2026 Hugo Award Administrators' Report

The below report gives an account of the decisions made by the 2026 Hugo Award Subcommittee about the administration of the 2026 Hugo, Lodestar and Astounding Awards, in keeping with the practice of recent year's administrators. It is a public document.

Please direct any questions arising from this report to hugo-admin@lacon.org.

Hugo Award Subcommittee

The LAcon V Committee completely and irrevocably delegated its authority to administer the 2026 Hugo Awards, Lodestar, and Astounding Awards to a Hugo Awards Subcommittee consisting of Administrator Tammy Coxen, Deputy Administrators Rosemary Parks, Warren Buff and Emily January, and WSFS Division Head Linda Deneroff.

Software

Nomination and voting ballot collection and tabulation was performed using the NomNom system developed by Chris Rose. At our request and to our great appreciation, Chris made several updates to NomNom to make the administration of the awards easier, including an improved method for canonicalization and a tabular nominations report. He also worked with Jed Hartman, our Hugo Packet coordinator, to implement some major changes related to that, including Hugo Packet download statistics and game code support in the Hugo Packet. We also thank Andrew January for providing suggestions and assistances related to NomNom, and to work underway to improve report generation in the future.

Eligibility Research

Our team of eligibility researchers was composed of Ian Moore, Liz Batty, Terry Neill, with Andrew January as a late addition. The research team began work in late February, once we had sufficient nominations in categories to determine a likely longlist of 15-20 candidates for them to research.

When Liz Batty was recruited for this role, the Hugo-winning podcast she co-hosts (Octothorpe) had intended to recuse itself for 2026. When they changed their mind about recusal we opted to keep Liz on as a member of the research team, but strictly firewalled her from seeing anything about the Fancast category (and other categories until Octothorpe had recorded their discussions about them).

Eligibility issues that were flagged by the researchers were referred to the Subcommittee, and discussed and decided by the Subcommittee alone.

Nominations Votes

1,488 total nominating ballots were cast.

1,482 of those ballots were entered by voters themselves into NomNom.

6 ballots were entered by administrators from paper ballots received by mail.

All nominating votes were deemed to have been cast by eligible, natural persons; no nominating votes were disqualified.

Specific Notes by Category

On Moving Nominations

As administrators, our overriding philosophy was to ensure that as many nominators as possible had their nominations counted, within the bounds of the WSFS Constitution. So, when we found that a member had nominated a work in the incorrect category, we would attempt to move it as allowed by Section 3.8.2:

> **3.8.2:** The Worldcon Committee shall determine the eligibility of nominees and assignment to the proper category of works nominated in more than one category.

However, we were not able to move all incorrectly cast nominations due to Section 3.8.7:

> **3.8.7:** The Committee shall move a nomination from another category to the work's default category only if the member has made fewer than five (5) nominations in the default category.

In this tables below we list all moves that could and could not be made:

- for any nominee who made it to the long list
- where unmoved nominations might have brought that nominee onto the longlist
- or where there a significant number of moves were required

Finalists are in bold. We did find one case, in Best Novelette, where the inability to move a nomination may have kept a work from being on the ballot.

Best Novel

Category Moves

Work	Moved From	# moved	# NOT moved	Valid noms
The Incandescent	**Novella**	**1**		**210**
A Drop of Corruption	**Novelette**	**1**		**187**
Katabasis	Novelette	1		124
The Buffalo Hunter Hunter	Novelette	1		80
Where the Axe is Buried	Novella	1		61
There is No Antimemetics Division	Related Work	1		58
The Potency of Ungovernable Impulses	Novella	17	33	28

Category Notes

The Potency of Ungovernable Impulses is a novel by Malka Older, with (as best as we could determine) an estimated word count of between 68,000 and 71,000 words. However, of the 61 people who nominated the work for the Hugo Awards this year, 50 of them placed it into Best Novella, rather than Best Novel. We suspect that this is because this work was listed on the Novella page of the Hugo Spreadsheet of Doom (although at the time we checked, it was with an "unconfirmed" status). This is a particularly ironic potential source for this error, since the Hugo Spreadsheet of Doom is itself a Hugo Finalist this year in Best Related Work. Nominators may also have been led astray because of Google, as a quick search of the book's title on Google finds it described as a Novella in multiple places.

