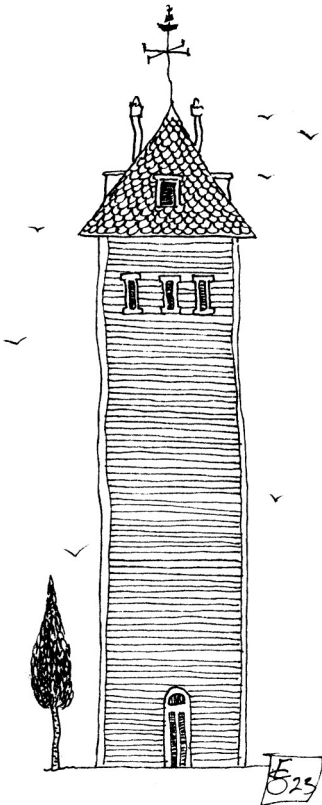


66 Claims Department



These are tough times.

If you're not a Hugos person, you might wanna stop with this section and move along briskly to the next issue.

OK, so now that they're gone, I got thoughts.

The thing about the Hugos is, they are built on a platform of admiration, prestige, respect, and in our specific case, love. We love science fiction, we love fantasy, we love the idea of giving things awards specifically for participating in the field where our love falls. It's impossible to separate these ideas from one another, even when something that clearly falls into only one of those categories happens plainly, in full sight. Admiration is easy, it's when the people or works we admire are honored, nominated, or awarded. Prestige is when we look back at the things that won or were nominated and realise what they meant, what they were and what they became (whether or not they wore a Flintstones shirt on stage...) and how we see the works that we nominate today in relationship to those works. Respect is, well, respecting the way that they're determined, awarded, praised. It has to do not only with the nominees and works, but with the entire process.

Love, it seems, is the hardest to define as to where it comes from, how it blooms, what it means. It's clearly there, you can see the passion for the Hugos, and especially when that love is crapped on.

And the Chengdu WorldCon crapped all over the thing so many of us love.

**Covers by the Amazing
*España Sheriff***

No mincing of words here; Dave McCarty and his team on the Hugo Subcommittee failed, flat out failed. They failed in performing the expected duties with the numbers, they failed fandom in not protecting the awards' integrity by disqualifying things without reason.

OK, that's not true. They failed fandom by apparently giving in to the Chengdu Anti-Pornography and Anti-Illegal Affairs Office.

From here, it's gonna get a bit harder. If you're only partly sold, dodge out now.

Dave McCarty did an interview with Chris Barkley that appeared on File770. In the comments, there were two that stuck out -

"AppleBlue on February 5, 2024 at 2:48 am said:

Dave is again lying. The eligible decision is a result of government intervention, we knew it. China Government even released an announcement on 26th Oct about they censored 12 Hugo finalists about Religion and LGBT (and deleted after several hours). Yes there is copy/screenshot for that government announcement shared in many Wechat groups among Chinese Fandom. Anyone email

me appleblue233@gmail.com will get a copy of that. I am online now for next 3 hours to send it to you all."

And Later

"AppleBlue on February 5, 2024 at 7:51 am said:

Screenshot from China government (to be specifically Chengdu National Work Group for "Combating Pornography and Illegal Publications") on 26th Oct. basically announced publically that for Worldcon there



were 12 finalists were censored due to LGBT & Religion concerns by 3 groups of people from the Chengdu government bureau (this post got removed several hours ago when they realized this is something not supposed to go public)

Google Drive Link for downloading

This has been widely spread among Chinese Scifi fandom. It's clear no eligible decision is a result of government intervention. Dave keeps saying bullshit that its Hugo Administrator teams decision..."

That Google Drive link mentioned went to an image of a post made on October 26th, 2023 by the Chengdu National Work Group, that was shared with folks in Chinese Fandom on Wechat groups.

This is the key part of it. "The World Science Fiction Convention was held in Chengdu from October 18th to 22nd. The Chengdu Anti-Pornography

and Anti-Illegal Affairs Office paid close attention to key foreign-related areas and strictly controlled key links such as salons, book signings, and book clubs to protect the World Science Fiction Convention.

Second, three special review teams were carefully organized to review the content of 1,512 works in five categories including cultural and creative, literary, and artistic shortlisted for the Chengdu World Science Fiction Conference. Works suspected of involving politics, ethnicity, and religion were strictly reviewed. Check and make recommendations on the disposal of 12 controversial works involving LGBT issues."

Let that sink in.

There are issues here. One, the Chengdu Anti-Pornography and Illegal Affairs Office reviewed all the works shortlisted. That's a BIG no-no, right? No one should have access to that list until near time of the announcement. Yes, I am full aware that many media outlets get the nomination lists slightly earlier, but this was BEFORE they'd even given the heads-up to nominees, it would seem. That's a massive problem, and one that will have a segment of fandom saying "I told ya so" because they were saying exactly this would happen if China ever got a WorldCon. Those thoughts, I find, are still based in xenophobia, even if the specific instance it turned out to be true.

The second is Chengdu Anti-Pornography and Illegal Affairs advised the Hugo subcommittee that things had to be removed. It's not entirely clear what pieces the office said needed to be struck. There are 15 that were noted as not eligi-

ble or nominations were declined. Some of these had good reasons attached, some simply noted as being Not Eligible.

The third is that Dave & Company look to have done their bidding.

