

CONSTITUTION

of the World Science Fiction Society

September 1996

Article I -- Name, Objectives, Membership, and Organization

Section 1.1: The name of this organization shall be the World Science Fiction Society, hereinafter referred to as WSFS or the Society.

Section 1.2: WSFS is an unincorporated literary society whose functions are:

1.2.1: To choose the recipients of the annual [Hugo Awards \(Science Fiction Achievement Awards\)](#).

1.2.2: To choose the locations and Committees for the annual World Science Fiction Conventions (hereinafter referred to as Worldcons).

1.2.3: To attend those Worldcons.

1.2.4: To choose the locations and Committees for the occasional North American Science Fiction Conventions (hereinafter referred to as NASFiCs).

1.2.5: To perform such other activities as may be necessary or incidental to the above purposes.

Section 1.3: No part of the Society's net earnings shall be paid to its members, officers, or other private persons except in furtherance of the Society's purposes. The Society shall not attempt to influence legislation or any political campaign for public office. Should the Society dissolve, its assets shall be distributed by the current Worldcon Committee or the appropriate court having jurisdiction, exclusively for charitable purposes. In this section, references to the Society include the Mark Protection Committee and all other agencies of the Society but not convention bidding or operating committees.

Section 1.4: The Membership of WSFS shall consist of all people who have paid membership dues to the Committee of the current Worldcon. Within ninety (90) days after a Worldcon, the administering Committee shall, except where prohibited by local law, forward its best information as to the names and postal addresses of all of its Worldcon members to the Committee of the next Worldcon.

Section 1.5:

1.5.1: Members of WSFS who cast a site-selection ballot with the required fee shall be supporting members of the selected Worldcon. The rights of supporting members of a Worldcon include the right to receive all of its generally distributed publications.

1.5.2: Voters have the right to convert to attending membership in the selected Worldcon within ninety (90) days of its selection, for an additional fee set by its Committee. This fee must not exceed two (2) times the voting fee and not exceed the difference between the voting fee and the fee for new attending members.

1.5.3: The rights of attending members of a Worldcon include the rights of supporting members plus the right of general attendance at said Worldcon and at the WSFS Business Meeting held thereat.

1.5.4: Other memberships and fees shall be at the discretion of the Worldcon Committee, except that they shall make provision for persons to become supporting members for no more than 125% of the site-selection fee, or such higher amount as has been approved by the Business Meeting, until a cutoff date no earlier than ninety (90) days before their Worldcon.

1.5.5: Any member of the Society shall have the right, under reasonable conditions, to examine the financial records and books of account of the current Worldcon Committee, all future selected Worldcon Committees, and the two immediately preceding Worldcon Committees.

Section 1.6: Authority and responsibility for all matters concerning the Worldcon, except those reserved herein to WSFS, shall rest with the Worldcon Committee, which shall act in its own name and not in that of WSFS.

Section 1.7: Every Worldcon Committee shall include the following notice in each of its publications:

"World Science Fiction Society", "WSFS", "World Science Fiction Convention", "Worldcon", "NASFiC", and "Hugo Award" are service marks of the World Science Fiction Society, an unincorporated literary society.

Section 1.8: Each Worldcon Committee should dispose of surplus funds remaining after accounts are settled for the current Worldcon for the benefit of WSFS as a whole. Each Worldcon Committee shall submit an annual financial report, including a statement of income and expenses, to each WSFS Business Meeting after the Committee's selection. Each Worldcon Committee shall submit a report on its cumulative surplus/loss at the next Business Meeting after its Worldcon. In the event of a surplus, subsequent annual financial reports regarding the disbursement of said Worldcon surplus shall be filed at each year's Business Meeting by the Worldcon Committee, or any alternative organizational entity established to oversee and disburse that surplus, until the surplus is totally expended or an amount equal to the original surplus has been disbursed.

Article II -- [Hugo Awards](#)

Section 2.1: Introduction. Selection of the Hugo Awards shall be made as provided in this Article.

Section 2.2: Categories.

2.2.1: [Best Novel](#). A science fiction or fantasy story of forty thousand (40,000) words or more appearing for the first time during the previous calendar year. A work originally appearing in a language other than English shall also be eligible for the year in which it is first issued in English translation. A story, once it has appeared in English, may thus be eligible only once. Publication date, or cover date in the case of a dated periodical, takes precedence over copyright date. A serial takes its appearance to be the date of the last installment. Individual stories appearing as a series are eligible only as individual stories and are not eligible taken together under the title of the series. An author may withdraw a version of a work from consideration if the author feels that the version is not representative of what said author wrote. 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 the lesser of five thousand (5,000) words or twenty percent (20%) of the new category limits.

2.2.2: [Best Novella](#). The rules shall be the same as those for [Best Novel](#), with length between seventeen thousand five hundred (17,500) and forty thousand (40,000) words.

2.2.3: [Best Novelette](#). The rules shall be the same as those for [Best Novel](#), with length between seven thousand five hundred (7,500) and seventeen thousand five hundred (17,500) words.

2.2.4: [Best Short Story](#). The rules shall be the same as those for [Best Novel](#), with length less than seven thousand five hundred (7,500) words.

2.2.5: [Best Non-Fiction Book](#). Any non-fictional work whose subject is the field of science fiction, fantasy, or fandom appearing for the first time in book form during the previous calendar year.

2.2.6: [Best Dramatic Presentation](#). Any production in any medium of dramatized science fiction, fantasy, or related subjects which has been publicly presented for the first time in its present dramatic form during the previous calendar year. In the case of individual programs presented as a series, each program is individually eligible, but the series as a whole is not eligible; however, a sequence of installments constituting a single dramatic unit may be considered as a single program (eligible in the year of the final installment).

2.2.7: [Best Professional Editor](#). The editor of any professional publication devoted primarily to science fiction or fantasy during the previous calendar year. A professional publication is one which had an average press run of at least ten thousand (10,000) copies per issue.

2.2.8: [Best Professional Artist](#). An illustrator whose work has appeared in a professional publication in the field of science fiction or fantasy during the previous calendar year.

2.2.9: [Best Semiprozine](#). Any generally available non-professional publication devoted to science fiction or fantasy which by the close of the previous calendar year has published four (4) or more issues, at least one (1) of which appeared in the previous calendar year, and which in the previous calendar year met at least two (2) of the following criteria: (1) had an average press run of at least one thousand (1000) copies per issue, (2) paid its contributors and/or staff in other than copies of the publication, (3) provided at least half the income of any one person, (4) had at least fifteen percent (15%) of its total space occupied by advertising, or (5) announced itself to be a semiprozine.

2.2.10: [Best Fanzine](#). Any generally available non-professional publication devoted to science fiction, fantasy, or related subjects which by the close of the previous calendar year has published four (4) or more issues, at least one (1) of which appeared in the previous calendar year, and which does not qualify as a semiprozine.

2.2.11: [Best Fan Writer](#). Any person whose writing has appeared in semiprozines or fanzines or in generally available electronic media during the previous calendar year.

2.2.12: [Best Fan Artist](#). An artist or cartoonist whose work has appeared through publication in semiprozines or fanzines or through other public display during the previous calendar year.

Any person whose name appears on the final Hugo Awards ballot for a given year under the Professional Artist category shall not be eligible in the Fan Artist category for that year.

2.2.13: Additional Category. Not more than one special category may be created by the current Worldcon Committee with nomination and voting to be the same as for the permanent categories. The Worldcon Committee is not required to create any such category; such action by a Worldcon Committee should be under exceptional circumstances only; and the special category created by one Worldcon Committee shall not be binding on following Committees. Awards created under this paragraph shall be considered to be Hugo Awards.

Section 2.3: Extended Eligibility. In the event that a potential Hugo Award nominee receives extremely limited distribution in the year of its first publication or presentation, its eligibility may be extended for an additional year by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the intervening Business Meeting of WSFS.

Section 2.4: Name and Design. The Hugo Award shall continue to be standardized on the rocket ship design of Jack McKnight and Ben Jason. Each Worldcon Committee may select its own choice of base design. The name (Hugo Award) and the design shall not be extended to any other award.

Section 2.5: "No Award". At the discretion of an individual Worldcon Committee, if the lack of nominations or final votes in a specific category shows a marked lack of interest in that category on the part of the voters, the Award in that category shall be cancelled for that year. In addition, the entry "No Award" shall be mandatory in each category of Hugo Award on the final ballot. In any event, no Award shall be given whenever the total number of valid ballots cast for a specific category (excluding those cast for "No Award" in first place) is less than twenty-five percent (25%) of the total number of final Award ballots received.

Section 2.6: Nominations. Selection of nominees for the final Award voting shall be done by a poll conducted by the Worldcon Committee, in which each member of either the administering or the immediately preceding Worldcon as of January 31 of the current calendar year shall be allowed to make five (5) equally weighted nominations in every category. The Committee shall include with each nomination ballot a copy of Article 2 of the WSFS Constitution. Nominations shall be solicited for, and the final Award ballot shall list, only the [Hugo Awards](#) and the [John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer](#). Assignment to the proper category of nominees nominated in more than one category, and eligibility of nominees, shall be determined by the Worldcon Committee. No nominee shall appear on the final Award ballot if it received fewer nominations than the lesser of either: five percent (5%) of the number of nomination ballots cast in that category, or the number of nominations received by the third-place nominee in that category.

Section 2.7: Notification and Acceptance. Worldcon Committees shall use reasonable efforts to notify the nominees, or in the case of deceased or incapacitated persons, their heirs, assigns, or legal guardians, in each category prior to the release of such information. Each nominee shall be asked at that time to either accept or decline the nomination.

Section 2.8: Voting. Final Award voting shall be by mail, with ballots sent only to WSFS members. Final Award ballots shall include name, signature, address, and membership-number spaces to be filled in by the voter. Final Award ballots shall standardize nominees given in each category to not more than five (5) (six (6) in the case of tie votes) plus "No

Award". The Committee shall, on or with the final ballot, designate, for each nominee in the printed fiction categories, one or more books, anthologies, or magazines in which the nominee appeared (including the book publisher or magazine issue date(s)). Voters shall indicate the order of their preference for the nominees in each category.

Section 2.9: Tallying.

2.9.1: Counting of all votes shall be the responsibility of the Worldcon Committee, which is responsible for all matters concerning the Awards.

2.9.2: In each category, votes shall first be tallied by the voter's first choices. If no majority is then obtained, the nominee who places last in the initial tallying shall be eliminated and the ballots listing it as first choice shall be redistributed on the basis of those ballots' second choices. This process shall be repeated until a majority-vote winner is obtained.

2.9.3: After a tentative winner is determined, then unless "No Award" shall be the winner, the following additional test shall be made. If the number of ballots containing votes listing "No Award" higher than the tentative winner plus the number of ballots listing "No Award" but not the tentative winner is greater than the number of ballots listing the tentative winner higher than "No Award" plus the number of ballots listing the tentative winner but not "No Award", then "No Award" shall be declared the winner of the election.

2.9.4: The complete numerical vote totals, including all preliminary tallies for first, second, É places, shall be made public by the Worldcon Committee within ninety (90) days after the Worldcon. During the same period the nomination voting totals shall also be published, including in each category the vote counts for at least the fifteen highest vote-getters and any other candidate receiving a number of votes equal to at least five percent (5%) of the nomination ballots cast in that category.

Section 2.10: Exclusions. No member of the current Worldcon Committee nor any publications closely connected with a member of the Committee shall be eligible for an Award. However, should the Committee delegate all authority under this Article to a Subcommittee whose decisions are irrevocable by the Worldcon Committee, then this exclusion shall apply to members of the Subcommittee only.

Section 2.11: Retrospective Hugos. A Worldcon held 50, 75, or 100 years after a Worldcon at which no Hugos were presented may conduct nominations and elections for Hugos which would have been presented at that previous Worldcon. Procedures shall be as for the current Hugos. Categories receiving insufficient numbers of nominations may be dropped. Once retrospective Hugos have been awarded for a Worldcon, no other Worldcon shall present retrospective Hugos for that Worldcon.

Article III -- Future Worldcon Selection

Section 3.1: WSFS shall choose the location and Committee of the Worldcon to be held three (3) years from the date of the current Worldcon. Voting shall be by mail or ballot cast at the current Worldcon with run-off ballot as described in [Section 2.9](#). The current Worldcon Committee shall administer the mail balloting, collect the advance membership fees, and turn over those funds to the winning Committee before the end of the current Worldcon. The minimum voting fee can be modified for a particular year by unanimous agreement of the current Worldcon Committee and all bidding committees who have filed before the deadline. The site-selection voting totals shall be announced at the Business Meeting and published in the first or second Progress Report of the winning Committee, with the by-mail and at-convention votes distinguished.

Section 3.2: Voting shall be limited to WSFS members who have paid at least twenty U.S. dollars (USD 20.00) or equivalent towards membership in the Worldcon whose site is being selected. "No Preference" ballots may be cast by corporations, associations, and other non-human or artificial entities. "Guest of" memberships must be transferred to individual natural persons before being cast for other than "No Preference", with such transfers accepted by the administering convention.

