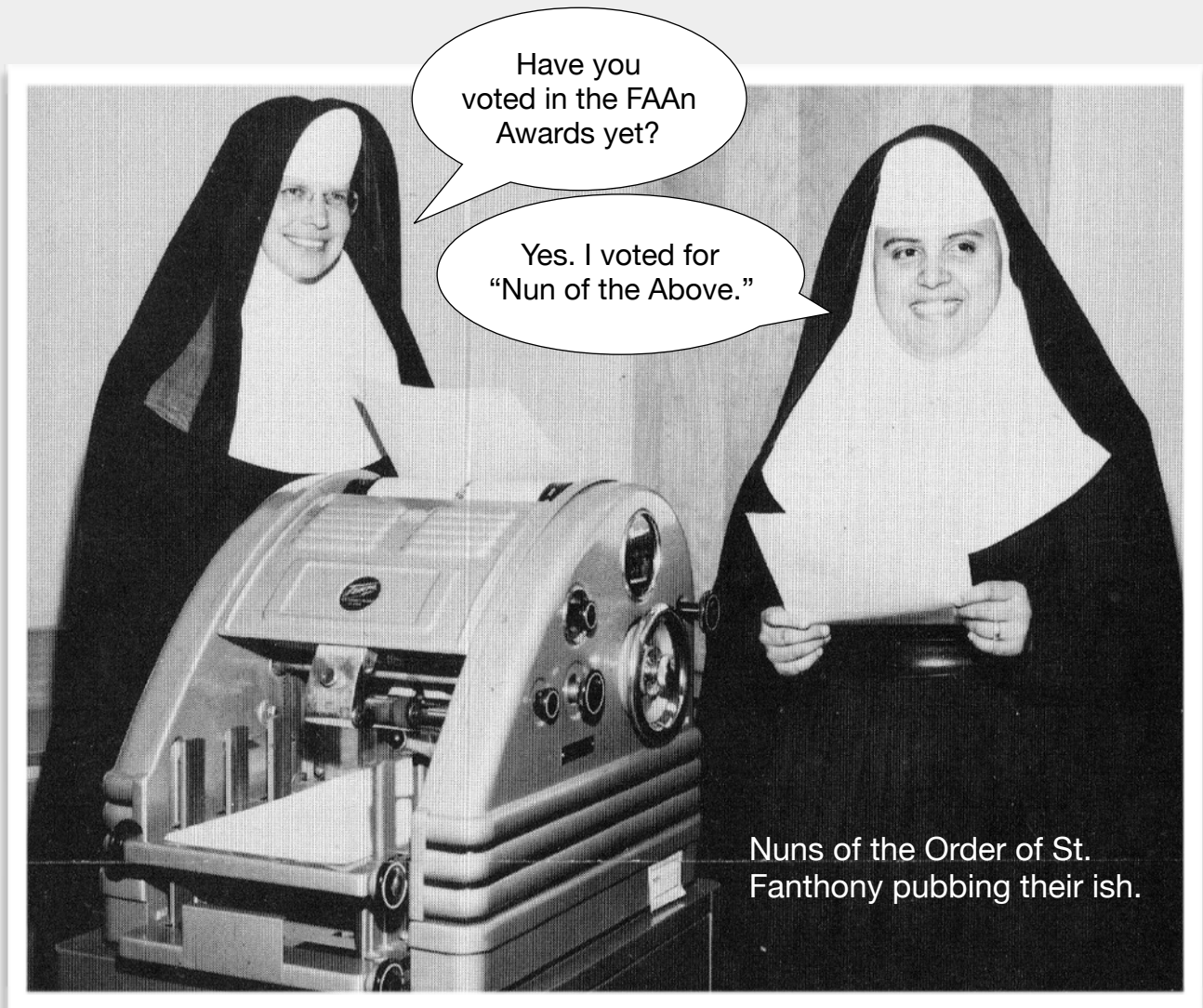
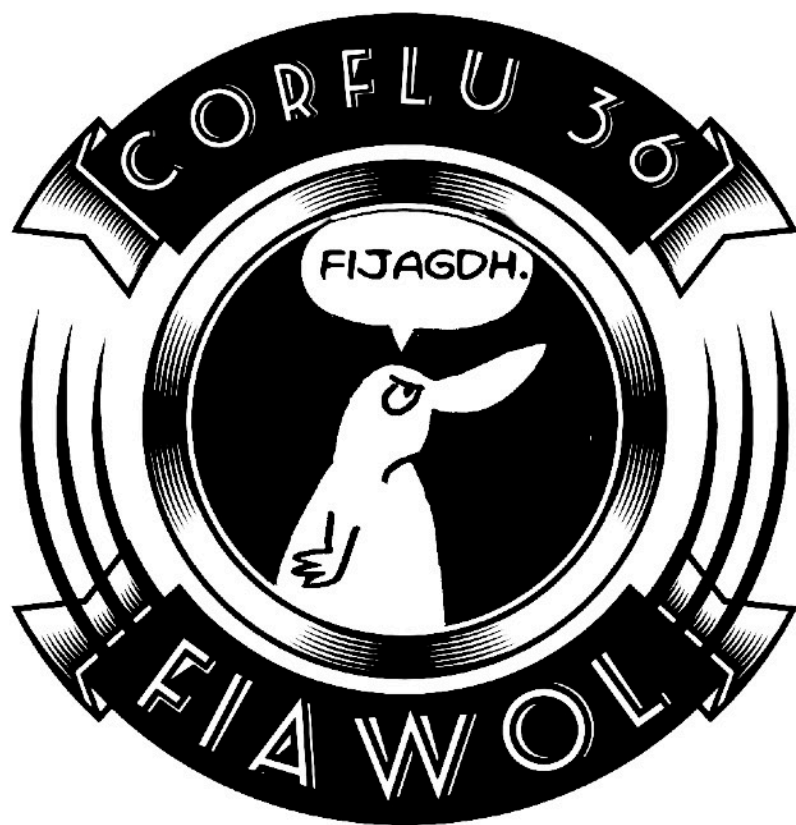


Random Jottings 18

The Corflu 36 SMOFing Issue



Our Most Boring Issue Ever!



Random Jottings 18

Random Jottings 18, the Corflu 36 SMOFing issue, is published exclusively in PDF form and is available on efanzines.com, corflu.org, and dobsonbooks.com. Eventually, it will join the other Corflu papers in a print edition, which confusingly will bear the same issue number. Written and edited by Michael Dobson, editor@timespinnerpress.com, and published by The Canal Press. © The Canal Press, CC BY-SA 4.0. May 2019 issue.

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Editorial

by Michael Dobson

It turns out that there's a lot more after-Corflu work than expected, and without the anticipation of throwing a party for lots of your friends. **TIP!** You'd better plan to have a free week after Corflu just to finish all the odds and ends.

The 18th issue of *Random Jottings* nearly completes my work as chair of Corflu 36 FIAWOL, which at this writing started about two and a half weeks ago. This issue is mostly boring unless you're into this kind of thing; useful to a small set future con-runners and of interest to people who want the details of the 2019 FAAn Awards. The FAAn Awards results are available separately on the corflu.org website, but if you have this issue, you don't need that as well.

One of my biggest frustrations in running this year's Corflu is that while a lot of the information is in various peoples' minds, not much has been written down, at least that I was able to find. I've tried to correct that by writing down everything I can, in hopes of people avoiding the mistakes I made and avoiding always reinventing the wheel. Rob Jackson is working on his own collection of information, which he plans to publish in *Inca*, and we're discussing collecting his material, mine, and whatever else we can come up with into a CreateSpace book with the working *The Smoffer's Guide to Corflu*.

I'll also be collecting all my Corflu-related material into a print version of *Random Jottings* 18, available only on request, and also available on Amazon. I really just want a bound copy for my bookshelf (which reminds me that I also want to do a volume of all the pre-CreateSpace issues of *RJ Real Soon Now*.)

Random Jottings 19 will be the Corflu Proceedings, and that will be available to everyone in print form at Corflu 37 Heatwave. I'm collecting photos, con reports (including brief snippets talking about a particular moment of the convention), and other materials, in hopes of putting together a memento of that rainy Rockville weekend. Please contribute.

Now on to the boring stuff.

Corflu 36 FIAWOL Evaluation

by Michael Dobson

In my business, you always send out a post-event evaluation to get an overall read on how successful you are, and to solicit comments — which are often more useful.

I sent out a nine-question evaluation. As of today, 20 people have responded. I estimate there are 50 potential voters, making this a 40% response; not bad for this sort of thing.

Fans being fans, a number provided comments but no scores, and some provided scores higher than 5 (note Curt's hospitality earns a well-deserved 5.04 on a 5.00 scale). I allowed it.

Here are the results, followed by the comments.

Category	Total Votes	% Voted	Average Rating	Rating as %
Administration	14	27%	4.93	99%
Materials	13	25%	4.73	95%
Communication	14	27%	4.93	99%
Hotel	14	27%	4.64	93%
Hospitality	14	27%	5.04	101%
Program	14	27%	4.39	88%
Special Events	11	21%	4.77	95%
Banquet	14	27%	3.89	78%
Overall	14	27%	4.96	99%
Cumulative	20	38%	4.70	94%

Comments

Michael, there wasn't an area of the convention that I could give less than a 5.

Absolutely every facet of the convention was handled superbly. You were totally accessible to deal with any problems, from getting a room to keep Keith Lynch happy to handling Lynn Cohen's stolen phone. Personally, I had no problems at all... ever....

The hotel was amazing and amazingly affordable.

Curt was incredible with his advance planning (scones & clotted cream, homemade chocolate chip cookies! Tequila with Margarita mixer), the banquet had something for everyone (exactly what I was hoping for - eggs, potatoes fresh fruit!), the GoH gave a speech that was actually interesting, the program was worth attending...

and on and on.

It was THE fannish event of the year for fanzine fans.

Magnificent!

Frank Lunney

it was a thoroughly enjoyable Corflu except for the banquet. All I can say is the food was cold & had it not been for the bacon & sausage & to a lesser extent the chicken, it would have been totally inedible. This was especially noticeable due to the excellent fare provided in the con suite.

Elaine Stiles

It struck me as extremely well organized and performed (if that is the right word). Many thanks for the Wed. night party and guest accommodations, and the opportunity to hang out with you and Curt on Thursday. If I had any criticism, it would mainly be that the programming could have benefited from microphones and speakers. As luck would have it, my Lyft to the National airport on early Monday morning went smoothly and on time, and my flight back home even arrived ahead of time to Oakland. All in all, just a great vacation. You rock!

Jay Kinney

Curt is a treasure and his wife has a chest of gold... nope, better not continue that metaphor!

The three mark-downs I gave were for hotel (dearer than I'm used to in the USA, but of excellent quality), banquet (I was first to the trough and many items were lukewarm - I like my food hot) and Program. Here I have to confess I am not a real Corfluvian as I'm not so much into fanzines as into fanzine fans. So and item on fanzine archiving followed by reminiscence about a zine I'd never heard of (mea culpa) then a fanzine auction was not compelling. Andy's play was, I think, the best he's done since Fanotchka - and it was short! But my failure to be ignited by the program items was more than

compensated by the conversations with fans I've either never spoken to before, or renewed my links with after too many years.

But above all, the exceptional teamwork you had with Curt made it the best Corflu I can remember. You have always been my hero. Perhaps now you are pushing for demi-god?

Ian Sorensen

Banquet is 3 because of the blah hotel food, which is what you could afford for the money you had to spend, so, not a criticism of you.

Murray Moore

I'll be honest--Corflu falls into that category of fandom that I'm interested enough in to go to it if it's in Washington or Baltimore and not go to if it's somewhere else. And I speak as someone who first wrote for fanzines in 1975.

I can't complain about the con--I thought you and Curt did a good job. And who knows, some day I'll go to another one.

Martin Morse Wooster

Consuite: 3 for the space itself, 5 for the food and hospitality. Program: Too sercon during the day! Well, except for the artists panel...Just a Minac was the highlight for me. Banquet: Food was cold and program was too long. Although Benford's GoH speech was just fantastic.

Alan Rosenthal

Your Corflu was fabulous! Everything was perfect and I had a wonderful time!

Jeff Schalles

Corflu 36 was an excellent convention. This is from my perspective as a member, a conrunner and a fanzine fan. Great job!

I have a concern about giving money to the GoH but am having trouble articulating it. It seemed absolutely brilliant at the time, a great idea to try!! But now I'm having second thoughts. I'm a bit afraid that it raises an expectation for later Corflus. And Corflus usually cannot afford to hand cash over to someone -- at least not until the con is done and dusted. I've long thought the GoH's membership fee should be refunded. I'd draw the line there.

Spike

1) Administration: 5/5, but tech ops (which should really be a separate question) 3/5. (Points rehearsed fully in the Corflu-running compilation.)

2) Materials: Totally 5/5 - outstanding. Dan S's lovely illo suffered shattered glass in my case in transit home, but that's airport baggage-chuckers for you. This particular minor disaster was recovered brilliantly by Coral who said: "I think there are some old photo frames with glass in them in the family history drawer!", and there was indeed a 7" x 5" one with no other duties except to donate its glass insert to Dan's illo frame.

3) Communication: 5/5. (Colin and Catherine last year: 1/5, especially if you weren't on Facebook.)

