



The Fiftieth issue of a sortof letter substitute, kinda thing, maybe weekly, maybe not, from:

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Available only via the net at the moment. See the colophon for the usual disclaimer. Supporting Toronto in '03 for the 2003 WorldCon and Me for TAFF. This issue dated, already, 20/03/00.

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## Tommy Stands for TAFF

Apart from my platform on the voting form itself, copies of which will be winging their way to you shortly; this is the first written article in support of my candidacy. Which seems sort of strange, given that I'd decided to stand at Novacon 1998. So why me? I've been involved in fandom since 1985 - publishing zines, running conventions, attending and, well you all know about that stuff already.

So if you know why you should vote for me what about all those reason why you shouldn't? "I shouldn't stand because I already have the financial ability to travel to America," is not a valid argument for me. Transatlantic flights are now relatively cheap but being a poor man's fund is not what I see TAFF being about - it is not just to send some poor impoverished fan to a con across the water. I think this view is an insult to those candidates standing.

It is also not about whether you've ever been to the United States before. The people voting for you know that they will be voting for a person they haven't met before, or want to meet again. In a lot of ways the TAFF race is a popularity contest: who is the candidate most likely to create the goodwill that is necessary between the two countries? Who is the candidate most likely to meet and greet, to socialise and spread the word of fandom?

I'm happy to say that all three candidates in this race more than meet those criteria, so what is next? TAFF isn't a free holiday. All of the previous winners will tell you that it is very hard work not only trying to get a trip report published, but administrator the fund for the following year, organising the next TAFF race and being the public face of TAFF. I have ably demonstrated through my Administering of the Organisation APA my skills there, financial capability and ability.

So what do you get for your money when you vote? Me for a start. It is after all a race to bring one fan to the attention of a whole bunch of other fans - and if you don't want to meet that person then hey, don't for them. I have this vague notion that not everyone in fandom hates the very sight of me.

A trip report. This is something that will happen, and will happen before the end of 2000 if I win. I believe this is a vital element of any TAFF trip - like reporting back on where the investment of people's generous donations and voting fees has gone. It should also help to raise funds through the donations from various US foundations, as well as the sale of the report itself. A determined and hard working fund raiser who is willing to go out on a limb and prove that there is life in the old TAFF devil yet.

Here, for the first time, I will also announce that I will be posting an on-line diary each day of my trip. This will be on my web site giving details of what I've been up to and who I've met, it will also act as an aide memoire for when I come to write my report. Anyone who has had the misfortune to get on my mailing list for TommyWorld will know that this is not only a feasible plan but also something that I have already achieved.

If you still think I won't make a good candidate then I urge you to get involved and vote for someone else. At the end of the day it is more important that you take part and help keep TAFF alive and well rather than sit by the way side and complain. Oh, and donations are also more than welcome.

Official ballots can be downloaded from:

<http://www.dcs.gla.ac.uk/SF-Archives/Taff/taff2000.html>

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So where have I been these past six months? Back in Belfast, as the change of address indicates. Working for the Northern Ireland Film Commission (<http://www.nifc.co.uk> is our old site, currently being revamped by our designers) as 'IT dude' - allegedly Database Officer/IT Manager. Don't laugh, its true. Contrary to what you may have heard, I'm now back in Belfast for good, have been working steadily for 6 months and have just started the Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer course which will keep me with this company for two further years.

I have been out and about in fandom, as my job allows, I tragically missed Corflu in Seattle due to some major server problems, plus my bank manager, but have been to NovaCon 99 (where I won a free membership to NovaCon 2000, so I'll be there as well) and I plan to do EasterCon and, hopefully, WorldCon this year as well. So slinking out from behind this pile of computers, you might actually get to meet me this year.

Tommy

This is being distributed to a whole bunch of friends on the net, if you received this and would NOT like to be on the mailing list please accept my apologies for this intrusion and let me know so that you will not be bothered by further ramblings. If you know someone who would like to be on the mailing drop me a line.