

# Bobolings

## REPORT OF THE LAUREATE COMMITTEE by Walter E. Marconette, Vice-President, 1938-39

As chairman of the Laureate Committee, I hereby submit a report on the selections of that group. The Laureate Committee of 1938-39 consisted of the following members: Jack Speer, Frederik Pohl, Robert W. Lowndes, and Walter E. Marconette.

In accordance with the precedent set up by Daniel McPhail, chairman of the 1937-38 committee, tally points were used in compiling this report. There were three points awarded for first choice, and two for second choice.

Publishing Law Michel of Brooklyn, N.Y.  
Honorable mention Norman and Morojo of Los Angeles, Calif.  
Editing Law Winchester, Mass.  
Honorable mention Ton, Y. and John  
Artist Lattie of Dayton, Ohio.

Poet I half stretch over Norm Scarcely his only lead in the Ohio. I started out with a personal import on the 3rd and 4th week. We were tied until at least four times. I voted, but in Joe Kennedy's case I've dreamed the entire poll, first tied for best fiction on a few of the boys who had not voted yet with the last ballots; in had response to one or two less ego-boo by voting for Burbee.

Best FAPAzine 1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
Best Article-Writer: 1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
Best Mailing Comments: 1  
2  
3  
Best Humorist: 1  
2  
3  
Best Fiction-Writer: 1  
Best Poet: 1  
Best Artist: 1  
Worst FAPA Member 1  
2  
3

As a rule I wouldn't dream of telling a letter to a 50% response. Between Blish, Boggs, and Dunkleberg...

...I'd had the faintest notion of taking one year's worth of my own work and putting it in a book. I'd have let them slide until I'd learned how to tabulate them. There was just a relative stretch for me between these two weeks. I'd have let them slide until I'd learned how to tabulate them. There was just a relative stretch for me between these two weeks. I'd have let them slide until I'd learned how to tabulate them.

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**F.A.P.A.**  
**Official Poll Card**

Best FAPAzine	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
Best Article-Writer:	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
Best Mailing Comments:	1
	2
	3
Best Humorist:	1
	2
	3
Best Fiction-Writer:	1
Best Poet:	1
Best Artist:	1
Worst FAPA Member	1
	2
	3

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George C. ...  
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**Bob Pavlat**  
5709 Goucher Drive  
College Park, Md. 20740

Chuck Hansen, Damballa 42, mailing 173: "Back in Fapa's Old Days I remember that members like the great D.B.Thompson used to list their Fapa Laureate Awards each mailing. I think it quite likely that this is what eventually led to the formalization of the annual Egoboo Poll, which was, to the best of my knowledge, instituted by the late, and by some of us lamented Fran Laney."

Dan McPhail, Phantasy Press 61, mailing 174: "Donald Wollheim, when retiring as FAPA's first president, established a Laureate Awards Committee to select outstanding talent among the membership & award certificates to the winners. The first was for the 1937 & 1938 year."

Donald A. Wollheim, The Fantasy Amateur I 2, mailing 4: "In closing the first year of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association and after consulting with Vice-President Daniel McPhai, I have decided to exercise my rights as President to appoint a Committee for the awarding of Laureate titles to those FAPA members who shall be deemed to have won them. ...The members of the Laureate Committee are: Daniel McPhail, Chairman; Olon F. Wiggins, Richard Wilson Jr., Robert W. Lowndes, and Robert A. Madle. They shall decide and award the following Laureate titles.... Publishing Laureate.... Editing Laureate.... Artist Laureate.... Poet Laureate.... Literary Laureate...."

Commencing with the third FAPA mailing, an Official Bureau of Critics had been established. This Bureau consisted solely of Lowndes in mailings 3 and 4. In the FA for the fourth mailing Lowndes, speaking as Official Critic, says "In the future...all members of the FAPA are invited to send me their reactions to any and all material in the mailings, to be associate critics, as it were, and I shall make note of these, tabulating the group-reaction as a whole...." Note that Lowndes was appointed as a member of the Laureate Committee.

