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October 22, 1974

ALL OF THE FOLLOWING IS TEMPORARILY DNQ

During recent years there has been a rising tide of dissatisfaction with the fan Hugos among fanzine fans. Dissatisfaction with their tendencies toward popularity-pollism and with their loosely defined nature, especially as regards professionalism. Like many of you, I have found the liabilities of the Hugos an interesting topic for discussion with other fans at conventions. At this year's Midwestcon, in one such conversation, I came to the conclusion that such criticism of the Hugo is unfair. I realized that many of us have been expecting it to work in a way it cannot possibly work and produce results it is incapable of producing. This is not to say that the Hugos are of no value and should be abolished. Popularly-voted awards have inherent value, and the Hugos have tradition behind them that makes them indispensable. But the popularly-voted award is not the only kind that exists. Call it elitism if you must, but people in many varied fields of endeavor value peer-voted awards just as much or more than they do popular ones — for obvious reasons. Science Fiction professionals have such an award, the Nebula. Perhaps it is time that the active fans of fanzine fandom had one too.

Creating such an award would not be easy. You'd have to overcome the skepticism and natural conservatism of people. You'd have to convince many that you weren't out to undermine the Hugos. You'd have to struggle to make such a new award valued and meaningful. But I have come to believe that the effort is necessary and worthwhile. Utilizing the two key concepts of peer nomination and voting [i.e., Nomination by the immediate, active peers of potential nominees (e.g., Artists nominate artists; writers nominate writers etc.) and final voting by active and knowledgeable fans who are the peers of the nominees in the broader sense. (So that although a fan might nominate in only one or two categories, he'd vote in all.)] and direct mail operation, it could be ensured that the new and old awards could coexist. That the selection process could be equitably run. And that the results could be meaningful and the award of value to the winners. That is why I've taken the somewhat audacious step of writing to you and to other prominent fanzine fans. I need your help. This has to be a community endeavor; for as a one man show it's sure to flop.

There have been attempts in the past to separate the fan and pro Hugos, or to make the egoboo poll of some single zine the universally accepted index of achievement. They have failed. In the former case probably because fans were not willing to give up the prestige the Hugos carry with them. In the latter case because few zines survive long enough to give their polls the cachet that comes of simply lasting long enough, and because thoughtful fans have always recognized that only to the regular readers of the source-zine (a circumscribed community defined by the editor) is a poll run through a single zine acceptable and valuable, and that the results of such a poll are distorted by the fact that the only zine all the readers receive is the source-zine itself. But there is a way these shortcomings can be avoided. By creating an award that is carefully defined, administered by a committee specifically chosen for that purpose, and that is independent of any single group, coterie, convention committee or list of subscribers; an award that will belong to all of fanzine fandom and to SF fanzine fandom alone. Thus can fandom be given a new way of recognizing those who do the most to make it worth being a part of.

I believe that it is NOW that such a plan has the best chance of succeeding. I believe this because when I mentioned my ideas in TAPS, Harry Warner, Jr. told us in his mailing comment that "/your/ideas on a new set of fan awards are quite close to the suggestion I've been making sporadically for the past couple of years." and went on to make it clear that he approved. I believe it because Linda Bushyager (who was an important participant in that conversation at Midwestcon) was able to point out to me a strikingly similar proposal by Donn Brazier in TITLE 29. I believe it because I met with interest and even enthusiasm when I explained my ideas to such fans as Linda, Donn, Mike Glicksohn, Bill Bowers and Mike Glycer. And I believe it because anyone who attended Discon had to be struck by the growth of various fringefandoms that threaten to swamp our conventions and take over our awards. A Star Trek fanwriter made it to the Hugo ballot this year and according to informed sources, Star Trek fanzines came close. In the year ahead we may well face the growth of yet another such phenomenon, "Apefandom." Such subfandoms are probably ephemeral, but while they hold sway, wouldn't it be comforting to know that there exists an alternative to the Hugo should the Trekkies and Apesters choose to make it their own? For these, and for other reasons, I ask you to seize the time and help me in the creation of a new fan-award alternative.

