

ALTERED BRANDS THREE -The DUFF newsletter from Janice Murray

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The Down Under Fan Fund race of 1999 is now under way. You have until the end of March to get your ballot in to either Terry Frost or me. The winner of this race will be attending the 1999 Worldcon - Aussiecon 3 in Melbourne - on the weekend of September 2-6, 1999.

I am pleased to announce that the three excellent candidates in this race represent three distinct facets of sf fandom (with a lot of overlap) and should create a lot of interest in the race. I am looking forward to receiving a large response from a wide variety of fans.

New Yorker Lise Eisenberg comes from an element of fandom that is as much social as written. (A segment in which I include myself.) Janice Gelb is very active in convention running and apahacking in California. Andy Hooper - of Seattle via Madison, Wisconsin - is this year's representative of fanzine fandom.

I encourage anyone not from North America or Australasia to participate in DUFF. Any one who has been active in fandom is eligible to vote, regardless of their nationality or place of residence. Furthermore, I encourage all North American fans to get involved in GUFF (the Going Under Fan Fund) which will send a fannish representative from Great Britain to Aussiecon 3. As in the DUFF race, GUFF has three superb candidates running this year. Please contact me if you want to see a voting form or get more information.

I would like to take this opportunity to point out a few items on the ballot. If you are not familiar with the ballot, or if it has been a few years since you read it, please look at it before you vote. I have already seen many ballots which show that this hasn't been done.

"The voter is not required to fill in more than their name, address and first choice."

Please don't feel you have to put a number in each of the blanks next to a candidate or other option. Do not choose the "No Preference" box unless you do not wish to vote for a candidate and do not wish the funds held over. This option is helpful for fans who want to get involved but do not feel they are knowledgeable enough to vote for a particular candidate. Checking off "No Preference" first and then choosing candidates defeats the purpose of this option. Similarly, if you are going to put a number next to "Write-In", please write in the name of the fan you are voting for.

"You must return the entire ballot (both sides)." I will suggest to the next administrator that future ballots stress this either by emphasizing the word entire, or by adding "(do not detach)" in the middle of *"Send this entire ballot with a US\$4 or A\$6 (or more)"*

donation to an administrator." It is a fact that I must do a quick eye-check to be sure the ballot wasn't altered in some way that might affect the reader's decision, thus voiding the vote. Yes, there is a precedent. Also, having all the ballots a consistent size makes it easier to handle and file them.

"If you think you may be unknown to the administrators, please give the name, address and other contact information of a fan or fan group (other than a candidate or nominator) who can vouch that you meet this criteria." This means that if I've spoken to you in such a context that I obviously know who you are, you needn't fill out this section of the ballot. I prefer asking a person for a reference over asking a club or convention; if you do list a club or convention as a reference, please don't assume that I know the correct address. Phone numbers and E-mail addresses are very handy when it gets down to the deadline.

"Deadline: Ballots must reach an administrator by March 31, 1999." I spoke to one fan who said he would have voted had I sent him a ballot with the deadline on it. I've yet to see a fan fund race that didn't clearly state this information, but just in case:

I must have your vote by March 31st - a March 31st postmark doesn't count.

"Ballots must be signed and accompanied by a donation of at least \$4 in United States currency or \$6 in Australian currency." In US money the absolute least you can give is four dollars. Not one dollar. Not two pounds. This is not negotiable. The sending of other forms of currency, however, is quite negotiable and I will also accept a donation of at least \$4 in postage stamps. It is not difficult for me to take foreign currency to my bank in Downtown Seattle and deposit it, but foreign checks (or cheques, for that matter) usually require a sizable service charge to process. Still, it can be done, and I want to make it as easy as possible for people to participate in DUFF.

To encourage the participation of Canfans I will gladly accept Canadian currency and Canadian cheques. Due to the exchange rate C\$6 is the minimum voting fee.

(This is the kind of detail that is subject to the whim of the administrator and is not to be considered a precedent-setting thing. The next administrator may find it more difficult to deal with C\$ and stamps. Other such variables are the acceptance of a couple as one nominator and the absolute limit of the length of the platform.)

At this point I would like to thank those individuals and organizations who have helped me distribute DUFF ballots. I am grateful to Victor Gonzalez, Vicki Rosenzweig, E.B. Frohvet, Dave Langford, Dick and Leah Smith, Marc Ortlieb and NESFA.

REMEMBER - I MUST HAVE YOUR BALLOT BY MARCH 31!
PLEASE DON'T PUT IT OFF UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE!