

## Frequently Asked Questions about USPA Elections

Compiled from the USPA Governance Manual, USPA 2002 Ballot and various other sources:

originally written Nov. 14, 2000, updated Nov. 9, 2002 and Nov 15, 2002

Compiled by Jan Meyer because I want you to be informed.

(c) 2002 by Jan Meyer All Rights Reserved. ;)

Permission is granted free of charge to distribute this in its entirety. Changes or additions by others are welcome and must be clearly marked.

-----

### **Q: Is there some written description about how USPA ballots are counted?**

A: There is no written description on how USPA ballots are to be counted or stored during and after the voting period. It is up to the Elections Committee Chair to coordinate with USPA HQ BEFORE ballots are publicly available on procedure for an upcoming election. This year (2000 & should be the same for 2002) John DeSantis arranged the following:

- envelopes reaching HQ that are obviously ballots, such as the ballot in PARACHUTIST or envelopes marked 'BALLOTS' by the sender, are placed UNOPENED, in order of postmark in a box that has a compartment for each region.

- the box holding the ballots is locked in Larry Bagley's office.

-----

### **Q: How are the ballots counted?**

A: Ballots are stacked in order of postmark in groups of 50. The USPA number written on the ballot is used to verify that the member is a current USPA member. If the member's membership has expired, the ballot is deemed disqualified. Two people independently count the ballots in the 50 ballot stacks. If their totals agree, the vote count is logged as such. A third person tallies the votes if the original 2 tallies are different.

From an email written by USPA Executive Director Chris Needels on Dec. 30, 2000: "As you can see from the e-mail date, it is Saturday, December 30. With approximately 6,000 ballots to process, count and collate, Larry and I are in the office today trying to catch up with an unprecedented voter turnout. The workload is complicated by the number of write-in's -- particularly for the four region for which there were no declared candidates.

Every ballot which arrives at HQ has to be date/time stamped, screened for validity - - such as current membership, correct region, signature, and original marks -- then placed in batches. Each voters named must be annotated in the data base as having submitted a ballot so that a second attempt to vote will be denied. Next each ballot it counted twice by two disinterested counters. Then there is a reconciliation process by which differences between the two counters are accounted for and corrected.

Then we run the final statistics of winners, vote count, and voided ballots, all of which goes to the Nominations and Elections Committee."

-----

**Q: Are there any rules concerning a recount if the difference between a winning and losing candidate is below a certain number?**

A: A recount is done on "anything close". There is no precise meaning to "anything close". No ballot is thrown away until after Mar 31 of the following year, and then only if there are no contested results.

-----

**Q: What happens if there is a tie?**

A: In case of a tie among regional director candidates or between national director candidates (for the last seat), confirmed by a re-count of the valid ballots, the seating of the winner will be determined by a toss of a coin.

- a. Such toss is to be conducted in a manner and at a time and place as agreed upon by the president and the Nominations and Elections committee chair.
- b. The toss will take place in front of at least three witnesses.
- c. In the case of a three-way tie, a coin will be tossed for each candidate, with the odd coin signifying the winner.

-----

**Q: When are ballots counted?**

A: Ballots are counted starting Dec 20th and not later than January 10 of each post-election year. Prior to Dec 20th the ballots are locked up.

The Dec 20th date is not mentioned in the Governance Manual. The counting of ballots is started before the final deadline of Dec 31, so that the counting may be completed by Jan 10. The interim results from Dec. 20-31 are supposed to be secret and only known by the "two disinterested counters".

Many years ago the ballots were counted as HQ received them. This practice was stopped (by efforts of John DeSantis) because the interim results become know to 'selected' individuals.

-----

**Q: When are the results distributed and to whom?**

A: Larry Bagley and the other USPA staff person know the results. After they have completed the ballot counting, they notify Chris Needels of the results. Chris Needels then notifies John DeSantis, Elections Committee Chair. (2002 update - From Mr. Needels description of the counting process, it appears that he knows the counts during the counting process.) The ballot counting should be completed not later than January 10 of each post-election year.