4) Hotel: 5/5. Value also definitely 5/5 - an outstanding deal, considerably cheaper than (for example) the central Chicago place. However Nigel was needing to shoehorn us into the centre of a major US city. You were happy for reasons that are now obvious, to accept a less central place but with lovely local facilities such as restaurants.

5) Hospitality: 5/5. Egoboo in shovelfuls for the Stakhanovite work Curt put in. He is obviously used to working long and unsocial hours! And for Liz's baking, too.

6) Program(me): 4.5/5. Good balance of serious and light-hearted items, all enjoyable one way or the other; it is arguable whether it would have been possible to shoehorn an 11 am start on Saturday and one extra item, though. (Nic F went far too far the other way at Richmond in 2014, with a 9 am start.)

7) Baltimore/Inner Harbor and Washington Galleries trips: 5/5, but Antietam trip N/A from me, sadly, as I was needing to drive down to Raleigh to see my son and daughter-in-law. Trips very much enjoyed, so many many thanks to Steve, Elaine, Colleen and Leonard. Colleen and Leonard hosted just me, so those who failed to come along to the Galleries trip missed a treat. Colleen is a lovely host, and the Clara Barton house was a revelation of relevance to my own work with UK Forces veterans.

8) Banquet: 4/5 for food; 5/5 for programming (see above). FAAn Awards presentations eventually well received despite the earlier whingeing about complexity, and presentations efficiently run on the day. Some whinged about Jim B's long and technical speech, which was only very tangential indeed to fanzines; but as a space travel freak and regular Space.com visitor, I love the kind of speculation Jim gave us.

9) Overall: Definitely 5/5! Brilliant atmosphere. Despite imperfections (and not many of those), once you have a positive vibe started, with a Chair and other committee who have everything decently under control, then everyone has a great time which becomes self-reinforcing. Which is why this was one of the best Corflus of recent years.

Rob Jackson

Administration: Rob was a great help at navigating me through flight bookings, travel documents and currency exchange given that I haven't been outside the UK in over 20 years, and some of which I left a bit late. But it all worked out in the end.

The program was just about right for me. I know some folk like less 'formal' programming and more chat/party time but I like to have a nominal schedule even if chose to ignore it. Sandra's panel was a hoot, and I enjoyed the fan art discussion/slide show. Splendid job from Andy and his crew at the auction.

The pre-con collating party was fun and a very welcome introduction for a US Corflu 'newbie'.

On the banquet, I subtracted 1 for lack of mushrooms :-), but a late breakfast / brunch was an inspired choice and far better option than rubber chicken. (United served me that one on the plane back. It was truly terrible, and the veggie pasta option looked equally unappetizing. I should have taken a con suite doggie bag, but I wasn't sure if I should smuggle scones through security.)

Overall, I had a really great time. Shame about the sunburn on the DC sightseeing trip, but I've stopped peeling now .

One bonus category: People 5++! This was the main reason for coming. Usually I get to chat to about half a dozen people out of several hundred at a big con, but here I think I met and chatted with almost everybody at one point or another.

Loved it. First con in probably 8 years and I felt hugely welcomed by everyone and make a whole bunch of new friends. Hope to see as many of you as possible in the UK in 2021!

Steve Jeffery

Duh, everything was excellent. You're just fishing for compliments. You deserve them. Thanks so much for getting me to def come. I had a wonderful wonderful time.

Chris Couch

We "attended" Corflu by watching some of the videos on Youtube - Opening Ceremonies in the bar, most of the Void Boys panel and the Rotsler Awards panel, and the post-banquet presentations. Let Rob Jackson know we appreciated the opportunity.

And the membership packet arrived today - many thanks for that. The framed Dan Steffan piece was intact, and the Fanthology looks very appealing. I'll be reading that sometime in the next week or two. The other items were fun, and maybe we'll visit some of the Maryland attractions in two years, if we attend Worldcon in DC.

Jerry Kaufman and Suzanne Tompkins

Could have rearranged or chosen a different Con Suite with more overstuffed chairs in circular clusters, for easier talk and less overwhelming noise. I had some good conversations just outside.

Frederic Gooding III

You did an extraordinary job of it. All the success must go to you -- even if Curt did bring the meatballs.

Dan Steffan

[I brought those meatballs, dammit! Me! Me! Of course, Curt did everything else. - MSD]



The Membership

1	A	Ted White
2	P	Michael Dobson
3	A	Colin Hinz
4	A	Catherine Crockett
5	A	Nigel Rowe
6	A	Tom Becker
7	A	Spike
8	A	Sandra Bond
9	A	Rob Jackson
10	A	Geri Sullivan
11	A	Murray Moore
12	A	Mark Olson
13	A	Deborah Dobson
14	A	Edie Stern
15	A	Joe Siclari
16	A	Ken Forman
17	S	Robert Lichtman
18	A	Pat Virzi
19	A	Jay Kinney
20	S	R-Laurraine Tutihasi
21	S	Claire Briailey
22	S	Mark Plummer
23	S	Dixie Kinney
24	A	Gregory Benford
25	A	Curt Phillips
26	A	Steve Stiles
27	A	Elaine Stiles
28	A	Rich Coad
29	A	Ian Sorensen

30	A	Mary Ellen Moore
31	A	Frank Lunney
32	A	Jeff Schalles
33	S	Jerry Kaufman
34	S	Suzanne Tompkins
35	A	Jim Benford
36	A	Andy Hooper
37	A	Carrie Root
38	A	Mary Burns
39	A	Bill Burns
40	A	Steve Jeffery
41	A	Alan Rosenthal
42	A	Jeanne Bowman
43	S	Pat Charnock
44	A	Bruce Newrock
45	A	Flo Newrock
46	A	Keith Lynch
47	S	Nic Farey
48	A	Colleen Brown
49	A	Leonard Stockman
50	A	Dan Joy
51	A	Gordon Eklund
52	S	Doc Morgan
53	A	Grant Canfield
54	A	Susan Graham
55	A	Luis Ortiz
56	A	Karen Schaffer
57	A	Michael Ward
58	A	Lynn Koehler
59	A	Martin Morse Wooster
60	A	Dan Steffan
61	A	Lynn Steffan

62	A	Illi Ferreira
63	A	Victor Gonzalez
64	S	John Hertz
65	A	Frederic Gooding III
66	A	Richard Dengrove
67	A	Mowgli Assor
68	S	John Purcell
69	S	Lloyd Penney
70	S	Patti Ross
71	A	John D Berry
72	S	Stephen Beale
73	A	Alta Sligh Ayers
74	A	Bob Crain
75	A	Matthew Moore
76	A	Ulrika O'Brien
77	A	Craig Hughes
78	A	Chris Couch
79	A	Marla O'Neill
80	A	Dan O'Neill
81	A	Motya Gershunskiy
82	A	Bob Madle
83	A	Priscilla Olson
84	A	Rich Lynch
85	A	Nikki Lynch

Of the 85 total members, 70 were listed as Attending Members and 15 as supporting members. Ten were “single-day” attending (all Saturday), leaving 60 as full attending. Seven full attending and two single-day attending didn’t come, meaning there were 53 full attending members and 8 single-day attendees, for a total of 61 at the convention. (An earlier count had attending membership at 50; this has now been corrected.)

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Corflu 36 FIAWOL Financials

by Michael Dobson, Corflu 36 FIAWOL Chair

I'm very pleased to say that Corflu 36 FIAWOL finished in the black. Total convention income, combining membership fees and auction revenue, was \$9,536. Expenses totaled \$9174, leaving a surplus of \$362. Corflu 37 Heatwave received \$300, and the Corflu Fifty received \$62. (All amounts are rounded to the nearest full dollar.)

Balance Sheet

INCOME		EXPENSES	
Memberships	\$5,917	Banquet	\$1,841
Auction	\$3,002	Hotel	\$1,240
T-Shirts	\$270	Consuite	\$2,334
Consuite Sales	\$67	Awards	\$608
GoH Opt-Out Money	\$280	T-shirts	\$426
TOTAL	\$9,536	Advertising	\$377
		Program	\$109
		Giveaways	\$1,331
		Registration	\$206
		Mailing	\$422
		Guest of Honor	\$280
		TOTAL	\$9,174
NET INCOME	\$362		
To Corflu 50	-\$62		
To Corflu 37	-\$300		
BALANCE	\$ -		

Income Details

Membership Income	
Attending	\$6,265
Supporting	\$166
Transaction Fees/Exchange Rate Costs	-\$89
Premium/Sponsoring	\$650
Prodigal Fan Discounts	-\$325
Complimentary Memberships	-\$750
Net Membership Income	\$5,917

Membership

The official membership rates began at \$100 for attending, then jumped to \$125 and \$150 as the convention neared. The supporting membership rate was “pay what you want.” In the end, it averaged \$11.08 per person, though that included a few complimentary supporting memberships that lowered the average.

I waived the \$25 lateness increase when it came due, and only went to \$125 at the end. If you hadn’t attended Corflu in more than three years, you got a \$25 Prodigal Fan Discount. If you added another \$50, you could upgrade to a Premium membership. Premium members received a free T-shirt. The money from premium members was allocated to pay for awards. There was one Sponsoring member, Timespinner Press (me). I charged myself \$200.

Because the convention was in good financial shape, I focused on getting more people to attend, and as a result, gave out quite a few free memberships. Saturday guest panelists received a one-day complimentary membership, as did our Balticon representatives.

Corflu is about its attendees, and my goal was to get as many of my favorite people here as possible. Different people had different issues. Some were logistical, others financial. In addition to free or discounted memberships, I paid portions of hotel bills and provided other support for a number of people. Some of the aid reimbursed people who did work for the convention. The total cost was around \$1,600, and I’m only sorry it wasn’t much more.

Auction and Consuite Honor Box

Almost solely due to the superhuman efforts of Andy Hooper, the auction proceeds of around \$3000 are fully half the total membership income of approximately \$6000. This utterly changed the financial position of the con.

In Advance. One of the smartest things I did was reach out to Andy Hooper early to ask his advice about auction matters. He told me if I could get him enough fanzines to sell on eBay, he could raise much more money and do it before the con, when it's most useful. I sent Andy three boxes of fanzines (roughly six reams of paper), warning him that my fanzine collection had never been that robust and I wasn't sure they were worth much. To my surprise, Andy said otherwise, and by the end of 2017 I had nearly \$2500 extra cash on hand, all due to Andy. I'm enormously grateful and deeply appreciate all the time and effort he invested in supporting Corflu FIAWOL.

Andy, in return, has pointed out that these were all my fanzines in the first place. While that's true, they have been sitting in boxes for more than four decades. I loved them when they arrived, but I don't expect I'll ever reread more than a handful. I planned to give them all away at some point, and probably would have even paid to ship them. Those fanzines, thanks to Andy, are now in the hands of people who will appreciate them, and Andy's contributions played a major role in my ability to deliver a good Corflu.

When I first discussed chairing a Corflu back in Richmond, I was told I should expect to throw in about \$2000 of my own money, and I was prepared to do that. In a way I did, but as I would never have put in the time and effort to sell these fanzines myself, it is, as far as I'm concerned, free money, and I'm very glad it happened this way.

At Corflu. I knew that some portion of the at-Corflu auction proceeds would come my way, but I expected most of it to go to other fan charities. I was amazed when Carrie handed me a big wad of cash (\$559) as Corflu's share. It kept Corflu FIAWOL in the black and allowed me to pass on some money, so again, my thanks to Andy, Carrie, and everyone else who made that happen.

Honor Box. Several people brought items to sell on behalf of either Corflu-the-con or Corflu-50-the-fund. We displayed them on a table in the consuite and put an honor box next to them. A total of \$67 was collected, but as we couldn't determine what money was for Corflu 50 items and what was for Corflu-the-con items, so I decided the fairest way to go was split the money 50-50. Once I calculated the final surplus and gave \$300 to Corflu 37, I added the rest to the Corflu 50 pile and sent Rich \$62.35.

Overloading. I teach my classes the “iceberg principle” of work: 90% of it is invisible to outsiders. I underestimated the tremendous effort Andy put in to raise all that money, and while I understand it better, I’m sure I’m still missing major pieces of the work. Andy’s tireless work on behalf of fannish causes is well known, but it’s unfair for him to shoulder this responsibility year after year without help, whether in the form of a decent commission or others to take on part of the work.

However, auction revenue is now and will increasingly be essential to putting on Corflu without higher membership fees, losses to con runners, or cuts in services. Try the Corflu Budget Simulator (“What Do Corflus Cost?”) with and without auction income to get a sense of the impact.

Expenditure Comments

I’m not going to go over each and every Corflu expense, but some of them warrant comment, especially for the benefit of future Corflu chairs.

Banquet. I had to provide numbers to the hotel in advance, and estimated 55 people would attend. (I didn’t perform an actual count at the banquet, but it was less than that). The total cost was \$1841, or \$33.50 per person. Future Corflu chairs should note that the list price was \$25/person, but hotel taxes and mandatory gratuities drive the actual cost up substantially. An unanticipated extra \$8.50 per banquet attendee will play hell with your budget. All hotel charges are subject to these large taxes. **TIP!** Always ask for an “all-in” number on any hotel expense.

Hotel. By meeting the agreed-upon number of room nights, we received three free nights of consuite, and received a discounted rate for the fourth night. The list price of the program room was \$300/day, but with taxes it came to \$387. We had it for two days (and it’s why we did the opening ceremonies in the hotel bar, which was free).

