

THE NOVA AWARD

(August 1977)

The Nova Award is intended as a friendly pat on the back to the fanzine editor whose efforts gave the greatest pleasure to the voters over the previous year. It has no vast cosmic significance... Should any difficulties of interpretation of these rules arise, those concerned are urged to follow the course most in keeping with this spirit.

The Nova is an award for fanzines produced by science fiction fandom---see rule (6)---in the British Isles. It is the accolade of this specific peer-group, and committee rulings upon eligibility should be made with this in mind.

Since the "improved" Nova is awarded by popular vote, there is no way for editors to withdraw their fanzines from consideration. Withdrawals could make the award quite meaningless; an editor who's really determined not to be honoured can always refuse to accept the award.

These rules have been formulated with the help of several past Nova Award judges, who must be thanked for their patience and diligence.

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- (1) The award shall be called the Nova Award, and may be symbolised by some appropriate memento at the option of the Novacon committee.
- (2) The award shall be presented to the editor or editors of the fanzine winning the poll as detailed below.
- (3) The presentation shall be made at the annual Novacon held by the Birmingham Science Fiction Group.
- (4) The Novacon Guest of Honour (or the chairman of the Novacon committee, should the GoH be unavailable) shall make the presentation on behalf of the voters and the Novacon committee.
- (5) Any fanzine published in the British Isles shall be eligible for the award, provided that two issues have been published between 1st October of the preceding year and 30th September of the current year.
- (6) For the purposes of this award a fanzine shall be defined as an amateur publication which is concerned with science fiction, fantasy, science fiction and fantasy fans and/or associated subjects, and copies of which may be generally obtained in exchange for other amateur publications or in response to letters of comment. Any paid professional advertisement in the current year shall disqualify the publication in which it is printed. The Nova Committee (see below) shall have the final decision upon whether a given publication is a fanzine.
- (7) Any full or supporting member (of the Novacon at which the award is to be made) shall be qualified to vote, provided he or she has been active in fanzines (as detailed below) in the British Isles during the two years terminating on 30th September of the current year.
- (8) For the purposes of this award, to be "active in fanzines" means:
  - (a) to produce one or more issues of a fanzine (but see (9) below); or
  - (b) to have contributions, excluding reprints or letters of comment, published in two British fanzines; or
  - (c) to have letters of comment published in three or more British fanzines, a "we also heard from" mention or letter extract of less than 60 words not being sufficient."Fanzines" in this rule means different publications, and not different issues of the same fanzine.
- (9) In the event of a fanzine being produced jointly, the editors shall qualify for one vote only between them on account of that fanzine. A group of any size thus qualified to vote shall hereinafter be treated as a single voter.
- (10) Under no circumstances shall any person be entitled to more than one vote.



(11) Each year, the Novacon committee shall name one person to be Administrator of the award. The Administrator should have a good basic knowledge of British fanzines; but to prevent dispute, it is preferable that he or she should not edit a fanzine likely to qualify.

(12) The distribution of ballots and organization of vote-counting shall be the responsibility of the Administrator. Ballots are to be sent out with one of the Novacon progress reports, and shall also be available at Novacon itself. Should it not be possible to distribute ballots with a Novacon progress report, the Administrator may make other arrangements as in emergency rule (X.4) below.

(13) The Administrator, in consultation with the Novacon committee, shall also be responsible for the appointment of the Nova committee, which shall consist of three persons qualified to vote under sections (7-8) above, Members of the Nova committee should have a considerable knowledge of British fanzines. They should also be prepared to attend the Novacon at which the presentation is to be made.

(14) The Nova committee shall convene at the final counting of ballots, and shall make decisions where necessary upon the eligibility of each ballot and each fanzine voted for, and in the event of a tie in voting as noted in (29) below. The decision of the Nova committee upon these matters shall be final.

(15) The Nova Award ballot shall take this general form, which should be self-explanatory:---

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NOVA AWARD BALLOT

Please list the three fanzines you most enjoy, in order of preference. For a fanzine to qualify, two or more issues must have appeared between 1st Oct 19xx and 30th Sept 19xx. Votes for a fanzine edited by yourself will be ignored. Please don't vote if you're only familiar with a very few (less than six) fanzines.

First choice ..... edited by .....  
Second choice ..... edited by .....  
Third choice ..... edited by .....

Qualifications for voting are the publications of one fanzine OR two contributions to different fanzines OR three letters of comment (more than 60 words printed) in three different fanzines in the period 1st Oct 19xx to 30th Sept 19xx. Please enter qualifications below.

QUALIFICATIONS .....  
.....  
NAME (BLOCK CAPITALS) ..... SIGNATURE .....  
ADDRESSSS.....

((RULE (6) SHOULD BE REPRINTED HERE))

Please return this form to the Administrator (name, address) or hand in at the registration desk at Novacon X before it closes on Saturday evening.