Section 3.3: Site-selection ballots shall include name, signature, address, and membership-number spaces to be filled in by the voter. Each site-selection ballot shall list the options "None of the Above" and "No Preference" and provide for write-in votes, after the bidders and with equal prominence. The minimum fee in force shall be listed on all site-selection ballots.

Section 3.4:

3.4.1: The name and address information shall be separated from the ballots and the ballots counted only at the Worldcon with two (2) witnesses from each bidding committee allowed to observe. Each bidding committee may make a record of the name and address of every voter.

3.4.2: A ballot voted with first or only choice for "No Preference" shall be ignored for site selection. A ballot voted with lower than first choice for "No Preference" shall be ignored if all higher choices on the ballot have been eliminated in preferential tallying.

3.4.3: "None of the Above" shall be treated as a bid for tallying and shall be the equivalent of "No Award" with respect to [Section 2.9](#). If it wins, the duty of site selection shall devolve on the Business Meeting of the current Worldcon. If the Business Meeting is unable to decide by the end of the Worldcon, the Committee for the following Worldcon shall make the selection without undue delay. When a site and Committee are chosen by a Business Meeting or Worldcon Committee, they are not restricted by region or other qualifications, and the choice of an out-of-rotation site shall not affect the regional rotation for subsequent years.

3.4.4: All ballots shall be initially tallied by their first preferences, even if cast for a bid that the administering Committee has ruled ineligible. If no eligible bid achieves a majority on the first round of tallying, then on the second round all ballots for ineligible bids shall be redistributed to their first eligible choices, and tallying shall proceed according to normal preferential-ballot procedures. }

Section 3.5: To be eligible for site selection, a bidding committee must present adequate evidence of an agreement with its proposed site's facilities, such as a conditional contract or a letter of agreement; and must state the rules under which the Worldcon Committee will operate, including a specification of the term of office of their chief executive officer or officers and the conditions and procedures for the selection and replacement of such officer or officers. Written copies of these rules must be made available by the bidding committee to any member of WSFS on request. For a bid to be allowed on the printed ballot, the aforementioned rules and agreements, along with an announcement of intent to bid, must be filed with the Committee that will administer the voting no later than 180 days prior to the official opening of the administering convention; to be eligible as a write-in, a bid must file these documents by the close of the voting. If no bids meet these qualifications, the selection shall proceed as though "None of the Above" had won.

Section 3.6: To ensure equitable distribution of sites, North America is divided into three (3) regions as follows:

3.6.1: Western. Baja California, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Saskatchewan,

and all states, provinces, and territories westward including Hawaii, Alaska, the Yukon, and the Northwest Territories.

3.6.2: Central. Central America, the islands of the Caribbean, Mexico (except as above), and all states, provinces, and territories between the Western and Eastern regions.

3.6.3: Eastern. Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, Quebec, and all states, provinces, and territories eastward including the District of Columbia, St. Pierre et Miquelon, Bermuda, and the Bahamas.

Section 3.7: Worldcon sites shall rotate in the order Western, Central, Eastern region. A site shall be ineligible if it is within sixty (60) miles of the site at which selection occurs.

Section 3.8: A Worldcon site outside of North America may be selected by a majority vote at any Worldcon. In the event of such outside Worldcon being selected, there shall be a NASFiC in the region whose turn it would have normally been, to be held in the same year as the overseas Worldcon, with rotation skipping that region the following year. Selection of the NASFiC shall be by the identical procedure to the Worldcon selection except as provided below or elsewhere in this Constitution:

3.8.1: Voting shall be by written ballot administered by the following year's Worldcon, if there is no NASFiC in that year, or by the following year's NASFiC, if there is one, with ballots cast at the administering convention or by mail, and with only members of the administering convention allowed to vote.

3.8.2: Bids are restricted to sites in the appropriate region.

3.8.3: The proposed NASFiC voting fee can be set by unanimous agreement of the prospective candidates that file with the administering Committee.

3.8.4: If "None of the Above" wins, or if no eligible bid files by the deadline, then no NASFiC shall be held and all voting fees collected for the NASFiC site selection shall be refunded by the administering convention without undue delay.

Section 3.9: Each Worldcon Committee shall provide a reasonable opportunity for *bona fide* bidding committees for the Worldcon to be selected one year hence to make presentations.