Consuite. This covers all hospitality expenses except for the room costs. Curt and I based our budget on a formula we’d gotten from Aileen Forman, \$10/person/day. We spent \$2334 in total. Discounting Saturday-only members, who mostly didn’t stay into the evening, we had 53 actual attendees, making the final actual cost \$11.00/person/day, pretty close to the target, especially because we weren’t particularly worrying about money at that point. Note that Thursday and Sunday are lighter than Friday and Saturday in terms of stocking, but the \$11.00 number is the average for the full convention.

Awards. We gave eight FAAn Award trophies, 22 certificates (counting the Corflu MVP Awards), and two small trophies for “Just a Minac” and Past President of FWA. I had set aside premium membership income specifically for that purpose, so we spent \$608 out of a budget of \$650. The rest of the money partially offset the cost of free t-shirts to the premium members.

T-shirts. I’m not a big t-shirt fan, and wanted to do an embroidered polo instead, but there was enough desire for a t-shirt that I gave in. (Although I still arranged for a FIAWOL/FIJAGDH polo through Alison Scott’s Fannish Clothing Emporium. Spike and I rocked ours.) I had promised that there would be a benefit for those who spent the extra money for a premium membership, so decided to give all those people a free shirt. This was not entirely altruistic, as I had to order a minimum of 25 anyway. I spent \$426 on 25 shirts (\$17 each), and offered them at \$20 each. I collected \$270 (as a committee member, Ted got his for half price) for a net loss of \$156.

Advertising. I experimented with different ways to get the word out about Corflu, including a display of flyers at Worldcon and an advertisement in the Philcon program book. (Philcon had sent me an email offering an ad at a discount.) I would have broken even on it with two new memberships, so I decided to give it a try, offering an extra discount for mentioning Philcon so I could track response. There was no detectable response from either the Worldcon or Philcon promotions. I’m not sorry I tried the experiment, but I wouldn’t recommend doing it again.

Program. Aside from the function room, there were a few minor costs associated with running the program. I bought a table runner with a Corflu logo (I omitted the “36” so it can be used again), buzzers for the Just a Minac game, name tents, and cards and poker chips for the planned game evening. Nobody ended up coming to the game evening, but the cost was trivial. All told, \$109, and some of the stuff was passed forward to Corflu 37.

Giveaways. This category includes the items in your membership packet: the *Corflu Fanthology*, the Randy Byers anthology, the Dan Steffan framed print, and the program book (a last minute add). The Montgomery County Visitors Guides were, of course, free. The framed print accounted for roughly half the \$1331. We contributed to the printing fund for the Randy Byers book, but almost certainly paid only a fraction of the actual cost of those copies.

Registration. Name tags (we did have lanyard as well as magnetic, and even a couple of clip-ons I had around the house), the Tyvek envelopes for the member packets, a box of pens and Sharpies, and a couple of other miscellaneous items cost \$206. Again, some of this was passed forward.

Mailing. Now that progress reports don't have to be mailed any more, the only cost associated with a supporting membership is sending out the member packets. The need for protection of the glass print and the bulk of the packages drove the cost this year much higher than expected. Add in mailing trophies and certificates (thanks to those who took them at the con), and shipping leftovers to John Purcell, the total cost was \$422, against supporting member income of \$166. If our membership packets had been of normal size, the cost would have been dramatically less, but the mailing cost (including international) has to be factored into whatever supporting membership rate you set.

Guest of Honor. Corflus have taken different approaches to the GoH opt-out tradition. Some count on that money as part of their budget. At least one in recent years has waived the \$20 altogether. It does seem unfair to demand a ransom from attendees who have already paid to get out of a responsibility they didn't ask for. Given that there's already been variation from Corflu to Corflu, I figured that whatever I did wouldn't count as setting a precedent.

For Corflu 36, I made the \$20 opt-out fee optional. We asked everyone for the \$20, but told them it was their choice. If they wanted to opt-out without paying, that was fine, and several people took that route. By telling people the money was going to the GoH, though, more thought it was a fun thing to do, and the vast majority chose to pay. We earned \$280. I'm delighted we got Jim Benford at GoH, and he did spend all his GoH money at the auction.

I also thought the GoH should get some sort of memento, which is why I got the Dave Kyle pillow. In retrospect, I would have taken out enough of the opt-out money to pay for the pillow. Guest of Honor opt out money is listed both under income and expenditures; it's a net wash. Except for the pillow.

I've gotten some feedback about this, suggesting the prize was too rich, and that limiting the benefit to a membership fee refund and perhaps a memento of some sort (there are some inexpensive trophies you can get for under \$20 including imprinting) would be enough.

Honestly, I wasn't expecting \$280 when I decided to give the money to the GoH; I thought we'd get a hundred or so. Had I known, I might have gone with that approach. On the other hand, telling people the opt-out money was going to the GoH got more people to pay. If you go with the membership fee + gift idea, I'd tell people that any remaining money was going to something specific, rather than into the general Corflu treasury. You'll get higher response. And you can pick something you planned to do anyway.

What Does Corflu Cost?

I didn't have any prior financial data on Corflu running, so my preliminary budget was made primarily of WAGs¹. Now that I've been through it, I've put together a Corflu budgeting model, which will be available as an Excel spreadsheet on the corflu.org website. (It's being tested, and I expect to make numerous changes before it's finalized.) Modify this with your own assumptions and data, and you'll have a budgetary snapshot of your prospective Corflu.

Here's a screenshot of the current version, followed by some comments. There will be detailed instructions accompanying the final.

CORFLU BUDGET SIMULATOR MODEL

To estimate your Corflu financial situation, fill in all boxed cells. Cells without boxes are calculated by the model.

ASSUMPTIONS		EXPENSES	
Attending Members (#)	<input type="text"/>	Advertising/Promotion (\$)	<input type="text"/>
Supporting Members (#)	<input type="text"/>	Awards	\$ -
Auction Proceeds (\$)	<input type="text"/>	Banquet	\$ -
Other Income (\$)	<input type="text"/>	Consume Supplies	\$ -
		Hotel (Function Room)	\$ -
		Mailing	\$ -
		Member Packet	\$ -
		Program (\$)	<input type="text"/>
		Registration (\$)	<input type="text"/>
		T-shirts	\$ -
		Other (\$)	<input type="text"/>
		Contingency Reserve	\$ -
		Total Expenses	\$ -
INCOME			
Attending Memberships	\$ -		
Supporting Membership	\$ -		
Auction	\$ -		
Other Income	\$ -		
Total Income	\$ -		
(Note on memberships: Most people sign up either early or late, so % for in-between are likely lower.)			
Supporting Memberships			
Initial Rate (\$)	<input type="text"/>		
% of Members	<input type="text"/>		
1st Rate Increase (\$)	<input type="text"/>		
% of Members	<input type="text"/>		
2nd Rate Increase (\$)	<input type="text"/>		
% of Members	<input type="text"/>		
Premium Charge	<input type="text"/>		
% of Members	<input type="text"/>		
Supporting Member Average Price	#DIV/0!		
Remaining % to Allocate*	-100%		
(Premium Upcharge % not counted)			
Attending Memberships			
Initial Rate (\$)	<input type="text"/>		
% of Members	<input type="text"/>		
1st Rate Increase (\$)	<input type="text"/>		
% of Members	<input type="text"/>		
2nd Rate Increase (\$)	<input type="text"/>		
% of Members	<input type="text"/>		
3rd Rate Increase (\$)	<input type="text"/>		
% of Members	<input type="text"/>		
At-Door (\$)	<input type="text"/>		
% of Members	<input type="text"/>		
Complimentary/Free	\$0.00		
% of Members	<input type="text"/>		
Premium Membership Upcharge	<input type="text"/>		
% of Members	<input type="text"/>		
Attending Member Average Price	#DIV/0!		
Remaining % to Allocate	-100%		
(Premium Upcharge % not counted)			
Premium Membership Income	\$ -		
(included in total membership income)			
THE BOTTOM LINE			
Total Income		\$ -	
Total Expenses		\$ -	
Net Profit or (Loss)		\$ -	
Banquet All-in Cost Per Person			
<input type="text"/> \$ per person			
Consume Supplies			
<input type="text"/> # of nights			
<input type="text"/> \$ per person per night			
Function Rooms			
<input type="text"/> per day (\$)			
<input type="text"/> # of days			
<input type="text"/> Other hotel charges			
Mailing Costs			
<input type="text"/> International supporting members (%)			
<input type="text"/> 100% Domestic supporting members (%)			
<input type="text"/> No-show attending members (%)			
<input type="text"/> Mailing Cost (each) for International (\$)			
<input type="text"/> Mailing Cost (each) for Domestic (\$)			
<input type="text"/> Mailing of Awards, Supplies, etc.			
\$ - Total Mailing Costs			
T-shirts/Merchandise			
<input type="text"/> cost each (\$)			
<input type="text"/> price each (\$)			
\$ - margin (each)			
<input type="text"/> % who buy			
<input type="text"/> % given away			
\$ - Net Profit/Loss			
(If profit, shown with minus sign on Expenses)			
Awards			
<input type="text"/> number			
<input type="text"/> price ea. (\$)			
Member Packet (ea.)			
<input type="text"/> cost (\$)			
(includes all handouts and giveaways)			
Contingency Reserve (%)			
<input type="text"/> (At least 10% recommended)			
\$ -			

¹ Wild-Assed Guess, as distinct from the SWAG, or Scientific Wild-Assed Guess, which by tradition includes a decimal point.

In the spreadsheet, every cell with a box around it needs your estimate; cells without boxes are calculated.

We start with some basic assumptions about memberships, auction proceeds, and other income, followed by the various rate increases and the estimated percentage of members who will register at each price point. You get to fill in all these boxes on your version; this has sample data so you can see how it works.

ASSUMPTIONS	
Attending Members	50
Supporting Members	20
Auction Proceeds	\$2,000.00
Other Income	\$500.00

Attending Memberships	
Initial Rate	\$40.00
% of Members	30%
1st Rate Increase	\$50.00
% of Members	30%
2nd Rate Increase	\$75.00
% of Members	20%
3rd Rate Increase	\$100.00
% of Members	15%
At-Door	\$125.00
% of Members	5%

Supporting Memberships	
Initial Rate	\$25.00
% of Members	50%
1st Rate Increase	\$50.00
% of Members	50%

These assumptions (which can be changed on the spreadsheet to model different scenarios) tell us that the average attending member will pay \$63.25 and the average supporting member \$37.50.

Here's total income, all numbers calculated from the assumptions.

INCOME	
Attending Memberships	\$3,162.50
Supporting Membership	\$750.00
Auction	\$2,000.00
Other Income	\$500.00
Total	\$6,412.50

Some expenses also require assumptions:

Banquet All-In Cost Per Person		
	\$30.00	per member
Consuite \$10/person/night		
	4	nights
Function Rooms		
	\$350.00	day
	2	days
Mailing Costs		
	20%	% International members
	10%	Estimated no-shows
	\$15.00	Cost for International
	\$7.00	Cost for Domestic
T-shirts		
	\$17.50	cost each
	\$25.00	price each
	20%	% who buy

Awards	
6	number
\$30.00	price each
Member Packets	
\$10.00	each

There are a few lines in the Expenses column that require your input, but most are calculated from this data. You need to supply data for items marked in bold.

EXPENSES	
Advertising	\$200.00
Awards	\$180.00
Banquet	\$1,500.00
Consuite	\$2,000.00
Hotel	\$700.00
Mailing	\$123.00
Member Packet	\$700.00
Program	\$100.00
Registration	\$200.00
T-shirts	\$105.00
Other	\$250.00
Total	\$6,058.00

This scenario leads to the following.

Total Income	\$6,412.50
Total Expenses	\$6,058.00
Net Profit or (Loss)	\$354.50

You can play with these numbers to your heart's content. Please let me know if you find errors or omissions, or whether the model is giving realistic results. I hope it's of some use in your planning and budgeting.