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Other information may be added on the ballot form at the option of the Administrator. A vote for the Nova award consists of filling in (and handing in) this ballot form.

(16) The deadline for the return of completed ballots shall be at the time of latest closing of the Novacon Registration Desk upon the Saturday of Novacon in the current year.

(17) A fanzine voted for in any position upon a ballot submitted by its editor or co-editor shall be struck out on that ballot.

(18) A ballot shall be considered valid if---  
(a) at least one eligible fanzine has been listed in the appropriate



space; and

(b) an eligible voter has listed valid qualifications as detailed in (7-10) above; and

(c) the voter's name, address and signature are present.

(19) The decision of the Nova committee, concerning the validity of a ballot, is final.

(20) The counting of votes shall be performed by the Administrator, and/or the Nova committee, and/or members of the Novacon committee. The Administrator and the Nova committee should in any case be present.

(21) The fanzine voted for first place upon a valid ballot is defined as the first eligible fanzine to be listed in the appropriate space on that ballot (deletions excepted); and similarly for the second and third places.

(22) Should a fanzine be voted for in more than one position on a single ballot, any appearance after the first shall be struck out. Likewise, should a voter submit two or more ballots, all but the first recorded shall be marked "INVALID" in ink, set aside, and excluded from all counts of ballots. Other invalid ballots shall be marked and treated likewise.

(23) If fewer than three eligible fanzines are listed upon a valid ballot, then that ballot shall not be counted in any count of third-place votes; if only one eligible fanzine is listed, the ballot shall not be counted in any count of second-place votes.

(24) The name of each fanzine receiving a vote in any position shall be noted and recorded, together with the number of first-place votes received by that fanzine, and likewise the numbers of second-place and third-place votes.

(25) The "Total" for each eligible fanzine is derived as follows:---

(a) The number of first-place votes received by that fanzine is multiplied by 5 (five);

(b) The number of second-place votes received by that fanzine is multiplied by 3 (three);

(c) The results of (25a) and (25b) are added together, and the number of third-place votes added to this subtotal;

(d) The number thus obtained shall be called the Total corresponding to that fanzine, and shall be recorded against the name of that fanzine.

(26) The fanzine having the highest Total shall win the award.

(27) Should there be a tie for highest Total, the tied fanzine having the greatest number of first-place votes shall win the award.

(28) Should there be a tie for first place, both in Totals and first-place votes as in (27) above, then the tied fanzine having the greatest number of second-place votes shall win the award.

(29) Should two or more fanzines remain tied after second-place votes have been taken into account as in (28) above, the Nova committee shall have a casting vote.

(30) When the winning fanzine has been decided, the Administrator, Nova committee and Novacon chairman all being aware of this decision, the ballots and notes made in the counting shall be sealed in an envelope to be retained by the Administrator. The envelope and contents shall be destroyed one calendar month after the presentation of the award, but may in circumstances of serious contention be scrutinised before this time by qualified voters at the discretion of the Nova committee.

(31) In the announcement of the award's winner, there shall be no reference to any other fanzine voted for, nor shall those involved in counting the votes discuss the proceedings.

(32) The members of the Nova committee may individually elect to remain in office; but no person may remain a member of the committee for more than three consecutive years.



- (33) The Administrator, in consultation with the Nova committee, may appoint a temporary replacement for any member of the Nova committee should that member be unavailable for the counting.
- (34) Any Nova committeemember, if required to make a decision under (6) or (29) above upon a fanzine edited by him/herself (i.e. if in such a case the other two members hold opposite opinions), shall be temporarily replaced as in (33) above.
- (35) Changes to these rules may be proposed and put into force at a joint meeting of the Nova committee and the Novacon committee, the Administrator being also present. Suggestions for improvement may be submitted to the Administrator at any time by any person.

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APPENDIX: EMERGENCY RULES

These additional rules are effective only in years when a Novacon convention is not held. They override the relevant sections of the main rules.

- (X.1) The presentation shall be made at the following year's Easter convention by some appropriate person, according to circumstances.
- (X.2) The voting deadline shall fall upon the first Saturday on November in the given year.
- (X.3) The requirement that a voter be a member of the current Novacon shall be waived.
- (X.4) Distribution of ballots shall be conducted by post (through progress reports of conventions, by arrangement with the BSFA and/or fanzine editors, etc) and/or by hand at conventions or meetings of local groups.
- (X.5) The Administrator shall be responsible for announcing the winner of the award, through as many as possible of the channels suggested in (X.4) above.
- (X.6) In the absence of a Novacon committee, the Birmingham Science Fiction Group committee shall act in this capacity (or shall appoint a subcommittee to act for it) wherever required by the rules.
- (X.7) Should two or more consecutive years pass without a Novacon being held, the Administrator, Nova committee and Birmingham Group committee shall review the position with a view to either:---
- (a) discontinuing the award; or
  - (b) altering the rules (particularly regarding dates and deadlines) so the award may be geared to the annual Easter convention.

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