

MEETING OF THE MARK PROTECTION COMMITTEE
December 19, 2021

The first meeting of the Mark Protection Committee (“MPC”) for 2021-2022 was called to order at 10:05 a.m. in the Palladian Room of the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C. The MPC is the only permanent body of the World Science Fiction Society (“WSFS”), created by authority of the WSFS Constitution. Membership in the MPC also constitutes membership in the Worldcon Intellectual Property (“WIP”), a California nonprofit corporation.

Members in attendance were Judy Bemis (elected until 2023), Joni Dashoff (elected until 2023), Linda Deneroff (elected until 2024), Donald E. Eastlake III (elected until 2024), Dave McCarty (elected until 2024), Chris Rose (appointed by Chicon 8 until 2024), Chen Shi (interim appointment by Chengdu until 2025), Kevin Standlee (elected until 2022), Mike Willmoth (elected until 2023), and Ben Yalow (elected until 2022).

Jo Van Ekeren (elected until 2022), Cliff Dunn (appointed by DisCon III until 2023), and Ron Oakes (appointed by NASFiC 2020 until 2022) attended via Zoom.

Jo Van Ekeren, Kevin Standlee, Linda Deneroff and Bruce Farr were reappointed as President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, respectively for the current year. Bruce Farr also remains a non-voting member appointed to the board of Worldcon Intellectual Property to meet a corporate requirement.

Mr. Standlee presided and recapped the purpose of the MPC and why we’ve registered our marks in the U.S. and Europe. We do not have a dedicated funding stream, so we have to ask the standing Worldcons to donate to us if they have enough funds, and for several years we discussed changing our funding pattern. We do not make these requisitions until the convention is over and know it has made money. We don’t want to ask for funds from a convention that has lost money.

We need a business plan to present to the various Worldcons in order to ask for more funding. If we had extra money we would register our marks first in Canada and then in Australia. We discussed possibly swapping that order since Australia is currently bidding, and Winnipeg lost their bid. We would need a representative in Australia. Mr. Standlee said there is an Australian fan who is an attorney who might be interested in doing this.

Lodestar is now a permanent award, and it would be appropriate to register that as a service mark in the U.S., EU and UK. Mr. Standlee asked if Ms. Van Ekeren would contact our attorneys to start the process of registering the mark. The trademark classes are going to be very important because there are already two dozen marks in the U.S. alone for “Lodestar”. We should register the mark as “Lodestar Award” since that looks to be available without conflict on the United States Patent and Trademark Office (“USPTO”) website.

Jo Van again found the listing for “Hugo award” in Denmark. They have a Hugo festival and give a Hugo award. We had our attorneys send them a cease-and-desist letter awhile ago, but they have ignored it. Do we want to send have a follow up letter sent from our new German attorneys? We’ve already established that we made our claim in a timely manner, and Denmark is an EU country. We are protected in the EU and we believe we have a strong case. This would be a second item for our EU

attorneys in 2022. Mr. Standlee asked Ms. Van Ekeren and Mr. Eastlake to chase down the Danish Hugo and first search HugoAward.dk. There may be a standard challenge method under Danish rules.

Mr. McCarty noted that we stopped too soon on MPC elections and had not made any appointments to the Hugo Awards Marketing Committee ("HAMC"). He asked that Chris Rose be appointed to the HAMC. Mr. Rose is interested in upgrading the underlying structure of the HAMC website. The new committee as appointed is now Dave McCarty (chair), Linda Deneroff, Cheryl Morgan, Chris Rose, Kevin Standlee, Jo Van Ekeren, and other members as the committee may appoint from time to time.

Mr. McCarty will follow up with work with Google to upgrade our domains and software to a G-Suite.

Mr. McCarty is also involved with the Science Fiction Outreach Project ("SFOP") and asked if it were appropriate to give former Hugo Award winners and finalists ribbons to that effect to take to conventions to promote our marks and logo. The ribbon would say "Past Hugo Award Winner" or "Past Hugo Award Finalist". Mr. McCarty then made the following motion:

The MPC authorizes the Science Fiction Outreach Project to use the Hugo Award Logo and the service mark "Hugo Award" for the production of "Past Hugo Award Winner" and/or "Past Hugo Award Finalist" ribbons for marketing purposes at conventions other than Worldcon and NASFiC.

How many ribbons would a finalist or winner receive? We would depend on the SFOP to use good judgment in distributing the ribbons. Linda asked what to do about bad actors. Each finalist would receive only a handful of ribbons. The intent is to promote Worldcon at other conventions. The finalist would wear the ribbon, not distribute it.

By unanimous consent, the motion was adopted. There is no license fee or royalty involved; we are giving SFOP permission because we trust them.

Our next scheduled meeting will be the first day of Chicon 8 at a time and place to be determined.

The meeting adjourned at 11:06 a.m.