

The Proceedings of the WSFS Business Meeting at Discon.

The Business Meeting, as then defined, started with the presentation of the Big Heart and First Fandom awards, continued with what we would today call “constitutional matters”, and concluded with Site Selection. Only the middle phase is transcribed here.

Discon Proceedings, page 112

George Scithers: The next item of business: the reports of the various committees of the World Science Fiction Convention. Howard Devore, the Hugo Committee?

Howard Devore: Unfortunately, our chairman isn't here, and I had to fill in for him. I will make it as short as I can.

It is the opinion of this Committee that the original Hugo trophy, as conceived and produced by Mr Ben Jason, should be continued, but Mr Jason has been forced to discontinue production. It was feared that production by a commercial organization would increase the price beyond reason.

The original trophies were cast in bronze, machined, then chrome plated. We decided last year to use an aluminum casting. There has been a continued problem of flawed castings and of plating that is less than perfect. Apparently only the sand casting method is economically practical. In this case, some castings will be flawed and must be discarded, but the price of rough castings is low enough to cover this possibility.

It is suggested that the next Convention Committee consider the possibility of gold anodized trophies. This process should present a pleasing experience and would cost even less than chrome plating.

We further recommend that a small stock of finished trophies should be produced and maintained for the use of future conventions, avoiding any last minute production problems. The Michigan Science Fantasy Society has offered to produce these trophies at cost. We recommend that future Convention Committees contact them.

While we are on the subject, I would like to speak with anyone in the audience with a thorough knowledge of sand-casting proceedings, or anyone who can help us with the lost-wax process.

That concludes my report.

George Scithers: Ladies, gentlemen: the report.

There are in general three things one can do with a report. One can discuss it; one can accept it; one can reject it. Discussion, as a rule, takes precedence over an immediate vote unless there is an attempt to close out discussion. Is there any discussion of the report as it stands?

Do I hear a motion?

George Nims Raybin: I move we accept it.

Fred Lerner: Second.

George Scithers: I have a motion from Mr Raybin to accept, and a second to Mr Raybin's motion by Mr Lerner. There being no discussion I call for a voice vote. All in favor of accepting the report, which essentially is a set of recommendations and suggestions, all in favor say “ay”, please... (A chorus of “Aye's” from the floor.) Opposed? (one “No!” Laughter.) The motion is carried. Steve?

Steve Schultheis: I told Dirce Archer yesterday that I felt that the convention rules were a sort of albatross around my neck. It seems that every convention, Schultheis and a few others are up here presenting convention rules.

The purpose this time is simply to gather together the various rules that have been proposed and passed at various conventions, to eliminate the ones that no longer apply, and set down in one document those rules which do apply. A committee was appointed by the chairman of this convention, the members of which were Noreen Shaw, Buz Busby, Howard Devore and myself. We got together and put down the few pertinent bodies of rules, clarified a little bit of the wording, and would like to present them to you now as one concise document which future Convention Committees may refer to as a guide to what has been passed at previous conventions.

Now, I will wait until the copies of this have been handed out and people have had a chance to read it over. [See Appendix II.] The procedure will be ... George, what will the procedure be? Shall we just move that it be accepted, then?

George Scithers: In the case of a committee whose report is a proposed Constitution and rules, there are several alternatives possible. One is to reject out of hand; one is to accept out of hand; one is to discuss; another is to refer to another committee for further discussion.

Steve Schultheis: Now, the first three paragraphs, #1.01, 1.02 and 1.03, basically continue the present status quo. This is the way, in general, that the conventions are now run, but this puts it down in black and white.

The paragraphs numbered 2.01, etc., are the rules for selecting the annual Hugo awards. There are two important clarifications made in these rules. Under "Best Short Fiction" it has always been more or less apparent – I always thought so, at any rate - that "Best Short Fiction" referred to one story. (It says a science fiction or fantasy story, and that is singular.) And it was accepted as such by the science fiction convention that passed on this. At a previous convention a series of stories, more than one, was allowed eligibility in this classification. Therefore we have added this sentence: "Individual stories appearing as a series are eligible only as individual stories, and are not eligible taken together under the title of the series." This is to prevent what we saw as unfair competition of more than one story competing with single stories. The same situation applies in the "Best Dramatic Presentation" category. Under the wording of the category as it previously existed a series of programs – that is, individual programs, not a continuity – that were presented on television under a group title, as a series, should have been eligible for its first year of presentation and not eligible thereafter. This obvious interpretation, for some reason, has never been followed, and television series were made exceptions; whereas a motion picture could not be eligible every year, a television series could be. It did not seem quite fair to us to stick to the strict interpretation of this, because a series on television, after all, is made up of individual productions – or, if you will, stories. We felt that any one of these, just as any movie, should be considered as a thing in itself, and an exceptionally good television production, even if it is part of a series, should be eligible for the "Best Dramatic Presentation" award. So, to clarify the whole thing, we added the last sentence here: "In the case of individual programs presented as a series, the separate programs shall be individually eligible, but the entire year's production, taken as a whole under the title of the series, shall not be eligible." That is, in

a television series, any program during the year under consideration is eligible to be nominated for the Hugo, but the title of the series is not eligible.