-----

### **Q: In what ways are ballots disqualified?**

A: Ballots are deemed disqualified for any of these reasons:

- person is not a USPA member at the time of the election (2002 update: If a person's membership expires on Nov 30 & they do not renew, their ballot must be received at HQ by Nov. 30 in order to be valid. Membership must be current as of the date it is received.)
- there are any pre-markings on the ballot
- voting for the same person as National and Regional Director invalidates both sections of the ballot
- the ballot is not signed
- the ballot is an additional ballot from the same member, only the first ballot is counted
- Ballots containing more than eight national director votes or more than one regional director vote will not be considered valid for that portion incorrectly marked.
- Ballots received after the announced deadline: 5 p.m. EST December 31, 2002.
- Ballots that are faxed, electronically transmitted, or pre-marked will be declared invalid
- Voting for candidates outside of your region will invalidate that section of your ballot

-----

### **Q: How are write-ins attributed to the write-in candidate?**

A: Each distinct name is treated as a unique tally count. Votes for 'Joe Cool', 'Joeseeph Cool' and 'Joe E. Cool' are attributed to 3 different vote counts. The person whose name corresponds to a name in the USPA membership files gets the votes. Votes for 'Joe Cool', 'Joeseeph Cool' and 'Joe E. Cool' will not be attributed to the same person, even when there is no remotely similar name in USPA membership files. A write-in name must match the name USPA has in its membership file.

2002 update: - I \*think\* this has changed to count the votes as the same tally. I only have verbal reference to this from after the last election & I can't remember who said that to me.

-----

**Q: On the ballot where it asks for address & USPA #, does this information have to be EXACTLY correct in order for the ballot to count??**

A: HQ must be able to identify the voter. They will make every effort to match up enough information to do so. If the name and address matches but has an incorrect USPA # it will still count.

-----

**Q: If someone enters their address correctly and USPA # incorrectly or puts in a license (eg D-7833) instead, will the ballot still count?**

A: Yes

-----

**Q: Can a voter enter a license number instead of their USPA membership number?**

A: Yes.

-----

**Q: What do people that have just joined USPA, but do not have their membership info enter?**

A: From Madolyn Murdock - "The membership application must have been received and on file prior to receiving the ballot since the members AZTECH file and not the ballot will be used to establish region and membership currency. They would just need to include Name, Address, USPA# pending."

-----

**Q: Is it possible to give non-GM candidates access to the GM database so that they can double check the membership number written on the ballot or look up the number for them?**

Since at least two people were disqualified from the regional ballots because of incorrect membership #'s or out of region people signing their petitions, it would seem appropriate to double check the numbers & region of residence of people.

A: From Madolyn Murdock - "I don't think this is possible but any vote will be counted if there is any possible way to identify the voter. License numbers can be used if USPA# is not available. This would be used to help identify the voter but the membership and expiration date would then be checked. I suggest using their USPA membership card."  
Translation - no.

-----

**Q: Do current BOD members have access to the GM database?**

A: From Madolyn Murdock - "Not unless they are Group members." This is not completely correct.

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

JULY 14-16, 2000

ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

"On Line Membership Access: This service will be available and live by August 1, 2000. All Group Members and BOD members will have access. As demonstrated during this report, it promises to be fast, simple and efficient."

I personally know of a former and a current BOD member who are not GMs that have access to the GM database.

-----

**Q: Does that new clause called Reminder at the lower right side of the ballot mean candidates cannot mail in ballots for people?**

Candidates essentially are compensating voters with a stamp by doing so.

A: From Madolyn Murdock - "Collection of ballots for bulk mailing is appropriate."

-----

**Q: How much do USPA Board Members get paid?**

A: They are not paid. A Board Member is a volunteer position.

-----

**Q: Who do I contact if I have a question that is not answered here?**

A: email [uspa@uspa.org](mailto:uspa@uspa.org) Include [FullBoard@uspa.org](mailto:FullBoard@uspa.org), [BODCandidates@uspa.org](mailto:BODCandidates@uspa.org) also if you want Board Members and candidates to know your question and answer.

-----

**Q: If I vote for less than 8 National Director Candidates, how can I be sure that no one else adds in votes?**

A: Madolyn Murdock has said that these two ways of preventing this type of fraud are acceptable:

Ed Fitch		
Russ Gunby		
Tiny Broadwick		
Leo Valentin		
Cliff Winters		
Leslie Irvin		
Ken Coleman		
Ruby Deveau	X	
Bob Buquor		
Jack Bergan		
Elisa Garnerin		
Dom Jalbert		
Floyd Smith	X	
James Russell		
Art Starnes		
Nick Piantanida		
Kurt Student		
Steve Snyder		
Joe Crane		
Katchen Paulus		

Ed Fitch	no
Russ Gunby	no
Tiny Broadwick	no
Leo Valentin	no
Cliff Winters	no
Leslie Irvin	no
Ken Coleman	no
Ruby Deveau	X
Bob Buquor	no
Jack Bergan	no
Elisa Garnerin	no
Dom Jalbert	no
Floyd Smith	X
James Russell	no
Art Starnes	no
Nick Piantanida	no
Kurt Student	no
Steve Snyder	no
Joe Crane	no
Katchen Paulus	no

A large X may be written across the write-in area were there are no candidates written in.

Disclaimer: Since some of the policies stated here are 'unwritten' policies, they may change from year to year or depend upon who you ask.