Had all nominations for **The Potency of Ungovernable Impulses** been counted in the Best Novel category it would have had a total of 61 nominations and been solidly in the long list, since works with as few as 53 nominations appear on the list. However, it would not have made the ballot, where the lowest number of nominations for a finalist was 126.

If instead, those 61 nominations had all counted in Best Novella, the book would have been very high on the long list, but would still not have made the ballot. And even though the preponderance of nominators had placed the book in the wrong category, we would not have been able to move it there even if we wanted to, because the word limit exceeded the 20% limit described in Section 3.2.10.

> **3.2.10:** The Worldcon Committee may relocate a story into a more appropriate category if it feels that it is necessary, provided that the length of the story is within twenty percent (20%) of the new category limits.

Best Novella

Category Moves

Work	Moved From	# moved	# NOT moved	Valid noms
The River Has Roots	**Novel**	**4**	**1**	**241**
Automatic Noodle	**Novel**	**6**		**230**
The Summer War	**Novel**	**1**		**116**
What Stalks the Deep	**Novel**	**1**		**108**
Murder by Memory	**Novelette**	**1**		**90**
	Novel	**1**		
A Mouthful of Dust	Novelette	1		80
The Orb of Cairado	Novel	1		57
Audition for the Fox	Novel	2	1	41

Category Notes

See Best Novel above for a discussion of **The Potency of Ungovernable Impulses**, which is a novel by Malka Older, not a novella as most nominators thought.

Best Novelette

Category Moves

Work	Moved From	# moved	# NOT moved	Valid noms
Rapport: Friendship, Solidarity, etc	**Novella**	**2**	**1**	**64**
	Short Story	**7**		
When He Calls Your Name	**Novella**	**1**		**61**
	Short Story	**3**		
The Millay Illusion	**Novella**	**1**		**47**
	Short Story	**1**		
The Girl That My Mother Is Leaving Me For	**Short Story**	**3**		**36**
3 Days, 9 Months, 27 Years	Short Story	3	1	36
We Begin Where Infinity Ends	Short Story	1		33
The Temporary Murder of Thomas Monroe	Short Story	1		32
Cronus	Novella	1		28
	Short Story	2		
Uncertain Sons	Short Story	1		24
The Life and Times of Alavira the Great etc	Short Story	1		29

Category Notes

It is possible that if the one unmoved nomination for John's Scalzi's "3 Days, 9 Months, 27 Years" had been able to move into the appropriate category, then Scalzi's novelette might have made the final ballot. "3 Days" needed 0.51 more points and 1 nomination to qualify. Due to the way points work in EPH it's hard to tell without rerunning the election, but if that nomination and its points had counted for "3 Days", the combination might have secured it a spot on the ballot and eliminated "The Girl That My Mother is Leaving me For."

Best Short Story

Category Moves

Work	Moved From	# moved	# NOT moved	Valid noms
Barbershops of the Floating City	Novelette	1		26
With Her Serpent Locks	Novelette	1		15

Category Notes

None.

Best Series

Category Notes

We did not move any nominations into Best Series. We did move one confused voter's nominations out of Series and into Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form.

Lady Astronaut by Mary Robinette Kowal received enough votes to be a finalist. However, we deemed it to be ineligible due to there being fewer than 240,000 new words since its last appearance on the ballot. This brought The Craft Wars by Max Gladstone onto the ballot.

The Singing Hills Cycle by Nghi Vo, received enough votes to be a finalist. However, by the end of 2025 the published stories of the series comprised fewer than 240,000 words, and so we determined that it was ineligible. This brought White Space by Elizabeth Bear onto the ballot.

The Craft Wars by Max Gladstone is a second series within the Craft universe, with the first series being the Craft Sequence. Some nominators called the series the Craft Sequence instead of the Craft Wars, but we counted all nominations as The Craft Wars since that is the series of the qualifying book published in 2025. The Craft Sequence was last a finalist in 2017 and did not win, so even were the series name the same, it would have been eligible this year by virtue of having enough new words.

Best Graphic Story or Comic

Category Notes

As the Long List for this category indicates, nominators nominated **The Power Fantasy** three different ways:

- The Power Fantasy Volume 1 (23 nominations)
- The Power Fantasy Volume 2 (14 nominations)
- The Power Fantasy (15 nominations)

As Volume 1 and Volume 2 are different works, and we had no way of knowing which volume people nominating only "the Power Fantasy" meant, we treated each of these nominations as a separate work. All three appear on the long list, with Volume 1 appearing as a Finalist.