The items in the paragraphs marked 3.01 and following are the Rotation Plan, which has been followed for many years now in selecting the choice of a science fiction convention, ensuring that the conventions are fairly well scattered, geographically, over the United States. There was some clarification down here as to what happens if the rotation plan is suspended for a year. I won't go into this business of A, B and C, and if B replaces A who follows that. The way it was worded before, it was possible for the same convention location to have the convention three years in a row by default. We have now changed the wording so that cannot happen, and the rotation will be fairer geographically. The paragraph 3.6 – that should be 3.06 – is a new item put here to replace several previous resolutions. We felt that individual circumstances in presenting the convention vary to such an extent that the committee bidding, who would know what the circumstances were going to be better than the convention doing the voting, should be allowed to change such things as the amount of the dues, etc. However, the people who vote on the site should be able to consider such changes beforehand. Therefore we have put the wording down as it is here. The thing is, if a committee who is bidding presents a change which the convention considers too radical, they can either vote against that bid, or they can vote to change the circumstance that the committee stated. All right?

The paragraphs marked 4.01 and 4.02 simply have to do with changes of this body and take care of revoking any past legislation.

George Scithers: Gentlemen – please – my problem is this: we are running fairly late.

Your problem is this: don't get railroaded by me, or by any committee.

There are essentially four possibilities: Discuss; accept out of hand; reject out of hand; or refer to another committee. I would like to very much to avoid more than an extremely brief discussion, simply because the schedule has gone badly off. Now, some proposals from the floor ... Mr Clement?

"Hal Clement": In 2.06 there is a misprint and the context doesn't clarify it. The middle line, which says "published for or more issues" – is it f-o-u-r or is there an omitted word?

George Scithers: Four – 1, 2, 3, 4. The lady...?

Voice From Audience: In the giving of the Hugo award section they say which award "will be made..."

George Scithers: Right; the wording would be more properly "may be made." George?

George Nims Raybin: In view of the fact that basically what has been proposed here today is merely a codification or clarification of what we have had all along (with the very few minor changes that were mentioned), and in view of the fact that no one has proposed any changes in these existing rules to be presented to the convention, it seems to me that the most logical thing we could do is to adopt these at this convention, and if there are changes – and I am sure that there may be some people who feel that some of these things should be modified – that can be done easily enough at the next convention. As I say with this merely being a clarification and codification of what we have adopted in the past, it seems to me that adoption of this now will make it a little clearer, to the attendees at the next convention, what the ground rules are that we have been working under. If those people who do feel that there are changes necessary will suggest them, then we will all know what the ground rules are that we are now considering. For that reason I am prepared to make a motion to adopt these at this time.

George Scithers: A motion has been accepted. Is there a second...? (seconded from the audience.) Fine. There is a motion and second. Now questions take precedence.

Voice From Audience: What about amendments?

George Scithers: Robert's Rules of Order cover amendments. I don't believe that a specific amendments rule would be necessary. Is there a feeling that a special rule of amendment is necessary? ... There is no such feeling. More comments. Mr Kyle?

Dave Kyle: I would like to say that in this particular instance I am heartily in favor of what Mr Raybin has suggested. (Applause)

George Scithers: Very briefly, the gentleman down front?

Jack Chalker: May I ask why it is unincorporated...? (Groans and laughter obscuring the rest of the question.)

George Scithers: Silence please... I will explain the question. The question was, why is the World Science Fiction Society unincorporated? The question is rooted in history and other difficulties. (Laughter.) The proposed Constitution is written to provide the Society with virtually no powers, no responsibility and, therefore, no need for incorporation. Individual convention committees have traditionally incorporated under various peculiar circumstances of their own.

Voice From Audience: Question.

George Scithers: The question has been called. I call for a voice vote. All in favor of accepting these rules with the changes put by the lady on my left and the gentleman on my right, "four" and "may be awarded"...

George Nims Raybin: Also 3.06, the misprint.

George Scithers: "3.06," right. All in favor? (A chorus of "aye.") The motion is carried. The next order of business is choice of the next convention site. Mr Don Ford.