

"I HAVE QUITE A LOT TO SAY!"

This is an UNOFFICIAL communique by Victoria Vayne for members of the FAAn Awards committee and various fans running the gamut from interested to hostile; reflecting opinions that are solely the author's and not necessarily shared by others of the committee, and inspired primarily by the arrival of Gary Farber's flyer, "Does Anyone Have Anything To Say?" Copyright (c) 1980 by Victoria Vayne with all rights reserved; except that for purposes of discussion of the FAAn Awards, recipients are free to quote provided credit is given to this communique as the source. Copies can be had for 20¢ in dimes and a self-addressed 4 x 9" envelope. PO Box 156, Stn D, Toronto, Ontario, M6P 3J8.

Gary Farber has sent around his short zine as a way of encouraging communication among members of the FAAn Awards committee, who have not, he says, been in such formal communication for several years. He has goaded me out of an apathy of quite a few months into producing a short zine with my own suggestions. I'm doing it this way rather than responding to him directly, partly because I want to be sure to reach people Gary may not have on his mailing list who I suspect may have something to contribute or may just be interested, and partly because what I have to say is somewhat lengthy and I didn't want it subjected to the uncertainties of the editorial knife. This is no more an official committee publication than is Gary's, but I hope it serves to advance the same interests that his intended. Copies of "Does Anyone Have Anything To Say?" are available from 602 12th Ave. E., Seattle, WA 98102, (206) 324-9857. (Gary doesn't say so, but a SASE probably wouldn't hurt...) I would like to hear directly from people who have comments on this essay, and if the tame xerox remains part of my life in the next few months, might be able to send off copies of some of the letters to Gary.

1. THE COMMITTEE

Currently, three of the nine-member committee are elected each year for three-year terms. And let's face it, nine people on the committee is just too bloody many. There isn't enough work involved in running the awards to keep even a third that number busy. This year, as last year, the awards are being handled by only two people, Mike Glicksohn to receive and tally the ballots and arrange for the award presentation, and myself to type up, print up and initiate distribution of the ballots. Some additional help was drafted at counting time last year when we were using the laborious Australian run-off system. This year we're using a direct point count, shown by Mike to have no effect on which were the winners, and since he has written a computer program to do the count, sorting lackies are no longer needed. A committee of three people would be ample -- two to do the work and a third as emergency backup in case someone broke a leg or suddenly gaffed. Last year none of the other committee members were asked to help out, because there quite frankly was no need to. On the other hand, the British and Australian agents and various newszine publishers did help out in the running of the awards, in most cases without being members of the committee.

A useful FAAn Awards committee should include:

- agents to distribute or encourage distribution of ballots in their area, drum up interest in the awards, and receive the ballots to relay them to the official teller
- someone to type up, print and distribute the initial ballots, urge others to reprint, and initiate distribution through newszines, etc.
- an official teller to receive nominating and voting ballots and tally the results, and collect the voting fee (if retained)
- someone to arrange for the making of the award statuettes and the site and running of the awards ceremony.

These functions can be completely adequately handled by a five-member committee, the membership of which can be distributed geographically in various ways. There ought to be a British and an Australian member to act as agents, and the remaining three all North American; or one member each could be from Britain, Australia and North America with the other two free to be from anywhere. All five members could be from anywhere, but there have generally always been British and Australian agents to receive and relay ballots and drum up interest -- these people ought to be proper, voting committee members, or conversely, the British and Australian committee members automatically become the agents. A committee member specifically from Canada is probably redundant; there isn't enough of a distinct Canadian fandom to warrant it and as far as fandom is concerned, Canadians are Americans anyway -- ask any British fan. I prefer "requiring" only one specifically North American member and leaving the remaining two places open to fans from anywhere. Additionally, any committee spot left open because no one in "its" country is interested should be open to a fan from anywhere. On the ballot, candidates for committee places can be grouped into British, Australian and North American, with at least one choice to be made from each list, plus two more choices from anywhere on all three lists. Each area's individual winner, plus the two overall highest raters beyond this, form the committee.

I'm in favour of annual election of all committee members; it seems more fair and easier to keep track of for voters and committee hopefuls alike, and is an easy "out" for someone who has lost interest. If a three-year maximum term on the committee is preferred, a committee member simply will not run again after the third year; however I feel that no limits should be placed on term of office since the supply of interested people willing to work could exhaust itself. If the voting fans fear a dynasty, they can simply not re-elect the would-be fuehrer.