Corflu 36 FIAWOL Post-Mortem

by Michael Dobson

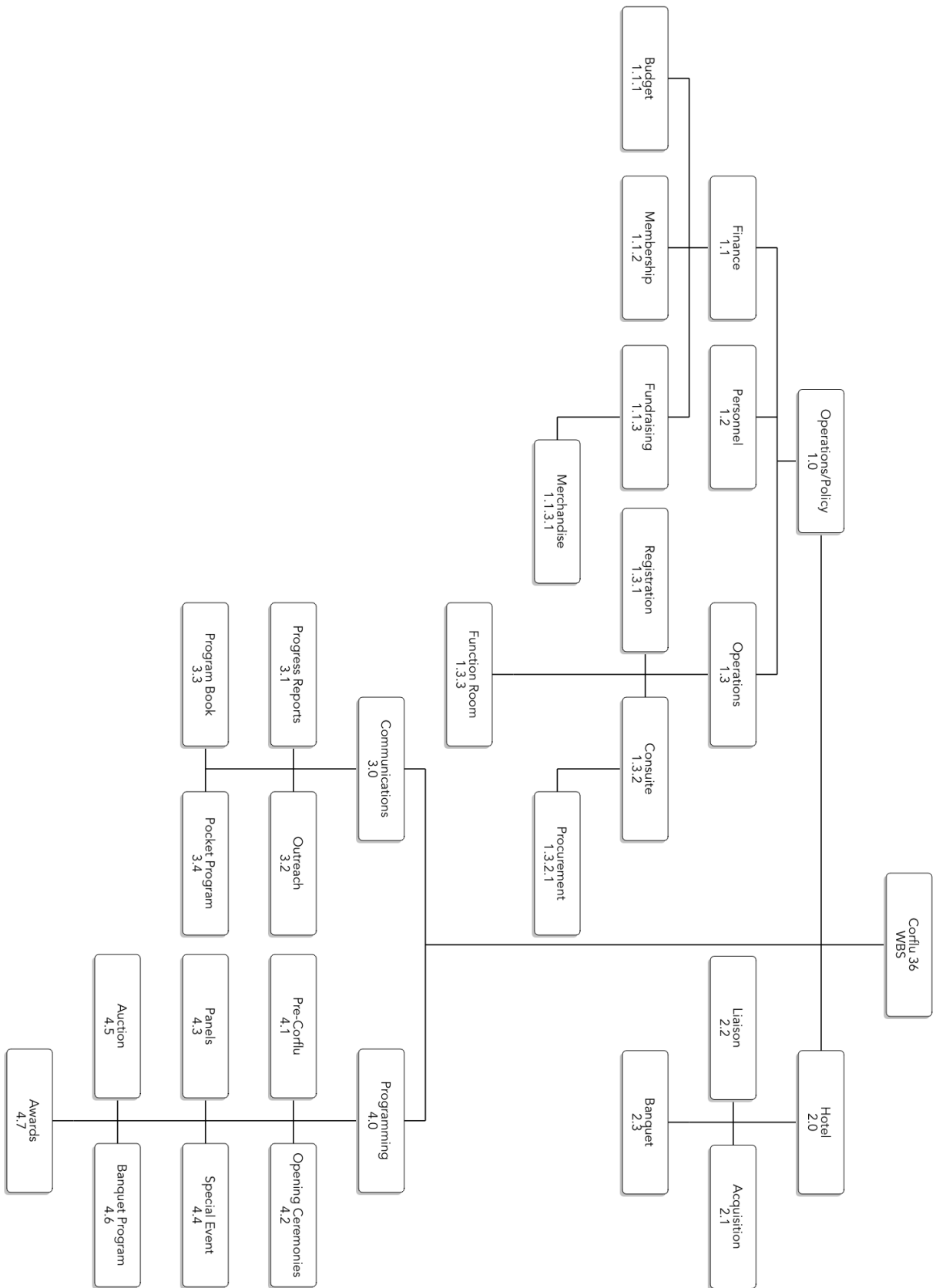
As many of you know, my day job is teaching project management seminars, but it's been a while since I turned my hand to an actual project. Now, Corflu isn't *that* complicated, and I didn't exactly need an industrial-strength project management process (Dobson's Law: Don't drive carpet tacks with a sledge hammer). However, there are some basics of project management that are worth doing even on smaller projects.

To give myself more incentive to do it right, I've been using Corflu as a case study in my seminars. In the Corflu pre-bid package (available at corflu.org), I included a Work Breakdown Structure (reprinted next page), one of those basic project management techniques. It's like an organization chart, but of the work of the project rather than the people. You'll notice there are quite a few moving parts, even in a small convention.

As this was done at the very beginning, there are some deviations from the original, and in an ideal world I'd redo the WBS armed with all my new knowledge. It wouldn't be that different, however, and the one here is good enough to serve as a template for future Corflus. You'll find a full discussion of the WBS elements in the pre-bid package.

I always think a WBS is worth doing (sticky notes and a whiteboard or sheet of flip-chart paper are all you need). In general, I also recommend a project charter, a written statement of the scope of the project. I didn't do it on this project because (a) the scope is basically known from previous conventions, (b) I didn't need to arrange approvals or sign-offs as would be the case in most organizations, and (c) I was operating with a severe lack of knowledge. While I've been to many sf conventions, I really have never run one. I made up a fair amount of it as I went along..

In an ideal world, all the material from previous Corflus would be available as reference, allowing the incoming Corflu chair to get up to speed quickly. On the grounds "better late than never," that's why I'm doing this report. Some of my project management students may choose to look at it as well, as I'll continue to talk about it in my classes.



I didn't use any of the most common scheduling tools; there's no Gantt chart and no network diagram. Neither would have been of much benefit in this case, because the majority of work consists of small activities that show up in random order, and there aren't a lot of mandatory dependency relationships (*i.e.*, activity X can't start until activity Y is complete).

Instead, a milestone chart, a simple grouping of tasks that had to be accomplished before a given deadline, was all I needed. For example, the first project milestone was last year's Corflu in Toronto. Before the convention, I needed (a) hotel, (b) dates, (c) membership rates (implying the need to create a rough budget), and (d) a bid package. Exactly when or in what order (for the most part) I did these things didn't matter, as long as they were all done prior to the convention.

I could have used more in the way of checklists, but again was hampered by a personal lack of experience and a lack of data. Rob Jackson and I discussed this, and he's working on some even as we speak. Other than that, I didn't use many other formal tools. On the other hand, my general project management experience came in handy. Though the subject matter was different, every project has people, budgets, stakeholders, communications needs, risks, etc.

At the end of every project, project managers are exhorted to perform "lessons learned," and I seem to be about the only person in the field who disagrees. Not that there aren't lessons to be learned and value in learning them, but "lessons learned" doesn't scratch the surface of what can be captured at the end of a project. Every project throws off lots of information. They aren't "lessons" as such, but they are useful information, but they have to be captured. I don't call it "lessons learned." I describe it as a salvage operation.

This isn't a formal post-project analysis, but it does reference the major categories of project planning and operations.

Project Management Issues

Project managers often reference the "Knowledge Areas" listed in *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge* (the PMBOK Guide). While most of PMBOK is of interest and use only to people running large and complex projects, all projects have at least some issues in common: scope, time, cost, people, communications, risk, and stakeholders. A good plan (and a good project review) needs to address all those issues.

Scope. While it's ideal to have scope fully defined at the outset of the project, it's not always practical. The basic outline of Corflu is long established, though not written down, and there's significant variation from year to year. I had a number

of ideas but had yet to figure out which ones were actually possible. Scope was inevitably going to change, and change inevitably increases risk.

A WBS helped me wrap my mind around the job and start to plan how to get all the moving parts moving in the right direction. Here's where vision comes into play. From the beginning, I announced my intent to try new things. It's always been my belief that the best strategy for meeting a target is to aim higher than you need to. Things inevitably go wrong, and if you shot for "good enough" in the first place, you won't even achieve that. By aiming high, my Corflu was also more fault-tolerant. If one thing didn't work, another would, and I'd still end up ahead.

I focused on the relationship between value and effort. If you can get high value for low effort, that's a strong reason to try it, especially if the cost of failure is low. High effort for low value activities should be carefully examined (or ones where failure could do major damage), and killed or cut back when possible.

The additional special activities (Baltimore, the party at my house, Gallery Place, Antietam) made Corflu seem more like a vacation destination. A fair number of people arrived early and stayed late, and overall I think they boosted attendance. By the time the official Corflu started, the con had been going on for days. From the con-runner perspective, these were great because they didn't take a lot of con time or money. All I needed to do was find willing volunteers and make sure information was communicated to the membership. My special thanks to Steve, Elaine, Colleen, Leonard, Andy, and Carrie.

The crowdsourced fanthology (*Random Jottings* 17) was also successful thanks to the participation of many. I only spent a couple of days putting it all together, and thanks to the magic of print-on-demand, it was amazingly cheap.

Having just come off a term as Merchandise Chair for the DC West Point Parents Club, I had recently developed a fairly large line of branded projects. My original thought was to do something similar with Corflu, but a quick survey of minimum order quantities made it clear that there was no money to be made in that area. We're just too small. (**TIP!** If you're trying new things, figure out the quickest and cheapest way to make them fail. You lower the cost on the ones that fail, and the ones that pass now have a much greater chance of success.)

At first I was going to give up the idea of merchandise altogether, especially once the auction money began to arrive, but I still wanted something physical to give people as a memento, and I wanted everyone to have one. From there came the idea of a signed and numbered art print, and Dan did his usual incredible job.

Several people demanded I do a t-shirt, so I overcame my initial reluctance and provided one. I made a bulk order of 25 from a local promotional service. Alison Scott of Fannish Clothing Emporium was able to meet my need for a polo (still on

sale; buy one now), and she also added a print-on-demand t-shirt, so Corflu shirts remain available.

Time. A very basic milestone chart was enough to help me keep Corflu on schedule, but there were other issues to consider. I was very aware of the Planning Fallacy (explained in *Random Jottings* 6, the Cognitive Biases Issue): Everything takes much longer than you think.

That motivated me to get started on everything I could far in advance of the convention, and it's a good thing I did. While I was able to get a fair amount done early, other areas experienced delay after delay I started a logo project in July; I had a finished logo in October. The process of developing an "enchanted duplicator" trophy using 3-D modeling started in September; it became clear it was a no-go in March.

None of this is abnormal, none of this is surprising, and none of this is a reflection on anybody. In a volunteer organization, everybody has a life and everybody has other things to do. What looks like a simple job at first mutates into the job from hell. By getting as much as possible done early, and at least starting the rest, you're in much better shape to handle the inevitable problems.

The biggest issue in time management for Corflu is that we all have a finite amount of time and energy we can devote to the con. Most of us have lives and jobs that necessarily take precedence.

Until the final few weeks, I devoted maybe a full day here and there to Corflu (visiting hotels, finishing up a PR), but most of the work up until March consisted of various email exchanges. On a busy day, Corflu took up an hour or two, but there were few busy days. However, the fact that I could only devote limited time to Corflu meant I had to be careful what responsibilities I took on.

I had arranged a light seminar schedule in the weeks prior to Corflu so I'd have time to get everything done, but the government shutdown meant most of my January and February work was pushed forward. I had 3-day seminars to teach on each of the two weeks prior to Corflu. To make matters worse, I got a jury duty summons. It was for one day or one trial. I could afford the day, but getting on a jury would have been disastrous. Fortunately, it was done by the numbers, and I had #578. Only the first 200 were called, and I was excused.

Starting the weekend prior, Corflu took all my time. I felt I needed to host one of the pre-Corflu events, since I'd roped so many others into the project. Ideally, I would have done an Air & Space Museum trip, but that would take a full day. I scheduled a party for Wednesday night. Shopping, cleaning, and prep work took

all of Wednesday, but I recovered some time by getting the partygoers to collate the membership packets.

Thursday we set up the consuite after final shopping. I spent Friday morning at home getting final Corflu materials in order, arriving at the Cambria shortly after lunch. And from then on, it was showtime.

(TIP! As noted up front, there's lots of work to do after the convention. If you don't plan for that extra time, you'll end up having your Corflu drag on for months after the fact.)

Cost. My original WAG, thanks to Aileen Forman, was that the cost of feeding and watering each person was around \$70 (\$10 x 4 nights + \$30 banquet). By that metric, a \$100 attending membership contributed only \$30 to all other convention costs. That meant I'd have to be very careful with costs. But once the auction money came in, Corflu went from being financially risky to having money to spare. I used the money to bring more people to Corflu, and to provide the art print. Other expenditures included the second consuite for Saturday night, an upgraded banquet, and a few more items. And there was still money to pass on.

Not having money worries is a huge advantage on almost any project, and it lowered my stress significantly on this one. Thanks again to Andy. Had the auction money not been there, it would have been a significantly different convention.

People. It's always challenging to run any project with a volunteer workforce. Some volunteers are rock solid reliable; others less so. Some are cheerful and easy to work with; others high maintenance. It's often hard to get people to volunteer at all. This is normal and expected on any project. I was lucky that my volunteers were both competent and reliable, and overall there was a lot less friction than I've encountered on past projects.

The backbone of my convention effort was, of course, Curt Phillips, whose magnificent job running hospitality has been singled out by just about everybody as the best thing about Corflu. Without someone willing to work as hard as Curt, I think the hospitality suite is at least a two-person job.

[*Curt Phillips writes:* "I really did have two people working on the consuite prep. Liz probably invested 30 hours at least in direct Corflu work. Since it was all done prior to the con it's not directly visible, but I think you'll agree that it added substantially to the success of the consuite. I promise you that my baking skills simply aren't in the same league as hers!" *Michael replies:* And anyone who ate her scones would definitely agree. Advance prep is essential. In actually *running*

the hospitality suite, however, Curt was essentially on his own, though various fans pitched in to help. Another person sharing the full load would have been helpful.]

I had responsibility for all operations outside the hospitality suite, and frankly, that turned out to be a two-person job as well. Because of a GPS address problem (the hotel was on a new street), the person who was going to handle registration Friday afternoon was more than an hour late. It couldn't be helped, but I now had to do registration while trying to answer questions and get ready for the opening ceremonies. I did have a list of previous GoH winners that I expected the registration volunteer to handle while putting slips in the box. I tried to mark them all off, but with unavoidable interruptions, some slipped through. The first two names drawn for GoH were ineligible because they'd already done it. When it became clear I'd made a mistake in not ordering a microphone for Saturday, I couldn't easily leave the program room. I was, after all, on the panel.