What follows is a first draft of what I think is a workable set of rules, definitions, standards and procedures. It is based on my original ideas as modified by suggestions from other founding members of the committee and various other people I've had occasion to discuss this with. Following that are some opinions about the merits and demerits of the various points and a list of topics for further discussion. What I'd like then is feedback and participation, as quickly and as great in volume as you can manage. If enough of you approve in principle, I propose to establish an ad hoc committee to hammer out the details, set up the awards and run them during their first year. Linda Bushyager, Mike Glycer, Harry Warner, Jr. and Donn Brazier have already agreed to join me in this. About 10 more volunteers are needed. (I suppose that those will be the ones who write in soonest. Sadly, there's no perfectly unobjectionable way to establish an ad hoc committee of this kind — especially when we intend it to play the powerful discretionary role that will later be taken by an elected body.) So are ideas. I hope that all of you, whether you choose to commit yourself fully by joining the committee or not, will ask to receive the committee's operating organ (I envision it as a sort of rotating apa with a very frequent schedule that will enable us to conduct our business without physical meetings.) and continue to give us the benefit of your ideas and opinions.

Oh yes, I should explain that I don't have a name for the awards yet. (Although, Ghu knows, I've tried to come up with one.) For the sake of convenience, the awards will be referred to below as the FAANS, (Which I suppose could be taken as standing for: Fanzine Activity Achievement Numerators.) a name that is no more graven in stone than is any part of what follows. (One of the first orders of business for the full committee will have to be the choice of a permanent name.) Because what follows is meant as a springboard for discussion and a starting point for our arguments. I expect that there will be eliminations, additions and modifications. (But don't think I'm not planning on fighting for my ideas!)

The Awards

- 1.1 Best Single Issue of a Fanzine: For the best single issue of a magazine about science fiction, fantasy, and/or fans, fandom and fannish doings and concerns published in the previous calendar year that is not published in hopes of a profit (or, indeed, making one) and does not pay for contributions.

- 1.2 Best Fan Editor: To the fanzine (as def. in 1.1 above) editor who in the whole of his fanzine output in the previous year showed the most skill in every area of editing.
- 1.3 Best Fan Writer: To the author of the best fanwriting in the form of one or more nonfiction articles, essays or reviews appearing in a fanzine (as def. in 1.1 above) other than his own in the previous year.
- 1.4 Best Fan Artist (Serious): To the creator of the best non-humorous illustration(s) for a fanzine (as def. in 1.1 above) in the previous calendar year.
- 1.5 Best Fan Artist (Humorous): To the creator of the best humorous illustration(s) for a fanzine in the previous calendar year.
- 1.6 Best Letterhack: To the author of the best published letter(s) of comment appearing in a fanzine (v.1.1) during the previous year.
- 1.7 No Award: Because it is hoped that the winners of the FAANs will be those who are not merely the best in any given year — no matter how thin a year it may have been — but those who have reached a distinctively high level of achievement as defined in the individual minds of the voters, the "No Award" option shall be available to the voters in every category on the final ballot.

Nominations

- 2.1 Nominations will be accepted from January 1 until March 15.
- 2.2 The nominators in each category will be those who are themselves theoretically potential nominees (under the standards of section 1 above) in that category, so that (save for the exceptions noted in 2.5 and 2.6 below) the nominators will be those of the immediate peers of the nominees who have been active in the previous calendar year.
- 2.3 Nominators may not nominate themselves or their own fanzines.
- 2.4 Nominations in the "Best Single Issue of a Fanzine" category (v.1.1) will be accepted from anyone eligible to nominate in any other category.
- 2.5 In addition to nominating in the "Best Fan Editor" category (v.1.2), faneds may nominate in the "Best Fan Writer" category (v.1.3).
- 2.6 Fanartists may nominate in either or both of the art categories (v.1.4 and 1.5) regardless of which category the nominator himself is eligible in.
- 2.7 Fans may be nominated in as many categories as they are properly eligible..

Voting

- 3.1 Final ballots will be accepted from April 1 until June 15.
- 3.2 Any fan eligible to nominate in any category (whether or not he has actually done so) may vote in all the categories on the final ballot.
- 3.3 Voters shall name only a single choice in each category.
- 3.4 The winner in each category shall be that nominee who receives the most votes in that category.

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- 3.5 Write-in votes will not be counted.
 - 3.6 In case of a tie, two (or more) awards will be given.
 - 3.7 The results of the voting shall not be announced before the official presentation.