Voters should be reminded that the FAAn Awards committee is not a popularity item; that committee members should be chosen for the interest they show in the awards and their willingness to help, and not merely because they're currently high-profile, popular fans.

**	<i>THE FAAn AWARDS COMMITTEE SHOULD BE MADE UP OF FIVE MEMBERS, ALL ELECTED</i>	**
**	<i>ANNUALLY BY THE PARTICIPANTS IN FAAn AWARDS BALLOTING, ONE MEMBER EACH</i>	**
**	<i>FROM BRITAIN, AUSTRALIA AND NORTH AMERICA, AND TWO MEMBERS TO BE CHOSEN</i>	**
**	<i>WITHOUT REGARD TO GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION.</i>	**

2. ELIGIBILITY OF PARTICIPANTS

I think it would be preferable to have 50 knowledgeable and impartial voters over twice the number of that 100 included biased people or those who have seen less than half the nominees. I'm in favour of tightening the eligibility rules for nominating and voting both, to favour those people who have access to enough of the year's output of fanac to make a truly representative choice. I'd prefer not to see people vote on partisan grounds even if they're conversant with most of the year's crop; and I have no use for those who let their own favouritism or grievances with people cloud their critical judgements.

I'm of two minds concerning nominating or voting for yourself. It's not allowed in the rules, but it occurred last year. (Ballots marked thus simply had the voter's name ignored in the count and everything else moved up a notch.) If the voter really does feel his or her own work or zine is the best that year, there are no good reasons why it shouldn't be voted thus. On the other hand, who is truly impartial about his own work -- either way? Altogether this is a difficult thing to assess and it may be best to err on the side of caution and retain the rule against it.

I would like to see nominations opened up to the point where a fan eligible to nominate at all would be eligible to nominate in all categories, under the honour system to restrict nominations to those categories where the fan is on familiar ground. Instead of the current qualifications based on activity levels, it is more appropriate to impose a general qualification of reading at least 20 different general distribution fanzine titles, as it allows non-active fans who still read enough fanzines and have come to know

the field well to participate. It is probably not necessary to set out criteria of, say, art, writing or loccking appearing in at least 10 different titles; or of publishing a general-distribution available-for-the-usual genzine or personalzine, since those who do these things are almost certainly already qualified under the familiarity-with-20 criterion. The primary criterion is familiarity with the current year's field, something that has very much to be self-judged. Hard guidelines are useful but nominations in the end rest on the honour system.

Determining eligibility for voting is easier than for nominating. Simply, to vote, you must be familiar with at least four out of five of the nominated zines, or the work of four out of five of the nominated artists or writers. Again, it pretty well has to be self-policed on the honour system, with a proviso that a voter skip any category in which he's familiar with less than four of the nominees.

**** WHILE RECOGNIZING THAT NOMINATOR AND VOTER ELIGIBILITY HAVE PRETTY WELL ****
**** TO BE LEFT UP TO THE HONOUR SYSTEM, A BASIC GENERAL CRITERION FOR NOMINATING ****
**** SHOULD BE ACCESS TO AND FAMILIARITY WITH AT LEAST 20 GENERAL CIRCULATION ****
**** FANZINE TITLES, AND GENERAL CRITERIA FOR VOTING IN A GIVEN CATEGORY SHOULD ****
**** BE FAMILIARITY WITH AT LEAST FOUR OUT OF FIVE NOMINEES IN THAT CATEGORY. ****

3. BALLOT PROCEDURE AND DISTRIBUTION

I do not feel any changes need to be made in the present procedure of nominations and final voting, as for example to a one-ballot poll system. Moshe Feder's suggestion of a few years back, of allowing people to nominate all through the year via postcard to the official teller whenever something impresses, can certainly be allowed; but quite bluntly I don't give this idea a snowflake's chance in hell of becoming even an insignificant fraction of the nominating procedure.

At the moment, ballots are distributed chiefly through the newszines: FILE 770, DNQ, CHECKPOINT/ANSIBLE, and CHUNDER!, but other zines, notably clubzines, have also sent them out. I've been sending out clean white copies of the ballots suitable for offset, xerox or electrostencil, to the most obvious distributors. Anyone who wants to copy and send ballots around is free to do so.

The vertical list format of both nominating and voting ballots introduced last year is my own design and obviously I am partial to it over previous formats as being considerably easier to use, especially at the voting stage. It would save work to adopt a permanent ballot format, a standard form on which only information particular to the year (committee roster, addresses, dates, nominees) need be changed.