Neither of these are major disasters, but they're examples of mistakes that could have been easily prevented with a second person working con operations. The second person should be officially in charge of registration, but the con-runner and registration person would serve as mutual backups. It would be important for them to keep an eye on each other so they could respond quickly when help was needed. I had authorized Curt to make hotel decisions involving money, as he needed to order ice. I would have authorized that second person as well so they could handle situations like the microphone. Plus, a second set of eyes always catches stuff you'll miss.

Perhaps most importantly, a team of four (two hospitality, two operations) allows shifts. Con runners need to sleep, visit with friends, see a program item or two, and maybe even go out to dinner. You can't do any of that unless you've got someone to cover for you.

That makes four people more or less full time during the convention, plus people who have specific responsibilities: in my case, that included (among others) Rob for online Corflu, Andy for auction, Geri for beer, and Spike for wine.

Sometimes the work and the volunteers came together. We were happy to welcome **fanac.org** (FIAWOL!) to set up its scanning operation, and they brought equipment and personnel. They report that it was very successful.

Communications. Several previous Corflus have been criticized for a lack of communication, but that seemed to me to be one of the easiest problems to solve. I'm a fanzine publisher, for goodness sake. These days, when you don't even need to print, collate, and mail, quick con updates are easy.

I tried to increase publicity for Corflu, but again hit bandwidth limits. I would have liked to have had a volunteer take active charge of publicity. I think if we'd taken the time, we could have talked more of the people who really should have been there into coming.

Risk. This is one of my favorite topics to teach, but its application to Corflu was limited. The two broad categories of risk are *pure risk* (all downside, no upside) and *business risk* (possibility of gain or loss). In general, it's smart to avoid pure risk if you can do so at a proportional price, but business risk is entirely different.

For a project like this, the key question is, "What's the worst that can happen?" If nobody takes advantage of our game room, what's the worst that can happen? We're out a couple of decks of cards. What if nobody signs up for the Baltimore trip? Steve and Elaine get the day off. For all the experiments I tried, that was the metric. If a failure would really hurt the convention, I either found a way to lower the risk or dropped the idea. If the cost and consequences of failure were trivial, I saw no reason not to go ahead. Most of the time, the latter was the case. Not every experiment succeeded, but the cost of failure was kept low.

Certain risks simply require organizational steps. If I don't keep track of the money, I risk going way over budget. So I keep track of the money. No big deal. The checklists Rob Jackson is working on will be invaluable in controlling those sorts of risks. If microphones had been on a program room checklist, for example, I'd have ordered them. As we know, all knowledge exists in fandom. The problem is that a lot of it isn't written down.

Procurement. From negotiating the hotel contract to acquiring consuite supplies, there's a lot of buying associated with a Corflu. As I didn't have experience with hotel contracts, I reached out to Ben Yalow and Geri Sullivan, who steered me through the process and provided extensive comments. Consuite decisions include make-or-buy (Liz Phillips' contributions in particular), when and where to buy (Curt bought a lot of the nonperishables in southern Virginia, where prices are generally lower), and what to buy.

Curt made up detailed lists after a very thorough survey of the membership. I'm sure previous Corflu hospitality coordinators have done similar things. It would be helpful to have checklists of needed supplies adjustable by attendance, and it would also be useful to keep track of leftovers, with an eye toward lowering excess food and drink. Curt plans to organize his thoughts and provide an additional analysis of hospitality operations as part of our continuing effort to document all parts of running a Corflu; it'll be along later.

Procurement also includes figuring out where to put the stuff after you buy it. Curt Phillips writes, “It's always been my belief that with any project, doing as much prep work as you can beforehand pays off in the execution of the project. And that includes staging your materials (in this case, the food) for sequenced injection into the project as needed. That's one reason why having that room very near the consuite door was so important to me.”

Do work with the hotel to have rooms around the consuite reserved for you and your team, with the closest doing double-duty as a warehouse. It's ideal if you can arrange to group most con-goers on the same floor, though as noted it's not always possible. Doesn't hurt to ask, though.

Stakeholders. Every project has stakeholders, people who have a stake in (or sometimes want to *put* a stake in) your project. Stakeholders have interests and needs, and it's often the case you can't make everybody happy.

Corflu is a major part of our little corner of fandom, and a number of people (including me) have a strong emotional connection to it. How Corflu is run and what it does is legitimately of interest to many, and inevitably not everyone will agree. There were issues of this sort, primarily involving the FAAn Awards, when discussions became passionate.

Given the history of fan feuding, I had approached running Corflu with a certain amount of worry. Projects have cost me friendships in the past. I'm both pleased and relieved that even in the heat of discussions, everyone kept their head. When we weren't able to come to a mutually agreeable outcome, we were able to keep the issues and the people separate. Thanks to everyone involved.

Since I made a conscious decision to apply some of my own project management advice, I tried to do so here. The first piece of advice I give is to listen. You don't have to agree with everything, or take every suggestion, but be sure you've understood clearly. Decide how much of a dog you have in every fight. Sometimes you need to win; other times it's more important they win; still other times the best strategy is to change the subject. Double-check to make sure you understand and are understood. I don't think my execution was by any means perfect, but I did do my best. And to whatever extent I succeeded, I think it helped.

* * *

I'm grateful for the support, encouragement, and hard work so many people put in to make Corflu 36 a success. Most of all, I'm glad just about everybody seems to have had a great time. Thanks for being part of this.



2019 FAAn Awards Report and Analysis

by Michael Dobson

The 2019 FAAn Awards were presented at the Corflu 36 FIAWOL banquet on Sunday, May 5, 2019. Twenty certificates and eight trophies were awarded to a wide range of highly deserving winners. It was for some recipients an emotional moment. Worthy candidates won trophies for the first time, such as fanac.org (not, as I mistakenly typed on the certificate, FIAWOL).

We honored people outside the traditional range of fanzine publishing, fan writing, and fan art. In-person fanac was recognized for the first time, and we recognized people who made contributions to our hobby in many ways.

This year saw a dramatic expansion of the number of categories, including the differentiation between certificates and trophies. This was a radical change and drew some sharp criticism.

When I first bid for the 2019 Corflu, I made it clear that I planned to try new and different things. While I didn't initially plan to have much involvement in the FAAn Awards, that changed, and last December I published what I intended to do and why in *Random Jottings* 15, the third Corflu 36 Progress Report. My primary goal was to resolve the expressed discomfort of Steve Stiles and Bill Burns for continuing to win each year in their prospective categories.

I could think of two ways to go. First, a special one-time Special Award followed by permanent retirement from the category; second, adjusting the categories so they would no longer be automatic winners. I chose to try both, believing that various additional categories should at least be tested, and that more egoboo was preferable to less egoboo. I knew this was the only time I would serve as awards administrator, so elected to experiment with a large number of categories — more than I would recommend be awarded on a regular basis.

Various opinions were expressed. At best, the reaction was neutral, or in support of the idea of experimentation (if not the specific implementation), and went down from there. I should note that only a few people expressed an opinion at all.

The objections can be summarized as (1) there is no problem in the first place, and thus no solution is necessary or appropriate, and (2) the proposed solution is bad either because it's a radical change and/or it's excessively complex. I disagree with the first, but I have some sympathy for the second, especially the "excessively complex" part. At the same time, I can't think of a different approach that would have achieved my goals.

That being said, there are two clear successes. First, the quality of the winners was high. I've heard no complaints that such-and-such winner was undeserving, or only won because of bloc voting. And second, the trophies (my other FAAn Award goal) were really nice.

THE VOTE AND THE VOTERS

Nineteen people in total voted, a dramatic drop from last year's 77, and by far the lowest number in recent FAAn Award history. Fortunately, those 19 included many of the most knowledgeable members of our community. In awards voting, the quality of the voter has a big effect on the quality of the awards.

There were three main reasons for this year's low participation. First, of course, is the complexity of the ballot. A number of the subcategories were experiments, and in a later section of this report I'll analyze the test results. The ballot this year took time and energy to complete, more than the range of voters wished to do. Second, opposition to my awards approach caused several regular voters to boycott this year's process.

Third, there was insufficient publicity and marketing. As noted at the time, I got the flu, and ended up postponing the voting deadline twice, since I wasn't going to get to the ballots anyway. Each time I made an announcement or sent out an email, I got more votes. That tells me I could have increased the number of voters significantly if I had made a greater effort.

In retrospect, it's clear to me that to get a good number of voters, the FAAn Awards administrator needs to beat the drum loudly and widely. People need frequent reminders (I've received more than one email over the years reminding me I hadn't yet voted), and the publicity has to go far beyond the membership. I sent out notices to the membership, posted on the Corflu 36 and Faaned's Facebook sites, and posted on corflu.org. This was in no way sufficient to achieve high numbers.

But is a high voter turnout necessarily a good thing?

I've noted before that I'm personally not a very knowledgeable voter. I only read a handful of fanzines and my overall involvement in fandom is, compared to many of you, marginal at best. The wider we cast our net, the more people of limited knowledge end up voting. This leads to the occasional "Huh?" winner. At Toronto, for example, there were conversations arguing that a particular award winner had only gotten the award through bloc voting. That hardly raises respect for the FAAn Awards.

As far as I'm concerned, the quality of the voters means more than the quantity. Look at the names of the 19 who did vote. (Go ahead, it won't take long.)

Voters (sorted by first name)

Andy Hooper
Bill Burns
Claire Brialey
Curt Phillips
John D. Berry
John Hertz
John Nielsen Hall
John Purcell
Mark Plummer
Michael Dobson
Nigel Rowe
Pat Charnock
Pete Young
Rob Jackson
Robert Lichtman
Roy Kettle
Sandra Bond
Steve Jeffery
Steve Stiles

This list (except for me) represents some of the most knowledgeable people in fanzine fandom. I'd take their judgment any day over a much longer list of people I don't know.

Besides voting in advance, there's a sort of validation vote that takes place after award are given. "Oh, such-and-such won an award? It was really deserved." That's the reaction to this year's award winners. While people may criticize the number of categories and the complexity of the ballot, that's about me, not about the award winners.

This year we had worthy voters, worthy winners, and really nice trophies. Steve and Bill had the voters validate their well-deserved special awards. I'm very happy with the outcome.

Based on this, I hope that future FAAn Award administrators will consider adding at least some of the new categories permanently to make sure the members of our fandom are recognized properly for all the things they do.

The analysis that follows begins with detailed voting results, followed by analysis of the categories themselves, a discussion of tabulation methodology, my commentary and recommendations, and finally a discussion of the physical awards themselves.

Now, let's do the numbers.

Detailed Results

Votes in the Fanzine Category

There were seven categories under “Fanzines.”

1. Best Fanzine
2. Best Genzine
3. Best Perzine
4. Best Newszine
5. Best Apazine
6. Best Special Interest
7. Best Special Publication

The Best Fanzine Trophy was awarded to the publication with the highest cumulative vote. Votes in all seven categories counted toward the trophy. Fanzines also received votes if they published specific items named in the Art and Writing categories.

Cumulative Votes for the Best Fanzine Trophy

A total of 90 votes were registered across all categories. Trying to sort them by totals created numerous #REF errors, so the cumulative table is published here unsorted. Following is a summary table sorted by total votes.

	FANZINE	WRITING	ART	TOTALS	
Beam	6		5	11	3rd
Banana Wings	15	7	2	24	1st
SF Commentary	7	1		8	
Vibrator	5	1	1	7	
Trap Door	5	6	1	12	2nd
Inca	1			1	
Lofgeornost	6			6	
Mumblings from Munchkinland	2			2	
Flag	4			4	
Spartacus	1			1	

Rat Sass	1			1	
The White Notebooks	1		2	3	
Ansible	11			11	3rd
The Zine Dump	1			1	
File 770	1			1	
Vanamonde	1			1	
Necessity	1			1	
brg	2			2	
Wherever I Lay My Hat	4		1	5	
Baseball and Time Travel	1			1	
The Devil's Apprentice		1		1	
The White Notebooks		1	2	3	
iota	1		1	2	
Random Jottings	1			1	
Fadeaway	1			1	
True Rat	4			4	
Lake's Folly	5		2	7	
The Corflu 35 Bheer Tasting Guide	1		3	4	
Madison Foursquare	1			1	

Sorted by Total Votes in Rank Order

Rank	Fanzine	Total Votes
1	Banana Wings	24
2	Trap Door	12
3	Beam	11
3	Ansible	11
4	SF Commentary	8
5	Vibrator	7
5	Lake's Folly	7
6	Lofgeornost	6
7	Wherever I Lay My Hat	5
8	Flag	4

8	The Corflu 35 Bheer Tasting Guide	4
8	The White Notebooks	4
8	True Rat:The Beast of Roy Kettle	4
9	*brg*	2
9	iota	2
9	Mumblings from Munchkinland	2
9	Random Jottings	2
10	Baseball and Time Travel	1
10	Fadeaway	1
10	File 770	1
10	Inca	1
10	Madison Foursquare	1
10	Necessity	1
10	Random Jottings	1
10	Rat Sass	1
10	Spartacus	1
10	The Devil's Apprentice	1
10	The Zine Dump	1
10	Vanamonde	1

Votes in the Best Fanzine Category

While people could vote for best fanzine of the year in addition to voting for their favorites in each category, no certificate was given in this category. Instead, all votes went toward the Best Fanzine trophy. Eighteen people voted in this category.

Beam	2
Banana Wings	8
SF Commentary	5
Vibrator	1
Trap Door	1
Inca	1

Votes in the Best Genzine Category

Seventeen people voted in this category, and a certificate was awarded to *Banana Wings*.