Fantasy Amateur I 3, in the fifth mailing, announced the reappointment of Lowndes as Chief of Bureau of Critics, and the appointment of Associate Critics J. Michael Rosenblum, Frederik Pohl, Russell J. Hodgkins, Milton A. Rothman, and Jack Speer. It was further announced that the Bureau of Critics would serve as the Official Laureate Committee for 1939. Laureate awards were announced in the ninth mailing, using the same categories. Laureate Committees were used for at least two more years.

Coming back to Chuck Hansen's recollection which is at the head of this page, Norman F. Stanley's report in the Fantasy Amateur for the fortieth mailing provides a nice summary: "Laureate Committee's Report. The following citations of merit are awarded for items which were published in the twenty-seventh to thirty-third mailings inclusive. For the benefit of newcomers, to whom this may seem unwarrantedly ancient history, be it known that these ratings are based on laureate nominations published by various members in their FAPA magazines. This admirable practice, inaugurated by

L. R. Chauvenet, who first reported on the Spring 1944 mailing, ((27)) flourished for a time, eventually to die out with Stanley's report on the thirty-third mailing. The present report is to collate and digest...those individual nominations...." Categories in which awards were given were Editing and Publishing, Poetry, Fiction, Articles, Humor, Art, and Best in Mailing. The Laureate Committee was cited as "Being those members who were energetic enough to publish their ratings of the mailings: L. R. Chauvenet, D. B. Thompson, N. F. Stanley, A. L. Widner, A. L. Searles, H. Warner, Jr."

The 40th mailing was the end of Stanley's term as vice president. Laney's first term as vice president commenced with mailing 41, and in this mailing Laney said: "If enough of you made regular laureate nomination, I'd try to compile a report something like the one Stanley had in the last FA. But you don't, so I won't. In lieu thereof, I shall conduct an official poll of FAPA. My next report will not only give the full details, but will include stamped pollcards. The May mailing will include a tabulation of these cards which will simply reek with ego-boo." That card is reproduced on the cover of this issue of Bobolings. (Actually, for the reproduction, I used the card from the following year, but since both cards were printed from the same master it doesn't matter.)

And that's the origin of the Egoboo Poll. The name of the poll was a natural at the time, but if the name must be credited to someone I'd give the credit to Stanley, rather than to Laney. In setting forth the laureate awards in the fortieth mailing, Stanley listed not only the top winners (as had been the case in the earliest days of the laureate awards), but also those who'd received only a mention or two in the published mailing ratings. Norm often dropped a bit of verse into his writings, and here Norm explained that "Also-rans are listed, too, Thus providing more ego-boo."

It seems fair to say that the poll idea was well received by FAPA. Thirty five members voted in that first poll, a bit over half of the membership. The following year thirty seven votes were received. Over 20 votes were received in each of the first fifteen years of the poll. In the following eighteen years (1963 through 1980) as many as 20 votes have been received only three times, in 1964 (23), 1965 (21), and 1967 (20). Even there, the 1965 vote total may be artificially high, since that's the year that an attempt was made to eliminate the screening of the waiting list constitutional provision by voting to eliminate all members of the waiting list.

Warner and others have wondered about the decline in participation in the poll. I've had my own ideas. Three basic approaches to the poll have been tried, but I'd have to say that results don't clearly indicate or even hint at the clear superiority of any one of the three approaches in obtaining greater voter participation. The summary table on the next page should provide some food for thought.

In the following table, the mailing and date column contains the number and date of the mailing with which the poll was distributed. The "type" indicates the voting approach allowed, with "Fixed value" meaning a system where first place is assigned some number of points, second some lesser number of points, etc, as advocated by Warner and as most recently used last mailing; "Category value" meaning that the voter is allowed to distribute a set number of points in each category (such as 50 points in the Best Mailing Comments category), sometimes with a limitation on the number of points he may give to any one person; and "Total value" meaning the voter is allowed a number of points (300 in the two cases we've had) which he can assign at will.

