

Los Angeles, California
September 29, 1944

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF
THE FANTASY AMATEUR PRESS ASSOCIATION:

The undersigned members of FAPA wish to protest the special election called entirely without notice to the membership, and in which we are expected to pass on several very important matters of policy. We feel that constitutional amendments are of too permanent and too important a nature to be adopted or rejected on undiscussed, spur-of-the-moment elections called at the whim of the officers.

In addition to our objections to the manner in which the election was called, we feel that several features of the proposed amendments are not acceptable in their present form.

Under Article 13, we find the beginning of a policy of strict censorship. It seems unnecessary and foolish to eliminate discussions of the race question. If any members of FAPA are so reactionary as to take the fascist side of the problem, why not allow them to demonstrate their lack of liberalism? Equally good arguments could be made to ban discussions of labor problems, religion, eugenics, or nearly any other controversial subject.

The matter of obscenity is something else. Particularly in view of Mr. Searles' one-man dictatorship, something should be done; however, it seems highly undesirable to give any one officer the power to hold up any member's contribution to the mailing. We feel that the Official Editor should be required to run through all submissions, and submit anything dubious to each of the other officers. In the event that this makes it necessary to hold the item in question over until the following mailing, he should have authority to do so; but he should not have authority to ban anything entirely on his own responsibility. A venal editor would be too likely to abuse this privilege.

The point of changing the dates of the mailings is not without its merits. However, it has been known all along that we would have difficulty with the Xmas rush, and it seems odd that something on this subject could not have been put in the regular election. (Laney, for instance, would much prefer mailing dates of Feb, May, Aug, and Nov; as fitting much better into his Acolyte schedule. If the new proposal is adopted as written in the present ballot, it will necessitate his changing his Acolyte publication date.) Perhaps other members of FAPA would have liked to have had an opportunity to discuss this change.

The truly dangerous proposal to the well being of this society is in Article 13. When one considers the small percentage of votes cast in FAPA elections, it is patent that requiring "a majority of the active membership" is tantamount to making an automatic rejection of any proposal that may ever be submitted to this association. Out of 65 members, 37 votes were submitted in the last general election. Under the new form of Article 13, it would have required 33 affirmative votes to pass any legislation; had the recent election been held under these terms, only five members could have defeated any of the legislation considered.

As an alternate proposal, we suggest that the activity requirements be amended to require each member to vote in each general election--except under extenuating circumstances, such as overseas duty--unless a written excuse is filed with the president. A member who is not sufficiently interested in the affairs of FAPA to exercise his ballot is not sufficiently interested to remain a member. If this, or some similar, proposal were adopted, it would automatically take care of the situation at which the present proposal is aimed, and at the same time would not automatically stymie the organization.

We urge that the membership reject the various proposals offered in the special ballot of September 1944, so that alternate proposals can be filed in ample time to allow membership-wide discussion on them.

Respectfully submitted,

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