SF Commentary	2
Trap Door	4
Banana Wings	7
Beam	4

Votes in the Best Perzine Category

Fourteen people voted in this category, and certificates were awarded to *Vibrator* and *Flag*.

Vibrator	4
Lofgeornost	2
Mumblings from Munchkinland	1
Flag	4
Spartacus	1
Rat Sass	1
The White Notebooks	1

Votes in the Best Newszine Category

Thirteen people voted in this category, and a certificate was awarded to *Ansible*. It was observed at Corflu that *Ansible* had never won a fan award. Part of the problem is that there was no good place to vote for it. That being said, if there's a regular Best Newszine category in the future, there's a good chance we'll have another perennial winner.

Ansible	11
The Zine Dump	1
File 770	1

Votes in the Best Apazine Category

Nine people voted in this category, and the certificate was awarded to *Lofgeornost*. It's been argued elsewhere that apazines may not be appropriate recipients of FAAn Awards, but clearly it's quite possible. (Note, however, that *Lofgeornost* also received a vote under Best Perzine.)

Lofgeornost	4
Madison Foursquare	1
Vanamonde	1
Necessity	1
brg	2

Votes in the Best Special Interest Zine Category

While many fanzines explore a wide range of topics, some focus on a specific area. Six people voted in the Special Interest category, but for six different fanzines. Given that no publication got more than a single vote, no certificate was awarded in this category.

Wherever I Lay My Hat	1
Baseball and Time Travel	1
iota	1
Random Jottings	1
Mumblings from Munchkinland	1
Fadeaway	1

Votes in the Best Special Publication Category

Thirteen people voted in this category, and it was a close race. The certificate went to *Lake's Folly*.

True Rat: The Beast of Roy Kettle	4
Lake's Folly	5
Wherever I Lay My Hat	3
The Corflu 35 Bheer Tasting Guide	1

Votes in the Fan Writing Category

There were five categories under “Fan Writing.”

1. Best Fan Writer
2. Best Article (Fannish)
3. Best Article (Sercon)
4. Best Series or Column
5. Harry Warner Jr. Memorial Letterhack

Like Best Fanzine, the Best Fan Writer Trophy was awarded to the person with the highest cumulative vote. The fanzines in which specific articles appeared received bonus points for publishing them.

Cumulative Votes for the Best Fan Writer Trophy

There were 45 cumulative votes. The trophy was awarded to **Mark Plummer**, with Andy Hooper in second place and Paul Skelton in third.

1	Mark Plummer	10
2	Andy Hooper	5
3	Paul Skelton	4
4	Claire Brialey	3
4	John-Henri Holmberg	3
4	Pete Young	3
5	D. S. Ketelby	2
5	Jerry Kaufman	2
5	Robert Lichtman	2
5	Taral Wayne	2
6	Christina Lake	1
6	Fred Smith	1
6	Greg Pickersgill	1
6	John Hertz	1
6	John Lichen	1
6	Joseph Nicholas	1
6	Leigh Edmonds	1

6	Nic Farey	1
6	Steve Jeffery	1
6	Terry Kemp	1

Votes in the Best Fan Writer Category

While people could vote for best fan writer of the year in addition to voting for their favorites in each category, no certificate was given in this category. Instead, all votes went toward the Best Fan Writer trophy. Fifteen people voted in this category.

Andy Hooper	2
Christina Lake	1
Claire Brialey	2
John Hertz	1
Mark Plummer	5
Pete Young	2
Tara Wayne	2

Votes in the Best Article (Fannish) Category

Eight people voted in this category. The certificate went to John-Henri Holmberg for “Worldcon Kaleidoscope,” from *Trap Door* #34.

A Thing Which Seemed Very Thingish (Claire Brialey, Banana Wings 72)	1
Dining on Mock Duck (D. S. Ketelby, Banana Wings 71)	1
The Devil's Apprentice (Terry Kemp)	1
The Wasp That Stung Twice (Fred Smith, Banana Wings 72)	1
Triptych (Greg Pickersgill, Banana Wings 70)	1
Worldcon Kaleidoscope (John-Henri Holmberg, Trap Door 34)	3

Votes in the Best Article (Sercon) Category

Five people voted in this category. The certificate went to Andy Hooper for “Weisinger’s Worldcon,” from *Trap Door* #34.

Dystopia Mon Amour (Pete Young, The White Notebooks 11)	1
Weisinger's Worldcon (Andy Hooper, Trap Door 34)	3
Fascinating Mars (John Litchen, SF Commentary 95)	1

Votes in the Best Series or Column Category

Six people voted in this category. The certificate went to Mark Plummer for “Roadrunner,” from *Banana Wings*.

Roadrunner (Mark Plummer, Banana Wings)	5
Tales of a Las Vegas Taxi Driver (Nic Farey, Vibrator)	1

Votes in the Harry Warner Jr. Memorial Letterhack Category

Fourteen people voted in this category. The certificate went to **Paul Skelton**.

D. S. Ketelby	1
Jerry Kaufman	2
Joseph Nicholas	1
Leigh Edmonds	1
Mark Plummer	1
Paul Skelton	4
Robert Lichtman	2
Steve Jeffrey	1
William Breiding	1

Votes in the Fan Art Category

There were eight categories under “Fan Art.”

1. Best Fan Artist
2. Best Cover (Illustration)

3. Best Cover (Digital or Photography)
4. Best Illustrator (Fannish)
5. Best Illustrator (Stfnal)
6. Best Portfolio
7. Best Photographer
8. Best Graphic Design

Like Best Fanzine and Fan Writer, the Fan Artist Trophy was awarded to the person with the highest cumulative vote. The fanzines in which specific pieces of art appeared, or who were cited for graphic design, received bonus points..

In addition, voters decided whether to give Steve Stiles a Special Award for Artistic Achievement and retire him permanently from the Best Fan Artist trophy category.

Special Award for Artistic Achievement for Steve Stiles

Fourteen people voted; eight “Yes” and three “No.” Steve received the award, and is from this point forward ineligible for the Best Fan Artist trophy.

Cumulative Votes for the Best Fan Artist Trophy

There were also 45 cumulative votes in this category. The trophy was awarded to **Alan White**, with Ditmar in second place and a tie between Brad Foster and Brian Parker for third. Votes for Steve Stiles were disqualified because he received the Special Award, but were counted toward his #1 Fan Face total.

Rank	Name	Total Votes
1	Alan White	6
2	Ditmar	5
3	Brad Foster	4
3	Brian Parker	4
4	Dale Speirs	3
4	Geri Sullivan	3
5	Pete Young	2
6	Alison Scott	1
6	Craig Smith	1
6	D. West	1
6	Dan Steffan	1

6	Michael Dobson	1
6	Nic Farey	1
6	Ulrika O'Brien	1
6	Unknown (Journey Planet 41)	1
NA	Steve Stiles	10

Votes in the Best Art Achievement Category

While people could vote for best fan artist of the year in addition to voting for their favorites in each category, no certificate was given in this category. Instead, all votes went toward the Best Fan Artist trophy. Five people voted in this category.

Steve Stiles	2
Alan White	2
Brad Foster	1

Votes in the Best Cover (Illustration) Category

Eight people voted in this category. The certificate was awarded to **Brian Parker** for the cover of *Beam 13*.

Steve Stiles, Banana Wings 71	2
Steve Stiles, Lake's Folly	2
Brian Parker, Beam 13	3
Alan White, Skyliner 4	2
Craig Smith, Trap Door 34	1
Alan White, Wherever I Lay My Hat	1

Votes in the Best Cover (Digital or Photography) Category

Eight people voted in this category. The certificate was awarded to **Geri Sullivan** for the cover of *The Corflu 35 Bheer Tasting Guide*.

Opuntia 418	1
Vibrator 48	1
Beam 13	1
The Corflu 35 Bheer Tasting Guide	2
Skyliner 4	1
Journey Planet 41	1

Votes in the Best Illustrator (Fannish) Category

Eight people voted in this category. The certificate was awarded to **Steve Stiles**.

Steve Stiles	4
Brad Foster	3
Dan Steffan	1

Votes in the Best Illustrator (Stfnal) Category

One person voted in this category (for Ditmar). No certificate was awarded, but the single vote was credited toward the Best Fan Artist trophy.

Votes in the Best Portfolio Category

One person voted in this category (for D. West). No certificate was awarded, but the single vote was credited toward the Best Fan Artist trophy.

Votes in the Best Photographer Category

Seven people voted in this category. The certificate was awarded to **Ditmar**.

Ditmar	4
Dale Speirs	2
Alison Scott	1

Votes in the Best Graphic Design Category

Six people voted in this category. The certificate was awarded to **Pete Young** for *The White Notebooks*.

Beam	1
Skyliner 4	1
The Corflu 35 Bheer Tasting Guide	1
The White Notebooks	2
Random Jottings	1

Votes in the Online Category

There were six categories under “Online Achivement.”

1. Best Online Achievement
2. Best Archive or Resource
3. Best News and Information Source
4. Best Group or List
5. Best Blogger
6. Best Online Presence

Like Best Fanzine and Fan Writer, the Online Achievement Trophy was awarded to the person or site with the highest cumulative vote.

In addition, voters decided whether to give efanzines.com (Bill Burns) a Special Award for Online Achievement and retire him permanently from the Best Online trophy category.

Special Award for Online Achievement for Bill Burns/efanzines.com

Ten people voted; nine “Yes” and one “No.” Bill received the award, and is now retired from Best Online Achievement Trophy consideration.

Cumulative Votes for the Best Online Achievement Trophy

There were 50 cumulative votes in this category. The trophy was awarded to **fanac.org**, with *In The Bar* in second place and a tie between the online versions of *File 770* and *Ansible* for third. Votes for efanzines.com were disqualified because of the Special Award, but were counted toward Bill Burns' #1 Fan Face total.

Rank	Name	Total Votes
1	fanac.org	9
2	inthebar.groups.io	8
3	file770.com	7
3	news.ansible.uk	7
4	fiawol.org	5
5	efanzines.com	2
6	Galactic Central	1
6	Fancyclopedia 3	1
6	University of Iowa Library School Special Collection	1
6	TAFF Free Ebooks	1
6	Time Goggles	1
6	Fmzfen	1
6	Don West Memorial (FB)	1
6	Galactic Journey	1
6	Nic Falkner	1
6	Pablo Vasquez	1
6	Chris Garcia	1
6	Graham Charnock	1

Votes in the Online Achievement Category

While people could vote for best online fanac of the year in addition to voting for their favorites in each category, no certificate was given in this category. Instead, all votes went toward the Online Achievement trophy. Nine people voted in this category.

Fiawol.org	1
fanac.org	6
File770.com	2

Votes in the Best Online Archive or Resource Category

Eleven people voted in this category. The certificate was awarded to **fanac.org**.

Fanac.org	3
Galactic Central	1
efanzines.com	2
Fancylopedia 3	1
ansible.demon.co.uk	1
Fan Stuff (R. Hansen)	1
University of Iowa	1
TAFF Free Ebooks	1

Votes in the Best News and Information Source Category

Eleven people voted in this category. The certificate was awarded to **news.ansible.uk**.

news.ansible.uk	6
File770.com	5
Fan Stuff (Hansen)	1

Votes in the Best Online Group or List Category

Eleven people voted in this category. The certificate was awarded to **IntheBar**.

inthebar	8
Time Goggles	1
Fmzfen	1
Don West Memorial (FB)	1

Votes in the Best Blogger Category

Two people voted in this category (one for fiawol.org.uk and one for Galactic Journey). No certificate was awarded, but the votes were credited toward the Online Achievement trophy.

Votes in the Best Online Presence Category

Five people voted in this category for five different people. No certificate was awarded, but the votes were credited toward the Online Achievement trophy.

Nic Falkner	1
Rob Hansen	1
Pablo Vasquez	1
Chris Garcia	1
Graham Charnock	1

Votes in the In-Person Fanac Category

There were four categories under “In-Person Fanac.”

1. #1 Fan Face
2. SMOF of the Year
3. Services to the Hobby
4. Smoooooth Operator

Votes in the #1 Fan Face Category

Four people voted in this category. Note that people could vote directly for #1 Fan Face, but those votes were combined with others in the final tally for that trophy, so no certificate was awarded directly.

John Purcell	1
Bruce Gillespie	1

Sandra Bond	1
Ted White	1

Votes in the SMOF of the Year Category

This category was intended to recognize conrunning, though in practice there seems to have been some confusion and overlap with the Services to the Hobby category. Seven people voted in this category for seven different people. No certificate was awarded, but the votes were credited toward the #1 Fan Face trophy.

Claire Brialey	1
Moshe Feder	1
Geri Sullivan	1
Steve Lawson	1
Robert Lichtman	1
James Bacon	1
Curt Phillips	1

Votes in the Services to the Hobby Category

When it comes to fan charities and other fan services, a small group of people tend to shoulder the burden for the rest of us. Twelve people voted in this category, and the certificate went to **Andy Hooper**.

Joe Siclari	1
Andy Hooper	3
Michael Dobson	1
Bill Burns	2
Rob Hansen	1
Dave Langford	2
Curt Phillips	1
Claire Brialey	1

Votes in the Smooooth Operator Category

In homage to Bob Tucker, the Smoooth Operator category was designed to honor people who brighten up the room wherever they appear, whose presence makes every fannish situation better. Seven people voted in this category, and the certificate went to **Spike**.