Mailing Nr & Date	Vice President	Ballot Size	Type	Number of Voters	Notes
42-Feb 48	Laney	Postcard	Fixed value	35	
45-Nov 48	Burbee	"	" "	37	1
49-Nov 49	Spelman	"	" "	25	
53-Nov 50	Boggs	"	" "	25	
57-Nov 51	Pavlat	"	" "	30	
61-Nov 52	Silverberg	"	" "	26	
65-Nov 53	Rotsler	"	" "	22	
69-Nov 54	Wells	"	" "	25	
73-Nov 55	Cox	Sheet	" "	36	
77-Nov 56	Evans	"	" "	28	
81-Nov 57	Pavlat	"	" "	23	
85-Nov 58	Ellik	"	" "	21	
89-Nov 59	Economou	"	" "	43	2
93-Nov 60	Eney	"	Category value	50	3
98-Feb 62	Evans	"	" "	25	4
102-Feb 63	Calkins	"	" "	19	
106-Feb 64	Busby	"	" "	23	5
109-Nov 64	Caughran	"	" "	21	6
114-Feb 66	Sneary	"	Fixed value	10	7
118-Feb 67	Jacobs	"	Category value	20	
122-Feb 68	Cox	"	" "	16	
126-Feb 69	Moffatt	"	Fixed value	14	
130-Feb 70	Grennell	"	Category value	14	
134-Feb 71	Luppoff	"	" "	14	
138-Feb 72	Sneary	"	" "	18	
142-Feb 73	Warner	"	Fixed value	19	
146-Feb 74	Hulan	"	Total value	8	8
150-Feb 75	Boggs	"	Fixed value	6	8,9
154-Feb 76	Tackett	"	" "	12	
158-Feb 77	Pavlat	"	" "	16	
162-Feb 78	Evans	"	" "	18	
166-Feb 79	Glyer	"	" "	12	
170-Feb 80	Boutellier	"	Total value	13	
174-Feb 81	Cox	"	Fixed value	16	

Footnotes are on the next page.

Notes:

1. Note change to November.
2. Large turnout in part to get Wetzel/Lance off waiting list. Myers also went.
3. Large turnout not explained, but Higgs dropped with this ballot.
4. Note change to February.
5. Breen expelled from wl (later brought in by special rule). It is known that two votes of 25 total were cast solely for this reason; I've shown only the 23 who voted in the poll.
6. Waiting list expelled. Note change to November.
7. Note change back to February.
8. Turnout probably hurt by late mailing.
9. Turnout possibly hurt by veep's levity. (His conclusion).

So what's it all mean?

Well, I can't see that the change from postcard to sheet caused any impact (there goes one old theory of mine.)

The "Total value" approach does not attract voters. It may or may not turn them away.

Follow-up arm-twisting, which you can't tell from the table but which was done by Laney, Burbee, Eney (mailing 93) and Pavlat (mailing 158) brings in a couple of extra votes.

Consistency doesn't seem to help. The polls in mailings 158, 162, and 166 were almost identical. The polls in mailings 93, 98, 102, 106, and 109 were quite similar.

Geographic location of the veep does not appear to be an influence.

There is, I think, one hint. It's about the only thing I can detect where there appears to be a correlation. November polls appear to do better. No November poll has had a turnout of less than twenty voters. Most of the February polls have had turnouts below twenty. The cause-effect relationship might not exist, but it's something to think about.

I've looked at poll categories over the years, and see no significant connection between categories allowed and participation.

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"An APA is by its very nature a sort of mutual admiration society, or at least a mutual appreciation society, using the word appreciation in its old sense, appreciation of both the good and the bad. You have to feel that the other members are at least interested in what one is saying, or you tend to lose interest yourself. I think this is what happened to Harry Turner; at any rate I remember him saying a while ago that producing ((Now & Then)) was like throwing stones down a bottomless well, or words to that effect. What I think we're rather missing in OMPA is the sort of inter-reaction between the members you get in FAPA...."

Walter A. Willis  
WOZ 4, Feb 57, for OMPA 11.