

Happy New Year!

We've arrived in the new calendar year, but the Pegasus year is already running, so we're on our second issue. If you look back at our first issue, you'll find our discussion of this year's floating categories: "A Little Bit Country" and "A Little Bit Rock and Roll". And of course, the traditional categories will be back again. We'll probably have more to say about them before the year is over, but today, we're here to talk about:

The Brainstorming Process

This is where it all starts. When you go to the Pegasus website, you can fill out and submit as many brainstorming polls as you have the time and energy to type. It's not often that you can say "Vote Early! Vote Often!" without plunging into the murky waters of election fraud, but this is one of those times.

So what do you want to do when brainstorming? For that matter, what do **we** want you to do when brainstorming?

We know that there are more filkers and filksongs out there than **any** of us have the chance to hear. Not everyone gets to all of the filkcons. Some fine filkers may not get to a filkcon at all for one reason or another, but might show up at a regional or local general-interest convention. We may not have heard of them – but **you** may know just how good they really are. And that's where brainstorming helps us out.

What **we'd** like to hear about are the songs, composers, and performers that you think are worthy of winning a Pegasus Award in the categories for that year. We always start fresh each year, so even if you've brainstormed a particular song before, if you still think highly of it, you'll probably want to brainstorm it again. And we'd **especially** like to hear about the people and the songs that we **don't** all know, because this is our chance to learn about them.



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There's a temptation to submit brainstorming polls that list a **lot** of a particular filker's songs. If you like one of Jill Filker's songs, you might like a bunch of them well enough to feel like they deserve a Pegasus Award – and perhaps they do! But is that the best idea?

When the time comes to move from brainstorming to nominating, many people look at the brainstormed songs to help them pick out songs to nominate. And if there are a lot of people who like Jill Filker, but are trying to decide which song of hers to nominate, having a lot of songs on the brainstorming list is going to tend to spread out the nominations to the point where no individual song collects enough votes to make the ballot. That's not to Jill's advantage, nor to the advantage of the folks who like her work.

It's always possible that fifteen different people might brainstorm fifteen different songs by Jill. But that tells us something that a single person brainstorming the same fifteen songs doesn't: that there are a lot of people who like Jill's songs, even if they don't all agree on which one is best.

So, please brainstorm away. But try to concentrate on your very favorite songs, because it'll probably give you the result you want.

Ask Peggy!

It's time again for our recurring feature where our resident expert, Peggy A. Ward, answers your questions about the Pegasus. As we plunge into our overflowing mailbag, we emerge with a letter from A. Filker from Berkeley, California who asks:

"Why do the Pegasus Awards have a rule that says that a song – or a person for that matter – isn't eligible to be nominated in a category if it's been nominated the preceding two years? Did it get to be a lousy song somehow in the third year?"

Yes, "A", songs have a natural cycle that causes them to become just awful every three years –

Oh, wait! You wanted a **serious** answer.

There were several factors involved in the decision to add this rule. First, we're trying to compensate for an inherent problem in the design of the Pegasus balloting – every filk song that was ever written (and that **hasn't** won a Pegasus Award) is eligible to be nominated. There are a tremendous number of wonderful songs out there.

And there are five ballot slots in each category every year. That's not many. And it doesn't necessarily take a lot of nominations for a song to make the ballot, because there are so many different songs that might be nominated.

Of course, we'd all like to nominate songs and have them end up on the ballot. That's one reason that you might look at the results of the brainstorming poll when you're filling out your nominating ballot – not just because it gives you ideas, but because you **know** that this is a smaller pool of songs than "everything ever written". If you pick a song that appeared in the brainstorming poll, you know that it's a song that other people are looking at too, so it has a better chance of getting on the ballot than a song that **isn't** on the brainstorming poll.

Now what's an even **smaller** pool of songs to pick from if you're looking for a song that's likely to appear on the ballot if you nominate it? Well, that would be the songs that were nominated in the preceding year. And the available information suggests that people **were** looking at the previous year's ballot when picking out songs to nominate in the current year.

If you go back and look at the Pegasus website, what you'll see is that there were songs that appeared on the ballot year after year. Some of them eventually won a Pegasus Award. Others didn't. We're sure that all of them were mighty fine songs, but we're **not** sure that they necessarily would have gotten nominated a second (or third, etc.) time if they hadn't managed to get nominated that first time.

So that was the big reason that we put in the rule – it forces people to look beyond the previous year's ballot when deciding what to nominate for the current year. But there was also another reason.

Every year at OVFF, we have the Pegasus Nominees concert on Friday night. We hear twenty songs by a variety of performers.

And you know, after we hear a song twice in a row, we'd like to hear something different in the third year.

And now we do.

Send Us Mail

If you'd like to get your own question about the Pegasus Awards answered, just drop us an e-mail at:

wingwords@ovff.org

We'll look forward to hearing from you!

And, if not, we'll be hearing from A. Filker again...