Presentation

- 4.1 Because of the specialized and restricted nature of the awards, the administrators shall endeavor to arrange for their presentation at relatively small and fanish regional conventions.
- 4.2 The location of the convention chosen for the presentation shall rotate among the Eastern, Middle Western and Western regions of the United States and Canada.
- 4.3 Should there be sufficient international fanish interest to warrant it, the awards may be presented at conventions outside of North America at the administrator's discretion, but never more often than once in three years. No North American region's presentation rights shall be affected when this occurs; the normal rotation being resumed in the following year.
- 4.4 No region in North America shall be skipped without a unanimous vote of the administrators.
- 4.5 The administrators may shorten the nominating and/or the voting period by a maximum total of four weeks to facilitate the presentation of the awards at an appropriate convention.
- 4.6 When the administrators find that there is no suitable convention in one of the North American regions, they may arrange for a special awards banquet.
- 4.7 The awards shall be presented no later than the third weekend in August.

I have further sections prepared covering the details of the prescribed operating procedures, the election and operation of the administrative committee and so on, but it strikes me now, as I examine them before transferring them to stencil, that such details are premature and can wait until next time. (If your reaction warrants a next time.) I think you have already been given the information most essential to making a decision. However, I will now go on to the general, informal discussion of some of the above points that I promised and perhaps, if there's time, I'll say a little bit about the contents of the two sections I'm not now including. I do realize that this sort of legalistic detail is not the most entertaining reading.

Section 1.1 is not meant to exclude those zines that accept ads on an irregular basis. On the other hand, it excludes those that are primarily intended to be vehicles for publicity (as for a con bid, etc.). // By the phrase, "every area of editing" in 1.2 I mean the writing of editorials, magazine design, selection and combination of articles, selection of art and the combination of art with text, letter column editing and so on. It might be worth making such more specific points part of the section. // I think there are some distinct advantages to having a best faned and best single ish award as opposed to having only a best fanzine award. Many fans have a genzine, a personalzine and an apazine, for example, and in such cases the existence of a best faned award would allow the voters to consider all of such a fan's output. In recent years the giant genzine has declined and

the importance of personalzines has risen. Apa activity has remained significant and worthy of recognition. Neither kind of fanzine has much chance in the Hugo best-zine system. Even in the FAAN system, separate awards for these kinds of zines are impractical because of their limited circulation. Through the best faned category they can at last have at least a little weight in our decisions.// The existence of a best single issue award in addition to a best faned award will allow an exceptional one-shot or extraordinary first issue to be recognized by nomination (or even winning) without unfairness to those faneds who have labored long and hard to put out quality, regularly-scheduled periodicals. At the same time, it will be an acknowledgment of the fact that a zine is as much a product of those who contribute articles and art and those who write locs as it is a product of its editors' talents. The best single issue FAAN will also make repeat winners less likely than in a best-zine system. (And yes, I'll frankly admit it now, make it quite difficult for a newszine to win. But don't forget that the editors of good newszines could still win in the best editor category (where they belong, rather than in direct competition with general interest fanzines having smaller circulations).) // Of course, there is always the possibility that fans would choose to give both these awards to a single editor/fanzine. That could be quite appropriate in some cases, but if it began to happen monotonously, I'd then want to reconsider this structure.

For the moment at least, section 1.3 is meant to cover all fanwriting not done by an editor for his own zine. We considered that separate awards for fan criticism (either of pro fiction or fanzines or perhaps of both) would be worthwhile. We passed it up for now in order to keep things as simple as possible until we are more firmly established. The "nonfiction" specification is meant to exclude amateur science fiction and fantasy and not faanish fiction of the kind that used to appear in STELLAR or that was done by Terry Carr. I suppose some refinement of the section's language on this point may be in order.

The serious/humorous distinction made in 1.4 and 1.5 has always been problematic, but it is, I think, a necessary one. I'm hoping that we can trust the nominators in this category to agree on the classification of their colleague's work. We might want to allow the administrators to reclassify nominees (or the votes for them) in rare instances. This is not to say that someone couldn't be legitimately nominated (and win) in both categories.