Geri Sullivan	1
Spike	2
Michael Dobson	1
Ted White	1
Graham Charnock	1
Andy Hooper	1

Votes in the Unrecognized Fanac and #1 Fan Face Category

Two FAAn Awards remain:

1. Award for Unrecognized Achievement
2. #1 Fan Face

Votes in the Unrecognized Achievement Category

Sometimes, great work escapes the recognition of the FAAn Awards. This award was given to work done *before* 2018 that was not recognized by an award. Five people voted in this category, and the certificate went to **Taral Wayne**.

Corflu 50	2
Taral Wayne	3

Cumulative Votes for the #1 Fan Face Trophy

There were 315 cumulative votes in this category. The trophy was awarded to **Mark Plummer**, with Dave Langford in second and Claire Brialey third. Note

that the “Special Award” votes for Steve Stiles and Bill Burns were added to their #1 Fan Face totals.

Following this table is the list sorted by total points, so you can see where you fall on the egoboo totem pole.

	TOTALS	Best Fmz	Writing	Art	Online	Fan Face	Special Award	Rank
Alan White	6			6				
Alison Scott	1			1				
Andy Hooper	13	4	5			4		
Bill Burns	13				2	2	9	
Bill Plott	1	1						
Brad Foster	4			4				
Brian Parker	4			4				
Bruce Gillespie	10	9				1		
Chris Garcia	1				1			
Chris Nelson	2	2						
Christina Lake	6	5	1					
Claire Brialey	20	15	3			2		3rd
Craig Smith	1			1				
Curt Phillips	2					2		
Dave Langford	21	11			8	2		2nd
D. S. Ketelby	2		2					
D. West	2			1	1			
Dale Speirs	3			3				
Dan Steffan	1			1				
Ditmar	5			5				
Edie Stern	9				9			
Fred Lerner	6	6						
Fred Smith	1		1					
Geri Sullivan	6	1		3		2		
Gideon Marcus	1				1			
Graham Charnock	7	5			1	1		

Greg Pickersgill	2		1		1			
Guy Lillian III	2	2						
Harry Bell	8				8			
Jack Herman	1	1						
James Bacon	1					1		
Jeanne Gomoll	1	1						
Jerry Kaufman	2		2					
Jim Mowatt	4	4						
Joe Siclari	10				9	1		
John Hertz	2	1	1					
John-Henri Holmberg	3		3					
John Litchen	1		1					
John Purcell	1					1		
Joseph Nicholas	1		1					
Leigh Edmonds	2	1	1					
Linda Krawecke	1				1			
Mark Olson	1				1			
Mark Plummer	25	15	10					1st
Michael Dobson	4	1		1		2		
Mike Glycer	8	1			7			
Moshe Feder	1					1		
Nic Falkner	1				1			
Nic Farey	8	6	1	1				
Pablo Vasquez	1				1			
Paul Skelton	4		4					
Pete Young	6	1	3	2				
Phil Stephenson-Payne	1				1			
Rich Coad	2					2		
Rob Hansen	10	4			5	1		
Rob Jackson	1	1						
Robert Jennings	1	1						

Robert Lichtman	8	5	2			1		
Roy Kettle	4	4						
Sandra Bond	1					1		
Scott Custis	1	1						
Spike	2					2		
Steve Jeffery	1		1					
Steve Lawson	1					1		
Steve Stiles	18			10			8	
Tara Wayne	6	1	2			3		
Ted White	2					2		
Terry Kemp	1		1					
Ulrika O'Brien	7	6		1				

#1 FAN FACE BY TOTAL VOTES			
	NAME	VOTES	
1	Mark Plummer	25	
2	Dave Langford	21	
3	Claire Briailey	20	
4	Steve Stiles	18	
5	Andy Hooper	13	
5	Bill Burns	13	
6	Bruce Gillespie	10	
6	Joe Siclari	10	
6	Rob Hansen	10	
7	Edie Stern	9	
8	Harry Bell	8	
8	Mike Glyer	8	
8	Nic Farey	8	
8	Robert Lichtman	8	
9	Graham Charnock	7	
9	Ulrika O'Brien	7	

10	Alan White	6
10	Christina Lake	6
10	Fred Lerner	6
10	Geri Sullivan	6
10	Pete Young	6
10	Taral Wayne	6
11	Ditmar	5
12	Brad Foster	4
12	Brian Parker	4
12	Jim Mowatt	4
12	Michael Dobson	4
12	Paul Skelton	4
12	Roy Kettle	4
13	Dale Speirs	3
13	John-Henri Holmberg	3
14	Chris Nelson	2
14	Curt Phillips	2
14	D. S. Ketelby	2
14	D. West	2
14	Greg Pickersgill	2
14	Guy Lillian III	2
14	Jerry Kaufman	2
14	John Hertz	2
14	Leigh Edmonds	2
14	Rich Coad	2
14	Spike	2
14	Ted White	2
15	Alison Scott	1
15	Bill Plott	1
15	Chris Garcia	1
15	Craig Smith	1

15	Dan Steffan	1
15	Fred Smith	1
15	Gideon Marcus	1
15	Jack Herman	1
15	James Bacon	1
15	Jeanne Gomoll	1
15	John Lichen	1
15	John Purcell	1
15	Joseph Nicholas	1
15	Linda Krawecke	1
15	Mark Olson	1
15	Moshe Feder	1
15	Nic Falkner	1
15	Pablo Vasquez	1
15	Phil Stephenson-Payne	1
15	Rob Jackson	1
15	Robert Jennings	1
15	Sandra Bond	1
15	Scott Custis	1
15	Steve Jeffrey	1
15	Steve Lawson	1
15	Terry Kemp	1

Analysis of Ballot and Categories

The 2019 FAAn Awards ballot was available in two formats: a multi-page PDF and a single page Excel spreadsheet. The multi-page PDF drew the most negative response. While no more complex than the single-page version, the sheer bulk seemed to be intimidating to many. Several voters elected to bypass the official ballot altogether and sent their choices in an email.

2019 FAAn Awards Ballot (Excel Version)

Do not fill out shaded areas.

VOTER INFORMATION

Your name	
Your email	
Address	
City/State/Postal	
Country	
Date	

	Name	Editor
1. BEST FANZINE		
1a. Best Genzine		
1b. Best Personal Zine		
1c. Best Newszine		
1d. Best Apazine		
1e. Best Special Interest Fanzine		
1f. Best Special Publication		

	Author	Title	Where Published
2. BEST FAN WRITER			
2a. Best Article (Fannish)			
2b. Best Article (Sercon)			
2c. Best Series or Column			
2d. Best Letterhack			

SPECIAL AWARD FOR STEVE STILES FOR ACHIEVEMENT IN FAN ART		(Vote YES or NO)
3. BEST ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENT	Creator Name	Fanzine/Website Issue
3a. Best Cover (Illustration)		
3b. Best Cover (Design/Photography)		
3c. Best Illustrator (Fannish)		
3d. Best Illustrator (Stfnal or Sercon)		
3e. Best Portfolio		
3f. Best Photographer/Digital Artist		
3g. Best Graphic Design		

SPECIAL AWARD FOR EFANZINES/BILL BURNS FOR ACHIEVEMENT IN ONLINE FANDOM		(Vote YES or NO)
4. BEST ONLINE ACHIEVEMENT	Website	Creator Name(s)
4a. Best Online Archive or Resource		
4b. Best News/Information Resource		
4c. Best Online Group or List		
4d. Best Blogger		
4e. Best Online Presence		

	Name
5. NUMBER ONE FAN FACE	
5a. SMOF of the Year	
5b. Services to the Hobby	
5c. Smoooooth Operator	

	Who?	For What?
AWARD FOR UNRECOGNIZED FAN ACHIEVEMENT		

There seems to be a strong consensus that there were too many categories and subcategories. Voting results confirm that while some categories drew significant interest, others were ignored by the majority of voters. Here is the percentage of voters for each ballot item, along with some additional commentary.

FANZINE CATEGORY

1.	Best Fanzine	95%
1a.	Best Genzine	89%
1b.	Best Perzine	74%
1c.	Best Newszine	68%
1d.	Best Apazine	47%
1e.	Best Special Interest Fanzine	32%
1f.	Best Special Publication	68%

While this year there was only a single trophy for Best Fanzine, in other years there have been multiple trophies awarded in the category. Last year there were awards for Best Genzine, Best Personal Zine, and Best Special Publication. I believe that there should be a single overall trophy in that category, but wanted to recognize the many different types of fanzines. Someone observed that this was the first time Dave Langford had won a FAAn Award, but in the absence of a Best Newszine option, where would you vote for it?

“Best Apazine” was an experiment. I had been told that apazines could not be eligible for FAAn Awards because of their limited distribution, but as far as I know, the proposition had never been tested. While only half of the voters made a Best Apazine selection, there was a clear winner. It should be noted, though, that Best Apazine winner *Lofgeornost* also received a vote in the perzine category. If perzines include apazines (a reasonable accommodation), then there’s no need for a separate category.

By contrast, there was very little interest in “Best Special Interest Fanzine,” and there was absolutely no consensus: six fanzines each received one vote.

Having each major category spawn numerous subcategories, as was the case this year, is clearly excessive. However, the Fanzine category calls out for them. All kinds of different fanzines exist, and there’s no reason Best Fanzine should be restricted to genzines. To reduce category clutter, Perzine and Apazine could be easily combined. Special Interest Fanzine can be dropped, as most can be classified either as genzines or perzines. There’s an argument to be made for Best Newszine, but there’s a risk we’ll be right back in the perennial winners situation. I’d combine that with Best News & Information Source, with both print and online versions eligible.

Because the Best Fanzine FAAn Award is roughly equivalent to the Best Motion Picture Oscar, I would recommend calculating it in the same manner as #1 Fan Face. People would not vote directly for Best Fanzine, but rather for the subcategories. All votes would be totaled for the big award, along with other mentions (the Best Cover award under Art would gain points for the fanzines that published it) as appropriate.

FAN WRITING CATEGORY

2.	Best Fan Writer	79%
2a.	Best Article (Fannish)	42%
2b.	Best Article (Sercon)	26%
2c.	Best Series or Column	26%
2d.	Best Letterhack (Harry Warner Award)	74%

Traditionally, the Letterhack award has been a full trophy along with Best Fan Writer, but I chose this year to make it a subcategory along with other types of fanwriting. Voters focused on the two traditional categories, and most ignored the new options.

From the various opinions expressed, the problem with the three middle awards was they required far too much work and effort to make a meaningful choice. It's easy to remember that you like Jophan's fan writing, and less easy to remember any particular article Jophan published last year.

Eliminating the three subcategories makes most sense, though they could be made to work with a recommendations process. I understand that for various reasons a nominating round or a jury approach has been rejected, but recommendations are different. They don't restrict voter choice and they can be ignored. If a number of knowledgeable fans each wrote some recommendations that could be distributed alongside the FAAn Awards ballot, it would be much easier for lower-information voters. Personally, I would really value that kind of information. I won't go diving into last year's fanzines to pick the very best stuff, but if a few people whose opinions I respect suggest a particular article or issue, I might well go read them, and the quality of my vote would be much higher.

I did try to do this, but again, no takers for this year, possibly due to unhappiness with my overall approach.

FAN ART CATEGORY

3.	Best Fan Artist	26%
3a.	Best Cover (Illustration)	58%
3b.	Best Cover (Design/Photography)	42%
3c.	Best Illustrator (Fannish)	42%
3d.	Best Illustrator (Stfnal)	5%
3e.	Best Portfolio	5%
3f.	Best Photographer	37%
3g.	Graphic Design	32%

While Best Fan Artist drew unusually low response, it's easily explained by the 74% who voted for the Steve Stiles special award. The two Best Cover awards got much higher response, due primarily to Bill Burns' cover gallery. Best Illustrator (Fannish) was for a person, not a specific piece of art, so drew much more attention; Best Illustrator (Stfnal) and Best Portfolio drew only a single vote apiece, and no certificate was awarded. Best Photographer was another experiment; while it drew 37% of the voters, the winner evidently hasn't published photographs in fanzines for some time. Based on this, I'd keep a single Best Cover and an overall Best Illustrator category.

While Best Graphic Design only drew 32%, I thought it was an important category, and I'd recommend keeping it. A number of fanzines have made real efforts in this area, and it should be encouraged.

ONLINE FANAC CATEGORY

4.	Award for Online Achievement	47%
4a.	Best Archive or Resource	58%
4b.	Best News/Information Resource	63%
4c.	Best Group or List	58%
4d.	Best Blogger	11%
4e.	Best Online Presence	26%

As with the Best Fan Artist category, a lower than usual vote for the Online Achievement Award is explained by the Special Award for efanzines.com, in which 53% cast a vote.

I believe that part of the reason for efanzines' domination of the category was that Best Fan Website encompassed way too broad of a field, and people tended to default to the easy choice. The diversity of voting among the categories and the overall strong turnout in most of the Online categories supports this. I suggest

that future FAAn Awards should break the category into at least three (Archive or Resource, News and Information, Group or List). Best Blogger and Best Online Presence didn't get a lot of attention; if they continue, they should probably be lumped into an overall Best Online Presence category, or stretch the Group or List category to cover everything that isn't an archive or news site. The "Best News and Information Source" would be for both print and online, as most such publications offer both anyway.