We were called upon to make a decision regarding what material **A Girl and Her Fed** could include in the Hugo Packet. When we determined eligibility for the work to be a Finalist, we did so based on the language of the Best Graphic Story category and initially ruled that only material from 2025 should be included. However, since A Girl and Her Fed completed a long-term story arc in 2025 and was entering hiatus, and prior webcomics had ben eligible in the year the series as a whole was completed, we determined that A Girl and Her Fed could submit materials from its entire run.

Best Related Work

Category Moves

Work	Moved From	# moved	# NOT moved	Valid noms
We Will Rise Again: Speculative Stories About Political Protest, Resistance, and Hope	Novel	1		24

Category Notes

As an anthology, **We Will Rise Again: Speculative Stories About Political Protest, Resistance, and Hope** was certainly not eligible as a novel. We did discuss whether it should be eligible in Best Related Work. Our decision was that while the anthology did include fiction, it also included essays and other writing, so was noteworthy primarily for aspects other than the fictional text, and as it was not eligible in any other category it could be eligible here. It was 7th on the longlist and thus did not make the ballot.

While we did not receive formal inquiry, we did hear people wondering both before and after the announcement if the winner of this category, **Inventing the Renaissance** by Ada Palmer, was sufficiently related to the fields of science fiction, fantasy or fandom to qualify. We followed the norms of most previous Hugo Administrators and chose to honor the will of the voters rather than make a ruling based on content.

Best Dramatic Presentation-Long

Category Moves

Work	Moved From	# moved	# NOT moved	Valid noms
Murderbot	BDP-Short		1	174
Andor, Season 2	BDP-Short	1	1	144
	Series	1		
Pluribus	BDP-Short	1	1	85
	Series	1		
Severance, Season 2	BDP-Short	1		50
	Series	1		
Revolutions Podcast: The Martian Revolution	Related Work	14		31

Category Notes

The Martian Revolution was a multi-part fiction series told in the style of the historical revolutions featured on the Revolutions podcast. Nominators weren't sure where to nominate it, with 14 nominating it in Best Related Work and 17 in BDP-Long. We determined that it was eligible in BDP-Long, which alone disqualifies it from appearing in Best Related. It would also be ineligible for Best Related because, in our opinion, it was noteworthy primarily for its fictional elements.

Several televised series appeared in both Best Dramatic Presentation categories. The WSFS constitution prohibits works from appearing in more than one category on the final award ballot. Hugo administrators have interpreted this to mean that that no series can appear on the Best Dramatic Presentation Long Form ballot if any of its episodes appears on the Best Dramatic Presentation Short Form ballot, and vice versa.

Both the **Murderbot** series and multiple individual episodes received enough votes to qualify for the ballot in their respective categories. In situations where this occurs, the practice of Hugo Administrators is to try to determine how the wishes of the most voters can be respected. Since 186 members nominated at least one of the finalist episodes in BDP-Short compared to 174 members who nominated the entire series in BDP-Long, the entire series was excluded from the ballot by the Administrators. This brought **Mickey 17** onto the ballot.

Best Dramatic Presentation Short

Category Notes

Both the **Andor** series and multiple individual episodes received enough votes to qualify for the ballot in their respective categories. In this case, the entire series was nominated by 144 voters while the individual episodes were nominated by only 141, so the individual episodes were excluded from the ballot by the Administrators. This brought **Severance: Cold Harbor** and **Doctor Who: The Story & the Engine** onto the ballot.

Murderbot: "Free Commerce" received enough votes to qualify for the final ballot, but the constitution places a limit of two on the number of episodes of the same show allowed in this category. As is the typical practice, the showrunners were consulted and they chose to withdraw this episode. Because the next finalist in the long list was another episode of Andor, which had been excluded from this category, this brought **The Wheel of Time: The Road to the Spear** onto the ballot.

The interactions between Murderbot and Andor and the two Best Dramatic Presentation categories were quite complex. If Murderbot and Andor had both had more support in BDP-Long, then the finalists making the ballot in BDP-Short would have been the 4th, 7th, 8th, 10th, 11th and 12th on the long list.

Best Editor Long

Category Notes

Lindsey Hall declined nomination in this category which brought Joe Monti onto the ballot.