Section 1.6 is more important than it may at first appear to be. A good lettercolumn can turn a fair fanzine into a good one; the lack of a good lettercol is felt in even a zine that is superlative in other ways. Locs are the primary and most direct form of egoboo — they help to keep faneds going. And writing a good loc requires as much skill as any other kind of fanwriting. But this FAAN is of added importance because it is our answer to those who will claim that the FAAN system is too restricted, a closed shop — since only an active fan who is theoretically nominatable in at least one category can nominate in that category or vote in any on the final ballot. The existence of this category will allow any fan who is interested in fanzines but who hasn't published or contributed to one (for reasons of laziness, finance or talent) to participate in the FAANS simply by writing a loc good enough to get published. Surely anyone interested enough to complain about our stress on activity (and hence, on knowledgability) will have sufficient energy and enthusiasm to write a loc that gets published — even if it takes a few locs to do it. On this score, I should mention that Mike Glycer and I considered allowing the award to be for even a single loc, but requiring two published locs as nominating and voting qualification. Linda Bushyager wanted it to be one loc in either case, and for the moment, I have followed her greater liberality. I'm coming to think that she may be right, both on the ground of fairness and to

save us from both the accusation and the fact of being too exclusionary — a state of affairs that, despite my occasional lapses into elitism, really would be odious to me.

To conclude my discussion of the chapter on the awards themselves, I'd like to get back to section 1.1 for a moment. As should be obvious, this is a key section. Through its definition of what a fanzine is it affects all the other sections of Chapter I. The one I've used is a working definition formulated by Mike Glycer and me while he was here in New York after the Discon. I make no claims for its perfection. I'd be happy to hear alternative formulations.// Although it would be a rather blatant discriminatory step, I am considering the proposal of an amendment to this section that would add the words "and is not primarily devoted to televised science fiction or fantasy." to the tail end of its sentence. I have mixed feelings about this. At times I see it as a sorry bit of closed-minded conservatism on the part of one who should be open-mindedly accepting of what the future brings. At other times I see it as part of a righteous defense of our genre against mindless, lowest-common-denominator crap and as part of the battle of thoughtful, imaginative readers against passive and witless viewers. Comments?

On to Chapter II, Nominations.// I'm not saying that it's realistic, but I think it would really be great if we moved quickly on this and the first of the January is mentioned in section 2.1 were January 1, 1975!// Section 2.4 is necessary because obviously, a fanzine can't nominate another fanzine. We considered restricting this right to faneds, but decided, for reasons related to the logic behind what I've already said about most zines being more than the product of one fan (and again, to blunt criticism of over-exclusivity), to allow anyone who is seriously involved in the fun of fanzine fanac to nominate. The faneds will get their measure of more restricted pure-peer selection in the best faned category. While I would be the last person to claim that you have to have done and be able to do something to be qualified to criticize others who are doing it, there are some fans who believe this. And I must admit that when we are talking about judging an abstraction like editing (rather than its tangible final product), it would seem that only those who have attempted it are fully qualified to judge it. And again I would stress that faneds are just as entitled to the advantages of peer-nomination as anyone else benefiting from the FAANs.// On a related matter, I'd like to know if you agree with me that faneds ought to be allowed to nominate in the best fanwriter category as well as in their own, but that fanwriters not be allowed a reciprocal privilege. The rationale here is that almost all faneds are fanwriters for their own zines (editorials of course, and sometimes reviews) and that all faneds (except those who have done personalzines exclusively) spend much of their time and skill in dealing with, judging and editing fanwriters and their work — and so they are eminently qualified to nominate in that category. On the other hand, not all fanwriters are faneds currently or have ever tried to put a zine together and so they don't have the same insight and practice in judging the work of their opposite numbers. (Fanwriters who are currently active in fanediting as well, would, of course, be able to nominate in that category too.)

The idea behind section 2.6 is that art is art, whether it is humorous or serious in intent and that even fanartists who do one kind or the other exclusively (if there are such) would be capable of judging the other variety for the purposes of nomination. The reason for separate award categories is not to distinguish between different "types" of artists, but to expand the opportunities for recognizing the contribution fanart makes to fanzines. [Note that the term "illustration" in 1.4 and 1.5 is meant in the broadest sense, i.e., to cover not only those works of art that elucidate a specific article they were meant to accompany, but those which function as adornment — relief for the eye from dull text.]

The chapter on operations, not included here, stresses that as much as possible of the business associated with the FAANs ought to be with the voters directly, rather than through outside media. Looking at it from a practical point of view, one must realize that the costs of an absolutely pure direct-mail operation could quickly mount to the prohibitive level. While nominating will be free, we'll have to ask for a nominal fee (probably \$1) with the final ballot votes. This will pay for some postage and it will also cover the making of the actual physical awards.// Since according to 3.3, voters may only name a single choice in each category it might not be impossible to allow voters to state their choices in letters or on postcards — if they can be made aware of the official nominees in each category. And let's face it, there just aren't enough zines that are regular enough that we could be sure of getting through to everyone in this fashion. The simplest solution may be to require the inclusion of a SASE with all nominations in which the final ballot can be returned to the voter. We could also accept a second, optional SASE when the final ballot is returned to us for counting, in which we can send word of the final results of the voting to those who won't make it to the presentation con.