**** A PERMANENT STANDARD FORMAT FOR THE NOMINATING AND VOTING BALLOTS SHOULD ****
**** BE ADOPTED THAT CAN BE USED FROM YEAR TO YEAR WITH ONLY CHANGES PARTICU- ****
**** LAR TO THAT YEAR REQUIRED. DISTRIBUTION SHOULD BE INITIATED THROUGH THE ****
**** FANNISH NEWSZINES, WITH INVITATIONS AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO COPY AND FURTHER ****
**** THE DISTRIBUTION OF BALLOTS EXTENDED TO ALL WHO CARE TO. ****

4. VOTING FEES AND FORM OF AWARD

I like the enchanted duplicator statuettes that Randy Bathurst has generously created for the FAAns since their inception in 1975. However, these awards cost money, and that cost has necessitated the imposition of the \$1.00 U.S. voting fee. Also, due partly to philosophical objections to paying a fee to vote in an egoboo poll, a number of knowledgeable fans have declined to participate in the FAAns, including a large number from Britain. Now, I would like to both keep the Randy Bathurst statuettes and get rid of that tiresome voting fee, hopefully with the result of increased knowledgeable participation.

Last year, IguanaCon made a donation to the FAAn Awards of \$200; and one way around the difficulty of fees vs. statuettes might be to encourage successful large conventions to

follow that example. Voluntary donations from participants could continue to be solicited, but somehow, making it conditional on the payment of a buck to participate in the FAAns has got to go.

** DO AWAY WITH THE MANDATORY VOTING FEE FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE FAAn AWARDS, **
** INSTEAD SOLICIT VOLUNTARY DONATIONS FROM INDIVIDUAL FANS AND SUCCESSFUL **
** CONVENTIONS, WITH THE CONTINUATION OF RANDY BATHURST'S STATUETTES CONDI- **
** TIONAL ON FUNDS BEING AVAILABLE AND RANDY'S CONTINUED INTEREST IN MAKING **
** THEM. **

5. THE CATEGORIES

As long as the FAAn Awards have a money problem and award statuettes are retained, there is a practical limit on the number of categories that can be supported. In addition, there's a kind of psychological limit to the number of categories a fan is willing to mull over in order to make selections. Six categories is a decent number; enough for adequate representations of talents and not too many to be intimidating. There are some overhauls I'd like to see in the exact definitions of the present categories, however.

I would like to get rid of the Best Single Issue and Best Fan Editor categories and replace them with one for Best Genzine and one for Best Personalzine. Both categories would include one-shots, depending what kind of one-shot it was, although both could pit one-shots against full runs of frequent zines. The genzine category would include club-zines and newszines and certain apazines; the personalzine category would include most apazines. Such a change would give runs of personalzines a chance where putting them up against "edited" large genzines could possibly leave them ignored; and would give their creators a chance to win not just for their writing in their zine, but for the zine's other ⁷⁴⁵categories as well. I don't think a separate category for apazines is warranted; if the zine is well-distributed outside the apa then it already has a chance under, most likely, the Best Personalzine category. If it isn't seen outside the apa, chances are not enough people will see it to be able to successfully nominate it, and even if it were nominated, not enough would see it to be able to judge it fairly against others. Apazine awards for limited distribution material are best done as an egoboo poll within that apa only, as is done in FAPA. In any event, apazines are not excluded from consideration; it's up to their creators to bring them to more general notice.

I would get rid of the Best LoC Writer category outright. Good writing in letters can come under the aegis of Best Fan Writer. The Best Fan Writer category ought to be split into Best Fan Writer (Humorous) and Best Fan Writer (Serious) in the same way as the artists categories are already divided. Together these two categories encompass anything from critical analysis or reviews to personal journalism and outrageous faanish nonsense.

I would leave the Best Fan Artist (Humorous) and Best Fan Artist (Serious) untouched.

This gives us six awards categories, all defined generally (i.e. "Best" for a body of work for the given year, even though that "body" can comprise only one item, such as a one-shot). If finances and resources permit, and interest warrants it, up to three more specific awards can be added: Best Single Issue, Best Single Article (which can include letters), and Best Single Piece of Artwork (which can be a cover or interior). Best Single Issue, which I feel properly belongs in such a "specific" classification would be defined and handled in the same way as it always has; and strong arguments can be made for retaining it if the other categories were to be defined as above in the future. Best Single Article and Best Single Piece of Artwork would be hard to determine, and it's difficult to predict whether interest -- to say nothing of fans' energy -- will warrant including them.

** THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES OF AWARDS COVER THE FIELD BEST: BEST GENZINE, **
** BEST PERSONALZINE, BEST FAN WRITER (HUMOROUS), BEST FAN WRITER (SERIOUS), **
** BEST FAN ARTIST (HUMOROUS), BEST FAN ARTIST (SERIOUS). A SPECIFIC AWARD **
** FOR BEST SINGLE ISSUE SHOULD BE RETAINED. SPECIFIC AWARDS FOR BEST SINGLE **
** ARTICLE AND PIECE OF ARTWORK CAN BE INSTITUTED IF INTEREST WARRANTS IT. **

6. AWARD SITE SELECTION

The optimal timing of the awards' nominating and voting procedure takes into account both mail delay and time required for distribution and tallying, and the fact that the best time to decide on a year's best is as soon after that year is over as possible. The nominating procedure is best initiated early in the year or even in December of the year before, for ballots to arrive in early January, with a deadline for nominations sometime in March, to allow distribution of final voting ballots in April for a deadline in June. Thus, a convention in June or July, chosen by the committee members in consultation with con organizers, seems ideal for the awards presentation. I prefer not to have the awards at the worldcon where they get swamped amidst other distractions; on the other hand, the worldcon is most likely to have most people interested in the awards in attendance.

In the past, fannish regionals held in June or July have been chosen: MidWestCon, WesterCon, and AutoClave. These cons all draw fans from a wide area and attract sufficient numbers of fanzine fans. If interest and the slate of final candidates warrants it, the awards could occasionally be presented at a British con in July or thereabouts; or an Australian con if there were enough Australian nominees on the ballot in any given year.

What should not be used for the awards are conventions of a distinctly non-fanzine-fan interest or too strong a peripheral orientation (i.e. Doug Wright cons at the most grotesque extreme, but that goes without saying); or cons that are, however sizable, strictly local and unlikely to draw many out-of-towners. On the other hand, newcomer cons that take on a fannish aspect shouldn't be ruled out of consideration.

There is little reason to change the timing of nominations-voting-award ceremony from its present rough schedule, nor worry about a site for award ceremonies as long as the likes of AutoClave, MidWestCon or WesterCon exist. So far there has been no problem of any one region monopolizing the awards ceremony year after year.

**	<i>OPTIMUM SCHEDULE FOR THE AWARDS IS: NOMINATING BALLOT AVAILABILITY -</i>	**
**	<i>JANUARY, DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS - MARCH, VOTING BALLOT AVAILABILITY -</i>	**
**	<i>APRIL, DEADLINE FOR VOTING - JUNE, AWARD CEREMONY - JUNE OR JULY AT A</i>	**
**	<i>SUITABLY FANNISH CONVENTION WHOSE LOCATION ROTATES FROM REGION TO REGION</i>	**
**	<i>AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.</i>	**

A questionnaire -- again UNOFFICIAL and a personal project only -- will be drawn up to poll FAAn Awards participants as to their preferences for the old ways of the awards vs. the suggestions given here, or any further suggestions you may provide. These will be sent out in DNQ along with the final voting ballots in April, and Mike Glicksohn as the official teller of the awards has agreed to accept them for me, so that answering such a poll is made as convenient and easy for participants as possible. The questionnaire, being unofficial, is not intended to bind the FAAn Awards committee to any actions, but will serve merely as a guide to discussion of changes in the way the awards are operated in the future. Any readers having ideas and proposals they wish to see incorporated into this questionnaire, please send them to me directly, PO Box 156, Stn D, Toronto, Ontario, M6P 3J8; also I would appreciate hearing from anyone planning to distribute the final FAAn voting ballots who might be willing to carry these questionnaires as well.

DISTRIBUTION: Bruce Arthurs, Mike Bracken, Brian Earl Brown, Linda Bushyager, Avedon Carol, Jackie Causgrove, Ed Connor, Don D'Amassa, Alan Dorey, Leigh Edmonds, Gary Farber, Moshe Feder, George Flynn, John Foyster, Gil Gaier, Mike Glicksohn, Mike Glycer, Jeanne Gomoll, Arthur Hlavaty, Terry Hughes, Jerry Kaufman, Dave Langford, Eric Lindsay, Rob Jackson, Ian Maule, Joe Nicholas, Lee Pelton, Bruce Pelz, Peter Roberts, Stu Shiffman, Milt Stevens, Taral, Don Thompson, Harry Warner, Ted White. Plus whoever sends two dimes and a self-addressed envelope 4 x 9"... Please let me know if I've missed anyone obvious.

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