Best Semiprozine

Category Moves

Work	Moved From	# moved	# NOT moved	Valid noms
Galactic Journey	Fancast	1	1	35
	Related Work	1		
Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow: Seattle Worldcon 2025's blog	Related Work	1		18

Category Notes

Beneath Ceaseless Skies had previously announced that it was recusing itself for the 2026 Hugo Awards, but it still received enough nominations to be a finalist. It declined nomination, which brought The Deadlands onto the ballot.

Best Fan Writer

Category Notes

The Hugo Administration team was uncertain about how to list Jay Brantner on the ballot. 17 of his 22 nominators had nominated only some variation of "TarVolon" or "Tar Vol" in this category, with only 5 including any portion of Jay Branter's name. In consultation with Jay Brantner, he wanted to be listed by his real name on the ballot, but we had a real concern about confusion and that people would not associate the finalist on the ballot with the person they had nominated. Initially we listed him as "Jay Branter (for "Tar Vol On")" but after additional feedback from the community we changed this to Jay Branter (AKA "Tar Vol") to reflect that this was effectively a pseudonym. This was Jay Branter's first year on the ballot - now that his real name is more well known in the community and associated with his writing, we think it would be reasonable for future administrators to omit the pseudonym should he be a finalist again.

Best Fan Artist

Category Notes

While EPH was put into place to reduce the power of intentional slates, it can also act against groups of voters who non-intentionally nominate highly overlapping lists of finalists. This effect is especially dramatic in categories with a small number of nominators and was seen very clearly in the Best Fan Artist category this year.

España Sheriff, Alison Scott and Iain Clark are all UK-based artists who are active participants in local fandom and tend to donate art to conventions there. As such we believe they naturally had highly overlapping voter pools. In Round 34 Alison and España had the lowest number of points so were pitted against each other for elimination. They both had 12 nominations, but since España had 5.25 points to Alison's 5.00, Alison was eliminated. When that happened, España received 2.58 points from Alison's voters, increasing her total to 7.83. In the next round she

received an additional 1.17 points from Iain's elimination, and this kept her from facing elimination again until Round 39 and ultimately allowed her on the ballot as the 6th place finalist. Meanwhile Iain finished 12th and Alison 13th.

Best Poem

Category Moves

Work	Moved From	# moved	# NOT moved	Valid noms
Care for Lightning	**Novel**	**1**		**34**
The Mourning Robot Angela	**Novel**	**1**		**23**
The World to Come	**Novel**	**1**		**13**
To Be the Change	Novel	1		10
Hugo Award for Best Poem	Related Work	1		8

Category Notes

One nominator accidentally placed all five of their poem nominations in novel. What they lacked in attention to nominating category they made up for in taste, as 3 of their nominations made the final ballot.

Last year, Seattle Worldcon 2025 ran a Best Poem category as their special Hugo Award. In the same year an amendment to create a permanent Best Poem Hugo received first passage. That amendment was ratified at the 2026 WSFS Business Meeting and will be in effect beginning in 2027 next year. Its pending ratification was one of the reasons LAcon V chose to run Best Poem as a special category this year. We wanted to have as much information as possible for the Business Meeting to consider before ratification.

Best Poem has an automatic sunset clause and will need to be re-ratified in 2029. The table below shows how the two years compared on a variety of factors that can be used to track the health of a Hugo category.

Factor	2025	2026	Notes
# of nominators	219	202	
% of ballots nominating	16%	14%	
# of voters	675	919	
% of ballots voting	34%	37%	
No Award 1st preference	31	36	1
% of voters with No Award 1st preference	4.6%	3.9%	1
# of unique works nominated	266	229	2
Ratio of nomination ballots to works	0.8	0.9	2
Highest nominations to ballot	26	35	3
Lowest nominations to ballot	11	12	3
Lowest nominations to long list	6	5	3
% Nominations to % Votes Ratio	2.1	2.7	4

1. Especially for a new category, a 1st preference of No Award is often a protest of the category as a whole
2. Best Poem has what we call a very long tail – there are many works published and the nominations scatter widely. Only Best Poem and Best Short Story had more works nominated than individual nominators.
3. One of the problems with a long tail is that it leads to works in the category making the ballot with relatively few nominations. In both 2025 and 2026 Best Poem was at or near the bottom of the categories.
4. While participation was quite low at nomination time, with only 14% of nominators nominating in this category (19th out of 21 categories), it was quite popular at voting with 8/21 categories having a lower voting percentage.