Chapter IV is based primarily on Harry's suggestions on the subject in TAPS. The most likely conventions to satisfy 4.1 and 4.2 are Midwestcon and Westercon in the midwest and west and Disclave in the east (which, of course, is earlier in the year than the other two, hence section 4.5). Looking back on 4.2 now, it occurs to me that it might be proper to add a Southern region to the rotation. Comments? We need definitions of the regions, too. // 4.7 is intended to insure that the FAANs are announced before the Hugos. It is worth considering whether — if we find that we can work comfortably on a compressed schedule — the FAAN schedule ought to be drastically speeded up so that the results could have some influence on the final balloting or even the nominating of the fan Hugos, as the Nebulas probably influence the pro Hugos. This is something else I have mixed feelings about. Once the FAANs became accepted, even coveted, would the fan Hugos matter to us as much anymore? Whether or not they will, is it really proper for us to attempt to influence them? While that was my first smofish impulse, I've come to think now that beating them to the punch will be more than enough. Actually, I'm sort of hoping that the non-fanzine fans, the fans who are primarily oriented towards conventions (and especially the worldcon), will sort of ignore the FAANs.

Since there's some room left, I guess some discussion of the committee that would run the FAANs is in order. I envision a committee of 15 elected administrators. Exactly how the election should work I'm not yet sure. Clearly, the voters would be the same people who would nominate and vote for the awards, but whether the voting should be by those voters for administrators at large or on some regional representative basis (Three each for Eastern, Midwestern, Western, Southern and Overseas regions?), or on a "craft" basis (Four editors, four writers, four artists, three loccers?) I don't know. I'm aware that the necessity of an election could prove troublesome — but I believe it's necessary. I did consider going with a much smaller committee and adopting the TAFF system, i.e., one year's winners become the following year's administrators, but gave it up for a number of reasons, a prime one being that unlike TAFF our winners could win twice in a row (and whatever system we adopt we'd probably want nominees serving on the committee to drop off until after that year's awards).// The next question in this area is that of terms of office. One possibility I've considered is three-year terms with one third of the committee up for election each year. Of course, two-thirds of the original committee would be shortchanged, but after that cycle there'd be no problem and you'd always have both experienced members and fresh blood on the committee. With such a system I'd probably want to rule out anyone's holding office twice in a row, both on grounds of undue concentration of power and because few could be expected to retain their enthusiasm that long or be required to

contribute that much sustained effort even if they did. Of course, if we decide on a one or two year term we might want to allow the serving of two (or more?) consecutive terms.// One final suggestion I have in this area is that a fan who publishes both eligible and ineligible (semi-pro) zines be allowed to vote but not to serve as an administrator. One of us, I believe it was Linda, has already criticized this proposal as being overly restrictive./// Once again, I apologize for the amount of legalistic nit-picking in what is supposed to be an initial proposal, but it seemed to me to be the best way to demonstrate my seriousness about this and to facilitate further discussion. Speaking of which, here are a few more topics that deserve some: *Should there be a special award that can be given by the committee on its own? *Should well-known fans of the past who are no longer very active be given some role to play? *What should be the design of the actual awards. (A miniature duper? A gilded beanie?) *What should the damn things be called? (Among the names suggested so far: the Dupers, the Typos, the Elliks, the Egoboos etc.) *Should nominees whose work appeared only in semi-pro (non-eligible) zines be eligible? *Should the fan-artist categories be divided by the existence or lack of a caption or dialogue balloon? By size? By fannish vs. stf subject matter? Should there be a best cover art category? /// Your opinions are invited.

I apologize to those of you who have been waiting for this letter for a while. As I said, it took me a month to build up the chutzpah.// I apologize too to any of you who may have taken offense at what might have seemed a bigoted attitude on my part about some fans and fanac. I assure you it was for rhetorical purposes only - I intend to continue attending all the cons I can./// I hope you'll all write. There will be at least one issue of a comm. bulletin, to report the results of this letter. Deadline for inclusion is November 16. (Overseas fan: please write even if you can't make that deadline.) If we continue after that, I hope someone else will take a turn at publishing so that I can put out my long lost genzine.//Thank you all,

Moshe Feder

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