Section 3.10: With sites being selected three (3) years in advance, there are at least three selected current or future Worldcon Committees at all times. If one of these should be unable to perform its duties, the other selected current or future Worldcon Committee whose site is closest to the site of the one unable to perform its duties shall determine what action to take, by consulting the Business Meeting or by mail poll of WSFS if there is sufficient time, or by decision of the Committee if there is not sufficient time.

Article IV -- Powers of the Business Meeting

Section 4.1: Business Meetings of WSFS shall be held at advertised times at each Worldcon. The current Worldcon Committee shall provide the Presiding Officer and Staff for each Meeting. Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions of (in descending order or precedence) the WSFS Constitution; the [Standing Rules](#); such other rules as may be published in advance by the current Committee (which rules may be suspended by the Business Meeting by the same procedure as a Standing Rule); and *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*. The quorum for the Business Meeting shall be twelve members of the Society physically present.

Section 4.2: Each future selected Worldcon Committee shall designate an official representative to the Business Meeting to answer questions about their Worldcon.

Section 4.3: Except as otherwise provided in this Constitution, any committee or other position created by a Business Meeting shall lapse at the end of the next following Business Meeting that does not vote to continue it.

Section 4.4: There shall be a Mark Protection Committee of WSFS. The Mark Protection Committee shall consist of one (1) member appointed to serve at the pleasure of each future selected Worldcon Committee and each of the two (2) immediately preceding Worldcon Committees, one (1) non-voting member appointed to serve at the pleasure of each future selected NASFiC Committee and for each Committee of a NASFiC held in the previous two years, and nine (9) members elected three (3) each year to staggered three-year terms by the Business Meeting. Of the nine elected members, no more than three may be residing, at the time of election, in any single North American region, as defined in [Section 3.6](#). Newly elected members take their seats, and the term of office ends for elected and appointed members whose terms expire that year, at the end of the Business Meeting. If vacancies occur in elected memberships in the Committee, the remainder of the position's term may be filled by the Business Meeting, and until then temporarily filled by the Committee.

Section 4.5:

4.5.1: The Mark Protection Committee shall be responsible for registration and protection of the marks used by or under the authority of WSFS.

4.5.2: The Mark Protection Committee shall submit to the Business Meeting at each Worldcon a report of its activities since the previous Worldcon, including a statement of income and expense.

4.5.3: There will be a meeting of the Mark Protection Committee at each Worldcon after the end of the Business Meeting, at a time and place announced at the Business Meeting.

4.5.4: The Mark Protection Committee shall determine and elect its own officers.

Article V -- Constitution

Section 5.1: The conduct of the affairs of WSFS shall be determined by this Constitution together with all ratified amendments hereto and such [Standing Rules](#) as the Business Meeting shall adopt for its own governance.

Section 5.2: In all matters arising under this Constitution, only natural persons may introduce business, nominate, or vote, except as specifically provided otherwise in this Constitution. No person may cast more than one vote on any issue or more than one ballot in any election. This shall not be interpreted to prohibit delivery of ballots cast by other eligible voters.

Section 5.3: The WSFS Constitution may be amended by a motion passed by a simple majority at any Business Meeting but only to the extent that such motion is ratified by a simple majority at the Business Meeting of the subsequent Worldcon.

Section 5.4: Any change to the Constitution of WSFS shall take effect at the end of the Worldcon at which such change is ratified, except that no change imposing additional costs or financial obligations upon Worldcon Committees shall be binding upon any Committee already selected at the time when it takes effect.

Section 5.5: Within two (2) months after the end of each Worldcon, the Business Meeting staff shall send a copy of all changes to the Constitution and Standing Rules, and all items awaiting ratification, to the next Worldcon Committee.

Section 5.6: The Constitution of WSFS, together with an explanation of [proposed changes approved but not yet ratified](#), and the [Standing Rules](#) shall be printed by the current Worldcon Committee, distributed to all WSFS members at a point between nine and three months prior to the Worldcon, and distributed to all WSFS members in attendance at the Worldcon upon registration.

The above copy of the World Science Fiction Society's Constitution is hereby Certified to be True, Correct, and Complete:

Donald E. Eastlake III, Chairman
George P. Flynn, Secretary
1996 WSFS Business Meeting

"World Science Fiction Society", "WSFS", "World Science Fiction Convention", "Worldcon", "NASFiC", "Hugo Award", and the distinctive design of the Hugo Award Rocket are service marks of the World Science Fiction Society, an unincorporated literary society. You can contact the WSFS Mark Protection Committee at mpc@wsfs.org.

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