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It's a good question why I bother to keep my FAPA membership alive. My current excuse is that I have \$2 on deposit with Bill, and I might as well use it up as try to go through the hassle of getting it returned to me. About all it's going to cost is running another 68 copies of my SFPazine (or part of it); the original part of that will be worth 7 pages, so all I need to do especially for FAPA is this one additional page. 476 extra turns of the crank and typing and xeroxing 68 copies of this page represents a fair return to FAPA for the pleasure it's given me. Some times I can't believe it. I've been in FAPA seven years now, and the total enjoyment I've gotten in those seven years probably is less than I get out of any single SFPA mailing. If it weren't for the prestige, I'd probably have dropped out a long time ago; as it is, I doubt I'll continue past this year, easy as it would be to do so.

A good example is the last Egoboo Poll, which is still being written about to an extent. The complaints I've heard sound for all the world like those of people who don't like sophisticated cameras; they prefer box cameras/Instamatics, depending on when they were talking, because all you have to do is point them and shoot, and you get reasonably good pictures. It's perfectly obvious that you can obtain exactly the same results with a Nikon F that you get with an Instamatic, and with equally little trouble - all you have to do is set your aperture, shutter, and focus for the values used in the Instamatic, never change them, and your Nikon F will take the same picture the Instamatic would. The thing you get with the sophisticated camera that the Instamatic doesn't offer is flexibility to do things that the Instamatic won't do - so you can get good pictures in about another 19 of the 20% of photographic situations that an Instamatic won't handle. Granted, you're paying a large price for this flexibility, and if you aren't an avid photographer it's probably not worth it - but it's one thing to say that a Nikon is more expensive than you can justify to yourself, and it's another to say that it's too complicated for you to take pictures with. Which is a much more common complaint.

The Egoboo Poll I ran last year was a Nikon compared with the Instamatic Harry offered the year before and Redd is offering this year. Consider. I gave you five categories, the names of all the members, and 300 points to award at will. If what you wanted was a simple thing where you gave first, second, and third places in each category, fine - you had 300 points, five categories, that's 60 points per category - give 30 for first, 20 for second, 10 for third, and there you are. You write down two digits in a box instead of a name on a line - this is a lot more trouble? If you prefer the more common type of egoboo poll where there's a fixed amount of points allotted per category and you divide them up among the recipients in any proportion you like, again fine - take your 300 points, balance them to suit yourself among categories, and then divide up the points within the category. The beauty of the grid poll is that it can be made just as simple or as complicated as you like. (One voter simply assigned 5 points per member - not a method I'd choose myself, but a possibly alternative, with the points going to whichever category the member did most in.) Don Markstein has coined (as far as I know - he's where I heard it first) the term "innumerate" to describe the equivalent of "illiterate" in matters which involve numbers. Innumeracy is less prevalent in fandom than in the intellectual world at large, probably because of the scientific content of the literature that brought us together - but it seems to be exceedingly prevalent in FAPA. Pity.

PERKIN-ELMER