Now, look; I get it. The Hugos were being hosted by a Chinese WorldCon, and there are things that happen in China that aren't what we do. Could anyone imagine this sort of review happening in any other country that has ever held the WorldCon? I can not.

The fact is, it certainly feels like Dave McCarty and Ben Yalow failed fandom. I can not imagine Dave making such a massive decision, one that had to have raised so many red flags for anyone who had any concept of how fandom views things like free speech, and especially anybody who remembers the Puppies. Dave says no one forced him to make the call, and I actually believe him. I believe they *advised* him to make the call, and it looks like he did.

And that's the most wrong thing Dave could have done.

The second this was raised, he should have resigned. I get it, it's a hard thing to do, but it's wrong to put fandom in that sort of position, and for Dave, who once strenuously defended not disqualifying the Puppy nominees to me, to make that call is hypocritical, and worse from most points of view, capitulatory. He sold out fandom. He may well have thought that if he resigned there would be no Hugos. Frankly, he may have been right, but then again, maybe not? If he was so dedicated to Chinese Fandom having a Chinese WorldCon, then when something that is clearly against the traditions and ways of Fandom, you step away, you give them the tools they

need, and you walk, still with some stink on you, but not nearly as much. If a team led by Chinese fans had made this call, well, I think we never would have heard about it in the end, but also, I think the fuss raised would have been different, though if any hint of it had gotten out, it probably would have made a splash.

The thing is, by all accounts, Chinese fandom is as pissed at Dave & co. as we are. They feel stained by this, especially as it was an American what done it to 'em! That's how it's viewed, and they ain't wrong.

There's also the matter of the numbers. They're wrong. To what degree, it's hard to say. Dave made some comments on them in his interview, but really, it's clear that there are far more issues than he let on.

Kinda From that interview-

*"The SQL query from from the data for the ballot counts in each category actually has a ***** flaw and it's and it's mistaken. It reported low across the board. So the places where they're where the places where people are are rightfully yelling, hey, there's more points in round nine than there are ballots cast in the in the thing they're right, there are more points in round nine because that's not a number that I ever had time to check in the process because at the end of the day. How many ballots are in each category? Isn't material to did we count things correctly? So I never double check? You know, because I didn't have enough assistance and you know, Joe and I are doing stuff and Joe's learning on the job while we were doing stuff. "*

The transcription Chris did wasn't great, but you can

see the point.

This is, without doubt, the shoddiest work I've ever heard of being done by an administrator of ANY award. If this is how Dave's done it every time, and only now has it become a problem, then man, it's a good thing it's almost a lock that he'll never get close to doing the job again. HE HAD 90 DAYS! He had a team, and if he didn't manage that team properly, then that's on him. I think JJ, a regular commenter on *File770*, said it best when they mentioned that Dave simply left his homework to the last night and didn't manage to actually do it.

Of course, the ripples from Dave's problems seem to be going far and wide. There are calls for massive reforms, and I'm that side, certainly. We need independent verification of all Hugo voting. There are issues with the effect this has had on the Hugo as a mark, and that will likely lead to some serious debate, and hopefully a house-cleaning for members of the Mark Protection Committee who were involved with the Mark Protection Committee, since they've done more damage to the reputation of the Hugos than any other group this decade, and likely ever because unlike the Puppies, the call this time was coming from inside the house. The Puppies attacked from the outside; this was from the very heart of what the Hugos are, and that's so sad, not to mention damaging.

Dave was wrong. He was wrong if he gave in to the recommendation to remove works from the ballot, and even more wrong if he took it on himself to do it unilaterally. He was wrong in refusing to ensure that the numbers as presented were accurate. He was wrong to not give an actual clear explanation. He was wrong in so many ways, and we need to

say so, loudly.

What now?

I see a few things that need to happen. The first is the MPC needs to take action to protect the reputation of the Hugo mark. They've started down this road, the Press Release (I can't think of any other time I've seen one from the MPC) said that McCarty, Yalow, and MPC member and Chengdu co-chair Chen Shi were censured. That's a good start, but they need to be removed from the committee, and Chengdu allowed no further representation on the board. Dave resigned, and good for him recognizing that he needed to go, though maybe he did it because he was just too busy to be bothered. Chengdu, the WorldCon itself, needs to be called out officially, and any affiliates of the convention needs to lose the right to use the marks. Finally, they need restructuring to prevent this from happening again. Yes, this only happened one time in 70+ years, but this destroyed so much good that it must never be allowed to happen again, and the MPC is the group that can nimbly deal with these sort of issues.

On a broader scope, we need an audit of the raw numbers. There is significant question as to the results of the nominations with the numbers as they stand, and to keep the community whole, we need to have the accurate, true numbers. This should be done by an external group, think a Price, Waterhouse Cooper-level group external of fandom. I'd argue we need to find one of them to permanently handle the numbers side, with a small committee advising them in the nomination process.

We need to specifically say exactly what the Administrator's powers are, I especially think we need to add language

to the Constitution that anything ruled ineligible must include a full and public explanation citing the portion of the Constitution that it has run afoul of. We never should have had to create such as rule, but here we are.

And, finally, we need an apology. From Dave. From Ben. From the Chengdu WorldCon.

The part of the interview with Dave that got me the maddest is this -

"Even though I am certain that every administration decision I made was correct,..."

There is no universe where the decision to remove things that were clearly eligible from the ballot. There no universe where the decision to put out faulty nomination data is correct. There is no universe where refusing to give clear explanations of your actions is correct. Dave was wrong, a lot.