IN-PERSON FANAC CATEGORY

5.	#1 Fan Face	26%
5a.	SMOF of the Year	42%
5b.	Award for Services to the Hobby	63%
5c.	Smoooth Operator	37%

I am no fan of #1 Fan Face, but kept it on the ballot for traditional reasons, and tabulated it in the traditional manner. I did give people an additional option to vote for #1 Fan Face in the In-Person category, though few did.

I strongly recommend keeping Services to the Hobby as a main FAAn Award category, and the voter turnout seems to agree. Conrunning could easily be combined into the category. If Services to the Hobby is kept, I'd recommend naming it in someone's honor, though I'm not sure who.

Although only 37% voted for the Smoooth Operator award, I think an award for being good company is a nice thing. Should it continue, I'd also recommend naming it the Bob Tucker Smoooth Operator Award, or just the Bob Tucker Smoooth Award.

Given the range of excellent candidates in this area, it's worth considering making the winners ineligible for 3-5 years to make sure recognition is given to all who have earned it. After that period, winners would return to eligibility.

UNRECOGNIZED ACHIEVEMENT

It doesn't happen every year, but occasionally some great work is overlooked by the FAAn Awards. I would have the category as an option on future FAAn Award ballots, though only award it when there's a clear consensus in favor of a particular winner. This year, 32% voted, so I awarded a certificate. Had there been a 60-70% turnout, I would have upgraded it to a trophy. I would keep this on the ballot for future years, but only award it if a winner achieved some

significant threshold, like 35% of the voter population. It wouldn't, therefore, be awarded most years, but when it was, it would only go to very popular choices.

Tabulation

I adapted the #1 Fan Face process for all trophy voting. All votes in all subcategories (whether a certificate resulted or not) were counted toward the award winner for that category. If you voted for something for the “Best Once-a-Year Fanzine Using CreateSpace” certificate, that vote also counted toward the Best Fanzine trophy.

In addition, relevant votes in other categories were also added to the award tally. A vote for “Best Cover” earned a Best Fanzine point for the fanzine that published it, as well as a vote for its creator as Best Fan Artist. And all of them counted as points toward #1 Fan Face.

The exceptions involved our two Special Award winners. Steve Stiles, for example, won the “Best Illustrator (Fannish)” certificate, and all those votes would normally add to his Best Fan Artist total. Because the Special Award made him ineligible, those votes weren't counted. However, those votes (and votes for the Special Award), were counted toward #1 Fan Face.

It sounds more complicated than it is. Since we didn't ask voters to tabulate their own ballots, in practice this had no impact on voters, although I could have been more clear that *all* votes would be counted, even though there might not be a certificate in every subcategory.

For those interested in the mechanics of vote-counting, I set up a multi-page Excel book, one page per category. (Available on request.) As ballots came in, I typed each vote in the appropriate column, regardless of whether it had been listed before. In the next column, I created a COUNTIF function for the first appearance of each nominee. The expression =COUNTIF(E7:E16, “Beam 13”), for example, looked at each entry in the range, and counted all the ones that contained the text string “Beam 13.” I could have sorted the column to group all the nominees by name and counted them by hand, but the likelihood of errors would have increased along with the number of voters. COUNTIF was safer. If there were only a handful of entries and only one or two candidates, I felt safe doing it manually.

Commentary and Recommendations

Why have FAAn Awards? What are they supposed to accomplish? Are the FAAn Awards there to provide a signpost for future historians to discover the very best of our field? Are they intended to be a definitive critical judgment of excellence? Or are they simply an opportunity to provide some cheerful egoboo to our fannish friends and colleagues?

There are fans who have very strong and passionate opinions on the subject, but not all those opinions agree. Even when they do, I'm not sure they represent the opinions of fanzine fandom as a whole, assuming fanzine fandom as a whole has much of an opinion.

Right now, of course, the decision for each year depends on who ends up as FAAn Awards Administrator. My position is clear: cheerful egoboo, and the more the merrier. When the supposed integrity of the awards trumps the feelings of recipients, and the major emotion expressed each year about the awards is unhappiness with some aspect or another, I have a hard time thinking of this as being in line with the spirit of fannishness, at least the way I understand it.

A substantial part of my experimental approach this year didn't work (too many categories, too complex a ballot), and I apologize for the upset that caused. We did have a high quality of winners (and voters) and spread around a lot of egoboo. I count that as a success. Plus, there's a great deal of new information here.

As always, the actions of future FAAn Awards Administrators are up to them, and nothing I say or do is binding on anyone else. I do hope future award committees will consider adding some of these categories; whether they are divided into trophies and certificates or all placed on the same level. In particular, the online options need expansion, and we should make sure that the full range of fanac is honored.

With that in mind, here's my list of suggested categories for next year's ballot.

1. **BEST FANZINE** (not voted on directly, but tabulated like #1 Fan Face from all categories that mention specific fanzines. The actual votes would be for:)
 2. **Best Genzine**
 3. **Best Perzine (includes apazines)**
 4. **Best Special Publication**
5. **BEST FAN WRITER**
6. **HARRY WARNER JR. AWARD FOR BEST LETTERHACK**

7. **BEST FAN ARTIST** (voted directly, not totaled from subcategories. I'd also add two more art awards:)
8. **Best Cover, Illustration, or Portfolio**
9. **Best Graphic Design** (awarded to a publication)
10. **BEST NEWS AND INFORMATION SOURCE** (print and/or online)
11. **BEST ONLINE ARCHIVE OR RESOURCE** (efanzines.com would not be eligible for this award.)
12. **BEST ONLINE FANAC** (groups or lists, bloggers, online presence, etc. Everything that isn't a news site or an archive/resource.)
13. **AWARD FOR SERVICES TO THE HOBBY** (fan charities, con running, etc. Includes the "SMOF" category from this year. This award should be named for someone, but I'm not sure who.)
15. **BOB TUCKER SMOOTH AWARD** (for someone whose presence brightens every con or every interaction, or who has great gossip. Considering the number of people who could be given this award, I'd make the winner ineligible for a period of five years, just so we could spread the egoboo around. No "Buggins' Turn" situation here; in terms of legitimate candidates, there's an embarrassment of riches.)
16. **#1 FAN FACE** (awarded using the traditional system, though as noted I'm not a fan of the category.)
17. **LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD** (chosen by a Sekrit Cabal of previous winners and Corflu chairs, as is traditional)
18. **SPECIAL AWARD FOR UNRECOGNIZED ACHIEVEMENT** (I still think this is an important option, but it shouldn't be awarded on a regular basis. I'd set a standard, such as "At least 35% of the total voter pool has to agree on a choice or else no award," which would ensure the trophy only went to really deserving candidates who had wide support.)

Of the 18 awards, voters would actually cast votes for only 15: Best Fanzine, #1 Fan Face, and the Lifetime Achievement Awards would not receive direct votes. Most years, only 17 awards would be.

While this is a lot fewer than this year, it's a significant increase over past years and (*pace* rich brown), that's not too many. It shouldn't be too difficult and too

time consuming to complete a ballot even with a larger number of categories, as all the categories that required significant research are gone.

If the goal of the Fan Activity Achievement Awards is to recognize the full range of fan activity (as opposed to focusing exclusively on *fanzine* activity), at least some of these categories are needed. I hope future FAAn Awards administrators will consider them.

Trophies and Certificates

The last item to discuss related to the FAAn Awards is trophies. No matter your philosophy about the FAAn Awards, trophies are good things. They add value. They look good on your bookshelf. Unfortunately, they tend to be pricey.

Early in the process, I set out to create what I hoped would be a permanent trophy for the awards. Working with John (Doc) Morgan of Toronto, we attempted to develop a trophy based on the Enchanted Duplicator, a two-part award consisting of a gold cube with a mimeograph on top.

Bill Burns directed me toward a site called Shapeways, which allows you to upload a 3-D model and have it printed in various materials. Looking at offerings on their website, I estimated that we could have a final printable trophy in the \$20-\$30 range. Most Corflus could afford this, or we could make trophies a fundraising target. (I budgeted the “Premium Member” income to pay for awards.)

Sadly, Doc Morgan had real-life issues interfere, and by the time he was able to finish, the only option that would meet our deadline was resin casting, at an approximate cost of \$90/trophy, way outside our price range.

I still believe it's possible to get this done and made available at a lower price, but it's only worth pursuing if future awards committees want it. I understand from John Purcell that his wife will be designing next year's awards, and I look forward to seeing them, so I'll shut down the 3-D printing project and settle up with Doc.

Meanwhile, I still needed awards, and time was running out. The T-shirt vendor I used, Fully Promoted of Bethesda, also made awards. I published a mockup in *Random Jottings* 16, and there are also photos in the Corflu 36 group on Facebook. The all-in cost for eight trophies (including set-up and shipping) was \$488.59, or \$61.07 each. Certificates (including gold foil trimmed paper and certificate holders) cost \$50.47, or \$2.52 each.

Just about everything to do with the awards turned into trouble. The trophy style was known as the “Pierce Award,” presumably because you could pierce someone with it. It came in three sizes. The prices weren’t too far apart, so I ordered the large size, 8.75” tall. A week and a half before the convention, while I was teaching a seminar, I got an email. The trophies I ordered were out of stock. The alternative they suggested looked terrible. And we were out of time.

Our salesperson made some calls, and found some Pierce Awards...size small, 6.875” tall. (The mediums, also unavailable, were 7.75” tall.) It was go small or go home, so I took the small. I still think they look good, though.



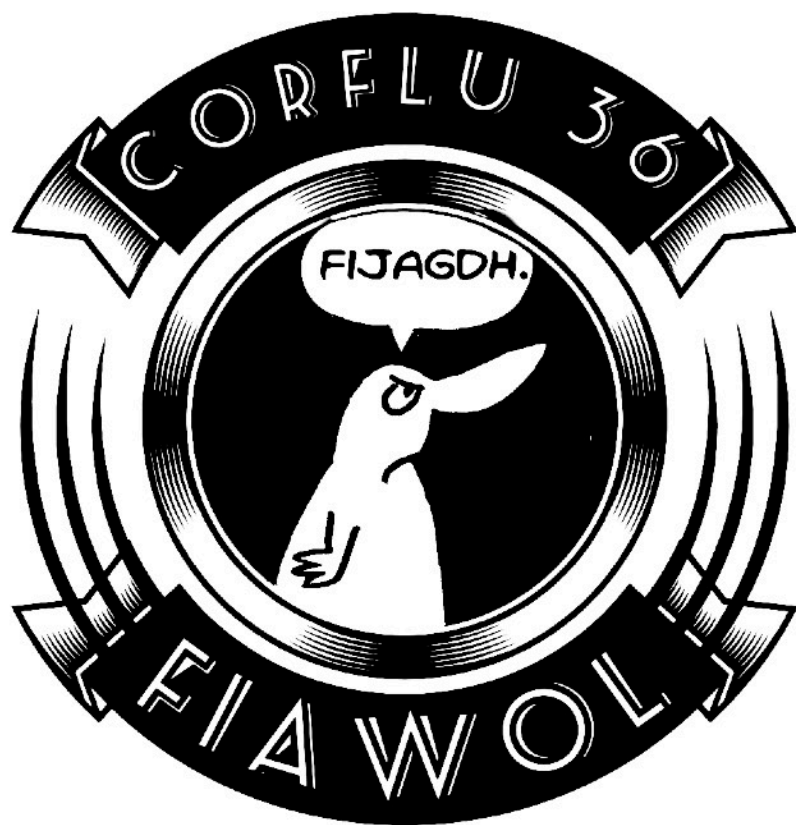
Not the Actual Winner

And then they nearly didn’t arrive, but that story is told elsewhere. The good news is that we ended up with a duplicate set at no extra cost.

In investigating award options, I did find an inexpensive option that future Corflus can use. I got inscribed trophies for Just a Minac and fwa Past President for \$34.68 in total from Crown Trophies (<https://www.crownawards.com/StoreFront/TRP.Trophies.cat>). While I couldn’t find anything either stfnal or fannish, they make a range of trophies that allow you to create a semi-customized trophy by either printing a logo or making an insert that can be added to a number of designs. There are trophies available for under \$20, and the set-up for the insert is \$35. (A trophy like this would make a great Guest of Honor gift.)

And this ends the 2019 Fan Activity Achievement Awards. While I’m happy to discuss this with interested parties, the decision authority is now in the hands of John Purcell or whomever he designates for Corflu 37 Heatwave. See you all there!

Michael Dobson





"How did we do it—before we had the Mimeograph?" queries her boss. "It has cut down our operating staff and our office expense. But better still, it has saved great chunks of *precious time*—and that's what counts now." The Mimeograph prints *better letters, forms, blanks, etc.*—with diagrams and illustrations if you wish—*quicker* than ever before. Let us show you. *A word of caution:* The Edison-Dick Mimeograph and the supplies which we manufacture for it are made *to work together*. Upset this relationship, the work suffers, and our responsibility for its quality and output ceases. Substitute inferior supplies and the result is the sure waste of both valuable time and materials. You do not know what splendid work the Mimeograph can do unless you have seen the new Mimeograph operating under proper conditions. Write for booklet "V"—today. A. B. Dick Company, Chicago—and New York.

