selections off to Murray Moore, the better. The rules are actually simple. To refresh your memories as to how this year's FAAn Awards will be determined, here is what Murray wrote in his email:

*In 2017, in the spirit of Chicago elections, you can vote twice for the 2017 FAAn Awards. Once as a nominator, and second as a voter. Why? Because you are Special. But you know that.*

*How can you vote twice? I, your Benevolent FAAn Awards Dictator for Life, invite you to help shape the 2017 FAAn Awards ballot. First, you can nominate. You choose your favourites as you did this year, in as many categories (provided by me) as you wish, for as many as four persons/titles/web sites. You can rank your choices and I will be interested to see your rankings and then I will ignore your rankings. Nominating is hard; deciding X is better than Y is harder. Your nominations for 2017 are equal in value; no 1<sup>st</sup> choice = 5 points, 2nd choice = 4 points, etc. Second, when the ballot is released, you can vote. The aggregate four most popular persons/titles/web sites chosen by the collective you will be printed on the ballot. Line five of five lines in each category on the ballot will be blank. Categories will be the same as last year: Fan Artist, Fanzine Cover, Genzine, Letterhack, Personal Zine, Special Publication, Fan Writer, and Fan Website.*

Murray's email address is [murraymoore@gmail.com](mailto:murraymoore@gmail.com). By all means, review last year's fanzines either in your files, on efanzines.com, or – more than likely – piled up on the nightstand next to your bed.

IT IS A PROUD AND LONELY THING TO BE A FAN.  
Therefore, vote John Purcell for TAFF so that he will be among friends.

## SKEWED RESULTS

Otherwise known as The Letter Column. All missives from readers who deemed previous issues worthy of a response will have their comments in regular Calibri Size 11 font (like this), and my responses will be in **Berlin San FB Demi** (like that). (\*) I hope to keep this issue down to eight pages again for maintaining first class postage rates, so this loccol will be edited – gosh! What a concept! – for space purposes, not space porpoises. That’s a whole ‘nuther critter entirely.

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*December 24, 2016*

Received *Askew #17 (the TAFF Hype Issue)* today. Not too much to comment on this time round due to the short page count and the almost total focus on your run for the TAFF election, but I thot I would send along a few quick comments anyway.

I have to say my interest in the TAFF election this year is not high. Of the folks running for the honor, I know you, of course, but I don’t know any of the other candidates. I presume this is because they are mainly convention fans. I attend very few conventions, even fewer these days, and whenever I go to a convention I am usually set up in the dealer’s room trying to turn books and stuff into money rather than socializing or sitting in on panels, so I suppose my lack of familiarity with the other candidates is understandable.

The only thing that struck my attention tho, is that the fourth candidate, Hold Over Funds, doesn’t seem to have a fan profile posted or a platform he is running on. (Or maybe Hold is a she, can’t tell just from the name alone). How does Funds hope to get elected is s/he doesn’t tell potential voters a bit about him/herself so an intelligent decision can be made? I dunno, it just strikes me as being pretty close to hubris, or rank arrogance for someone to run for a prestigious fan honor like TAFF and not even bother to tell people who they are or what they have done in fandom to deserve the honor. You are more up on these things John; is Hold Over Funds really so well know that s/her can completely ignore the entire established fan tradition, or is s/he just trying to establish some kind of new precedent with this cavalier behavior? **{You need to get out more, Bob.}**

... You have to send in bond money to run for TAFF? Do you have to wear a metal GPS monitored ankle cuff as well? Just asking. Good luck with the TAFF election.

**Bob Jennings**

**{Yeah, it sounds like you’re posting bond to be released from jail, but that what it has been called for a long time: anybody wishing to be considered a candidate posts a \$20 filing fee that goes toward the TAFF account. It is all for the good of the Fan Fund: hands across the waters, you see.}**

ÄÄNESTÄ JOHN PURCELL VARTEN TAFF!  
Hän halata teitä, ja pitää teitä, ja rakastan sinua, ja soittaa sinulle George.



