

The World Science Fiction Society

Minutes of the Business Meeting at Discon II, 1974

ABSTRACT:

The Business Meeting at DisCon II adopted a new Constitution for the World Science Fiction Society. No other business was transacted. Key provisions:

- The Hugo categories are limited to 10, but category definitions are left to the discretion of the responsible Convention Committee.
- The Rotation Plan is stabilized by regularizing the custom of holding a non-competitive Continental Con in North America during years when the Worldcon goes overseas.
- A mail ballot referendum system for amending the Constitution is set up.

CONSTITUTION of the World Science Fiction Society, Unincorporated adopted at the business session of DisCon II, 2 September 1974

The practice followed here, for record purposes, is to show the original text in plain text and changes in *Italic type*. There is no difference in the validity of plain and Italic wording.

1.01 The World Science Fiction Society is an unincorporated literary society whose functions are: to choose the recipients of the annual Science Fiction Achievement Awards (the Hugoes), to choose the location for the annual World Science Fiction Society, and to attend those Conventions

1.02 The membership of the World Science Fiction Society consists of all people who have paid membership dues to the Convention Committee of the current Convention.

1.03 Authority and responsibility for all matters concerning the Convention, except those reserved herein to the Society, lie with the Convention Committee, which acts in its own name, not that of the Society.

1.04 *Each Convention Committee should dispose of surplus funds remaining after accounts are settled for the benefit of the Society membership as a whole, and should publish or have published by the following Convention Committee a final financial report.*

2.01 Each year, the Society membership shall nominate and select the winners of the Hugoes. The Convention Committee shall distribute and count ballots, procure the material awards, present the awards at its World Science Fiction Convention, and perform such other duties as needed.

2.02 The Hugo Award will continue to be standardized on the rocket ship design of Jack McKnight and Ben Jason. Each committee may select its own base. The name and the design shall not be extended to any other award whatsoever. Under rare and extraordinary circumstances, a Committee may make *one* Hugo award on its own vote rather than that of the Society.

2.03 Nomination and voting shall be by mail ballot, limited to Society members. Members

must identify themselves on the ballot to avoid irregularities in voting. In the final ballot, members shall be asked to indicate first, second and so on choices for each category, among not more than five nominees plus "No Award". In counting votes, the Committee shall count first choices, eliminate the nominee receiving the fewest, redistribute ballots of voters who chose that nominee according to their second choices, and so on until a nominee acceptable to a majority of voters is reached or until the Committee should declare the remaining nominees are tied.

2.04 In general, Hugoes are awarded for outstanding literary or artistic accomplishment in science fiction or fantasy which became available to the membership by publication or performance in the calendar year immediately before the year the awards are given. A specific work is eligible but once, and cover date of the last instalment of a serial governs. Since increasing the number of Hugo categories makes each less significant to voters and to recipients, the number of Hugo categories shall be strictly limited to no more than 10, *including the Special Award permitted by paragraph 2.02.*

2.05 The exact categories and rules for the Hugoes to be awarded at each Convention shall be drawn up and published by that Convention's Committee as early as possible and at least a full year before that Convention's date. Categories and rules should follow tradition, with such few changes as each Committee decides upon, and should be reduced in number whenever a category fails to draw voter interest. At each step of nomination and voting, "No Award" shall be offered as an option to the members. Since the Committee has such wide discretion to establish categories, no person who is a member of the Committee or was so during the eligibility year, nor a publication or production closely associated with him/her, may receive a Hugo at that Committee's Convention.

2.06 *Should the Convention Committee delegate all authority to establish categories, prepare ballots, and count the same, to a sub-committee whose decisions the Convention Committee cannot reverse, then the ineligibility award above will apply to sub-committee members only.*

3.01 The Society shall choose the location of the Convention to be held two year's hence at a meeting held at an advertized time during each World Science Fiction Convention. The current convention committee shall supply the presiding officer and staff. Voting shall be by mail and in person, with run-off ballot as described above (but without the No Award option), limited to Society members who have paid at least two dollars towards membership in the Convention whose site is being selected. The current committee shall administer the mail balloting, collect advance membership fees, and turn over those funds to the winning committee before the end of the Convention.

3.02 To ensure equitable division of sites, North America is divided into three divisions:

Western: Baja California, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Saskatchewan, and all states and provinces westward.

Central: Central America, Mexico (except as above), and all states and provinces between Western and Eastern Divisions.

Eastern: Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, Quebec, and all states and provinces eastward.

3.03 Convention sites shall rotate Western, Central, Eastern. Bids may be considered out of turn only if the rule of rotation be set aside by a three quarters majority vote. In the event of such setting aside, the same motion shall also establish where the rotation is to resume.

3.04 A Convention site outside North America may be selected by a majority vote at any Convention. In this event there shall be an interim Continental Convention in the division that

lost, to be held in the same year as the overseas World Science Fiction Convention, with rotation skipping that division the next following year. To skip a division without giving it an interim Continental Convention requires a three quarters majority vote. Selection of the site of such Continental Convention may be by continuation of the World Convention site selection meeting or by such other method as the competing bidders may agree upon.

3.05 With sites being selected two years in advance, there are therefore at least two Convention Committees in existence. If one should become unable to perform its duties, the surviving Convention Committee shall determine what to do, by mail poll of the society if there is time for one, or by decision of the Committee if there is not.

4.01 The Society shall conduct business at a meeting held at an advertised times during each World Science Fiction Convention. The current Convention Committee shall provide the presiding officer and staff for each meeting. Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, Revised and such other rules as may be published by the Committee in advance. At this meeting, amendments to this Constitution may be proposed, discussed and perfected. Such perfected proposals, if approved by a majority of those present, shall be submitted by mail ballot to the entire membership of the Society by the next following Committee, no later than the nomination ballot for Hugo awards, for ratification or rejection by a majority of those voting. If ratified, the amendment shall take effect at the end of the next Convention, unless the Committee of that Convention (which is administering this mail ballot) chooses to make it effective when the vote is tallied. Each Committee shall publish the Constitution, with amendments, in a Progress Report and in its Program Book.

4.02 All previous constitutions, by-laws and resolutions having the effect of either are rescinded at the end of the Convention during which this Constitution may be ratified.

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