

MEETING OF THE MARK PROTECTION COMMITTEE
September 1, 2022

The final meeting of the Mark Protection Committee (“MPC”) for 2021-2022 was called to order at 2:35 p.m. in the Field Room of the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Chicago, Illinois. 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 Jo Van Ekeren (Chair; elected until 2022), Kevin Standlee (Vice Chair; elected until 2022), Linda Deneroff (Secretary; elected until 2024), Joni Dashoff (elected until 2023), Judy Bemis (elected until 2023), Mike Willmoth (elected until 2023), Dave McCarty (elected until 2024), Don Eastlake (elected until 2024), Daniel Spector (appointed by CoNZealand until 2022), Ron Oakes (appointed by NASFiC 2020 until 2022), Cliff Dunn (appointed by DisCon III until 2023), Chris Rose (appointed by Chicon 8 until 2024), and Chen Shi (appointed by Chengdu until 2025), as well as Bruce Farr, a nonvoting member. Cliff Dunn attended via Zoom; all others were in person.

Also attending were Tina (from Chengdu) and Jean Goddin.

The MPC approved the 2022 report to the WSFS business meeting without objection.

We discussed the Danish use of the mark Hugo Award. They talk about their award on their site, similar to what the Chicago Silver Hugo had done. They have a Word Press site, and they claim they’ve been using the name for a long time, holding a Hugo Festival. They may have used “Hugo Festival” for a long time, but not “Hugo Award”. Though they do not currently use their website, it is reserved and we cannot take it over. They also have FaceBook and Instagram sites. Our British attorney was instructed to send a letter via email, but they never received a response. There is a Danish registration name resolution dispute center where we can dispute their claim. We also have a new EU attorney that we have never used, and we can go through them.

Linda suggested first going using the Danish dispute resolution process, to bring our claim more to their attention; however, it might not solve their infringing on the actual trademark or cybersquatting on our service marks in the U.S., UK and Europe. Their email address is HugoAwards2022@gmail.com. We should also go after FaceBook and Instagram to address the issue. Kevin will contact FaceBook. We speculated how much of this problem would disappear if Hugo Boss were made aware of it. If we don’t hear back by end of November, we will involve our attorneys.

Yasser Bahjatt, on behalf of Yatakhayaloon Co. Ltd., would like to license the service mark “Hugo Award” in connection with publishing Hugo Award winners book in Arabic. Yassir is also bidding for a future Cairo Worldcon. He has agreed to pay \$10 for a ten year term to license the name. It is not an exclusive license. Kevin brought the contract with him, and the easiest way would have been for Yasser to come to this meeting, but he did not show up. We have made similar agreements in the past, and Kevin hopes to have this contract signed before the first meeting of the 2022-2033 session.

Linda handed out the most current list of our marks, but Worldcon.us expired last year, and Worldcon.uk and Worldcon.info expired in June and July, respectively, of this year. Don said they had been renewed and will get Linda the latest information.

The terms for Jo Van Ekeren, Kevin Standlee and Ben Yalow are up for election this year. The terms for Ron Oakes and Daniel Spector, as appointees, also will expire.

The first meeting of the 2022-2023 session will be at 1 p.m. on Monday, September 5 in the Dusable Room on the third floor of the west wing of the Hyatt Regency. We hope the new appointees from the 2024 Worldcon and 2023 NASFiC will be able to attend.

The meeting adjourned at 3 p.m.