To explore this data on your own for all Hugo categories from 2018 on, see the Hugo Stats Tables & Category Tracker spreadsheet

Astounding Award

Category Notes

Barbara Truelove received enough nominations to be a finalist, but was found to be ineligible due to qualifying publication(s) prior to 2024. This brought Molly O'Neill onto the ballot.

Silvia Park received enough nominations to be a finalist but was found to be ineligible due to qualifying publication(s) prior to 2024. This brought Sophie Burnham onto the ballot.

Upon notification of being a Finalist, Antonia Hodgson questioned if she was eligible, as she has novels published prior to 2024. However, when we reviewed the Astounding Award requirements with her, she confirmed that none of her prior work had included genre elements, so she was eligible for her first work of SFF, The Raven Scholar, which was itself a finalist for Best Novel.

Hugo Voter Packet

The Hugo Voter Packet has become a tradition at Worldcons although it is not a constitutional obligation or even regulated by the Constitution. We are grateful to all of the finalists and their publishers and studios and agents who granted us permission to include materials in the Packet, and for the effort they put in to create Packet materials and make them accessible.

Creating and distributing the Packet is a team effort among Worldcon volunteers. We are very grateful to Jed Hartman for once again being a superstar volunteer as packet coordinator. Others who made it possible this year were Chaos Golubitsky, Chris Rose, Andrew January, and the Hugo administration team, as well as the Worldcon volunteers who tested the Packet before it went live.

This year, we made some changes to the way the Hugo Awards Voter Packet was set up. For example:

- We provided a separate download for each finalist, in addition to the usual downloads for each award category and for the full Packet, to give members the option of downloading only the specific pieces of the Packet that they wanted.

- We continued to take steps toward making the Packet more accessible. In particular, finalists in the Best Artist categories and some other categories provided image descriptions for their images. (Thanks to everyone who's asked us over the past couple of years to make the Packet more accessible! There's more work to be done in that area, but we're improving.)
- We de-emphasized the PDF document format, because in general, PDFs tend to be less accessible and a worse reader experience than other file formats for primarily-text documents. We still included some PDFs, especially in categories where the works started out as PDFs and in cases where publishers provided PDFs; but unlike in previous years, we didn't ask finalists to create new PDFs for works that didn't already exist as PDFs.
- We created a document about how to create and test ePub ebooks, which helped finalists make more of the Packet ePub files more accessible.
- For some categories where works are freely available online (especially Best Fancast), we gave finalists the option of providing links rather than providing downloadable copies of the works.
- We provided a way for members to get evaluation codes for some of the Best Game or Interactive Work finalists, instead of making finalists set up their own code-request systems (as they've had to do in past years).
- For the first time ever, we have data about how many members downloaded materials from the Packet. A total of 2,887 members downloaded or requested at least one item from the Packet; nearly 60% of those members downloaded the full-Packet file. Our Packet server served about 39 terabytes of data over the 94 days that the Packet was available for download.

Final Ballot voting

Detailed information on voting for the final ballot is contained in the separate 2026 Hugo, Lodestar and Astounding Awards: Full Statistics document. In summary, 2,492 final ballots were received (2490 electronic, 2 paper) across the 21 categories.

Thanks and Acknowledgements

I am are very grateful to the entire Hugo Administration team. In addition to people named above, I want to mention some others here.

Rosemary Parks was invaluable as a Deputy and brought a lot of important knowledge and materials from her work with Seattle Worldcon 2025. Emily January was new to Hugo Administration, but jumped in feet first, and dragged Andrew January along with her (to the eventual benefit of the entire LAcon V committee!) And Warren Buff was a steadfast deputy administrator while also being a deputy division head for WSFS, and could always be called up on to know exactly what the constitution said about any topic, and why.

As she has been for many Worldcons before Terry Neill was absolutely indispensable in her role answering all of the hugo-help@ inquiries. We're also really thankful to the virtual team,

particularly Henry Balen, Gail Terman, and Anna Bradley for their assistance navigating the portal and helping our members participate.

And while we're sad Gabrielle Harbowy had to step away from the excellent work she was doing as Hugo Finalist liaison role, we're ever so grateful that she recruited Nyssa Fox to take her place, because Nyssa was awesome.