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Paul Skelton  
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*January 8, 2017*

*Askew 17* arrived this morning, though I had already read it by eldritch means. Well, Dave Langford mentioned it was out as an eZine and so I spoke the efanazines spell and indeed...there it was. That makes two consecutive issues of this 'print only' fanzine that I have as eZines. Given the cost of international postage these days I really should mention that I'd be perfectly content with a version attached to an email should you wish to keep me on your mailing list. I spent a stonking amount on a large-size tablet specifically for reading ezines and it would seem a shame not to use it.

Last time I wrote... *"Conversely, whilst we are not great travellers, if some special fan event is taking place somewhere we might manage to link up with the Mearae like we did for the Charnox BBQ which followed the LonCon, but such things take a degree of planning. We'll keep our fingers crossed."*

...and conversation with Mike Meara last weekend indicated that indeed some form of similar get-together is intended, so you could be lucky enough to get to meet us. This is a definition of 'lucky' not covered in most dictionaries.

Your review of *Etiquette and Espionage* sounded rather intriguing...until I noticed that it ran to 722 pages. I'm over 69 years of age now and I figure, if I want to be sure of finding out how a story ends, I should refrain from starting anything over 400 pages.

### **Skel**

**{69 years old? That's not too many... (\*) Keep in mind that on my iPhone, *Etiquette and Espionage*, in that format, ran to 722 pages. In hardcover, the book is a mere 307 pages long, a much better length that falls within your reading attention span. (\*) Ah, you are one of the lucky ones to read *Askew #17* both online at efanazines and also receive a paper copy. The wonders of 21<sup>st</sup> Century fanac!}**

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

*January 8, 2017*

Thanks for the *Askew* and the paper TAFF ballots you included. It's entirely possible that Suzle and I will be the last living people to use the postal service and a check to enter our votes and make our donation. In fact, the ballot doesn't include a space to show what our donation/voting fee is, and I added that information at the bottom of the voting side of the ballot (not to mention that the spaces provided to indicate our votes were barely large enough to hand-write the rankings). But in any case, the ballots will be in the mail this week.

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I'm of the opinion that fanzine fandom (all those who still publish, read, write, or draw for fanzines) is large enough to warrant any monetary support from Worldcons. Even including 'zines published for clubs or very special interest groups most of us (your readership) don't even know about, there's just not enough of us attending Worldcons. I would miss having a Fanzine Lounge of some sort at Worldcons, but would understand if they're not presented. At this stage in our history, Corflu performs the function admirably of giving us an event to attend.

### Jerry

**{I would miss the Fanzine Lounge, too; besides being a gathering place for fans, it is also meant to educate about a time when it was a Proud and Lonely Thing to be a fan. And now, a word from our Northern Sponsor:**

Lloyd Penney  
1706 – 24 Eva Rd.  
Etibocoke, Ontario  
Canada M9C 2B2

*December 21, 2016*

PURCELL FOR TAFF! There, got it out of my system. Again.



I always look towards the fan funds for interesting reasons to vote and run. It truly is perfect for those who are retired or close to it...could you imagine saying to your boss that you've won a fan fund, and need more than the usual amount of time off?

Milt Stevens' loc reminds me of the two fanzine lounges Yvonne and I ran, Winnipeg in 1994, and Montreal in 2009. We had the space, but neither had any budget. The Winnipeg lounge got a big boost from Geri Sullivan, and extra space from John Mansfield, and the Montreal lounge had food at least close by. We still made it work. True, most Worldcon committees don't understand why those silly fanzine fans need the space when they could probably have it in a private room. A lounge in the main function space, however, gives some visibility, and the odd curious type might wander over...

### Lloyd

**{Agreed. I think visibility and accessibility are what a fanzine lounge needs to have. Think about it. Fanzines chronicle who, what, where, when, how, and why we are. Harry Warner, Jr. called our fannish past "A Wealth of Fable." How very true that is, and it would be a shame to lose it.}**

**I Also Heard From:** Richard Dengrove (loc on Askew #15), Kurt Erichsen, Robert Lichtman, Ray Palm, David Thayer, Taral Wayne.

**Obituaries** Sadly, the science fiction community has lost three more much-loved fans. They are Peter Weston (1944-2917), Annamarie Van Ewyck (1943-2017), and Larry Smith (1946 -2017).

**REMEMBER:** the TAFF deadline to vote is midnight, March 4, 2017. Don't be late!