

Wing Words

The Occasional Newsletter of the Pegasus Awards

Volume 1, Number 4

It's Voting Season!

The Pegasus Final Ballot for this year should be available soon – by U.S. Labor Day – on the Pegasus website. By that time, your nominations have been compiled, the nominees have been contacted and given the chance to accept or decline, and now you need to decide who you're voting for.

It's quite likely that you haven't heard all of the songs or individuals nominated for Pegasus Awards this year. That's ok. There are a number of ways that you can get familiar with the nominees. With very few exceptions (generally due to copyright issues), you'll find musical excerpts from representative works for nominated composers and performers, along with excerpts and full lyrics for all of the Pegasus-nominated songs on the Pegasus website.

If you're lucky enough to be able to attend OVFF and want to wait to vote until you arrive at the con, then you'll want to catch the Pegasus Nominees concert on Friday night. There, a variety of folks will sing each of the nominated songs for your edification and enjoyment.

You may ask, "How are the concert performers picked?" And the short answer is: they volunteer. The longer answer is in Erica's article in the first issue of Wing Words, still available on the Pegasus website. If you think you can do a good job on one of the nominated songs – especially when the composer won't be at OVFF since they usually like to sing themselves – drop an e-mail to drneely@earthlink.net and volunteer. This doesn't guarantee that you'll be one of the performers, but it certainly improves your chances!

If you're at the con, you can vote up until midnight on Friday. If you're voting on-line or by mail, your ballot needs to be in by the preceding Wednesday. But either way, it's **your** vote.

Assembling the Final Ballot

If you've carefully read the Pegasus Bylaws, you probably realize that putting the Final Ballot together is a complex process. If you **haven't**, read on and we'll fill you in on a few of the important points.

First, you should know that no one can appear on the Final Ballot more than twice. This rule is there to increase the diversity of the nominees. A ballot where the same five people were nominated in all six categories would be relatively dull.

Then there is the "2 on, 1 off" rule. In its simplest form – there are a couple of wrinkles – the rule says that a song or a person can't be nominated in the same category three years in a row. This rule was introduced because the same songs would appear on the ballot again and again which – once again! – tends to make the ballot less interesting. One reason this happened, of course, was that these were good songs. Another reason was that a song that is on the ballot in the preceding year tends to collect more nominations simply because it was on the preceding ballot. So now a song – or a composer or performer – takes every third year off. We trust that the best of these will shortly be nominated again.

We also have to get permission from the nominee – or all of the nominees, in the case of a collaboration. And we need permission to post a brief clip from the song on the Pegasus website so that folks can hear it – assuming that it's legal to do so.

Finally, the nominee needs to be a member of the filk community. While that definition is relatively flexible, some folks who write filk-like songs – like, say, Weird Al – equally clearly aren't members of the filk community. The Pegasus is an award for filkers.

Simple, isn't it?

What Makes a Good Floating Category?

The floating categories for the Pegasus Award change every year. While the OVFF Committee makes the final selection of the floating categories, they're always interested in your ideas, so let's talk a bit about the floating categories and what makes a particular floating category a good or bad idea.

The floating categories frequently come in matched pairs, such as this year's "Best Comedy" and "Best Tragedy". A catchy and distinct pair of categories always starts out with an advantage. Distinct, of course, is important. It was a little frightening to see how many songs were suggested in **both** the comedy and tragedy categories this year. Normally, you'd think a song would have to be one or the other.

Thus, we see it's important that the category be able to be clearly defined to the folks who are nominating and voting. Not only can comedy be confused with tragedy – comedy is when **you** slip on a banana peel and die; tragedy is when **I** have a hangnail – but many folks are going to be tempted to confuse "comedy" with "a funny song". The Venn diagrams overlap, but aren't coincident.

It's also nice to define a category that actually contains enough Pegasus-worthy songs to be interesting. Before the OVFF committee renamed "Best Fight Song" to "Best Battle Song", many of us spent some time scratching our heads and wondering what filksongs fit the category – other than Tom Smith's fight song for TransPoly U and Frank Hayes' version of Ozymandius!

As an example of a really bad category, take "Best Pizza Song", where a "pizza song" is defined as a song that lasts so long that you can go out, order a pizza, have dinner, return to the circle, and find that the song is still going. The definition isn't totally disqualifying, finding enough **good** songs to fill the category makes it worse, and the fact that the Pegasus Concert would still be going at noon on Saturday is the last straw.

On the other hand, the number of songs suggested for both "Best Comedy" and "Best Tragedy" means that we **might** get a useful category out of "Best Cheeriose", honoring songs that present inherently tragic situations as humor. If we could find another cereal-related category to pair it with, we'd be set.

"Best Froot Loops" anyone?

Artwork!

Debbie Ridpath Ohi was kind enough to provide us with some artwork to dress up this issue of Wing Words, along with some snazzy logo art that we'll be using starting next year. We don't use a **lot** of art in a two-page publication, but if you've got some filk or music-related sketches or cartoons, we'd love to see them!



That Website Address

All of the info on the Pegasus Award can be found at:

<http://ovff.org/pegasus/>

This includes the on-line version of the Final Ballot, song lyrics, and MP3 samples. Come on by and see what's new!

Ask Peggy!

As we finish our first year, we thought it might be fun to answer your questions about the Pegasus Award next year. So if you've got a question, send it to us at:

WingWords@ovff.org

If we can figure out how to answer it, we'll give it a shot. And we'd **much** rather answer real questions than make up questions from "A. Filker in Wapakoneta".

Given what we might make up, you'd probably prefer that too.

Wouldn't you?