

Annual General Meeting minutes of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Association of New Zealand, held on March 24, 2008 at Copthorne Plimmer Towers, Wellington .

Meeting Opened: 10.10am

Present: 30 members

Apologies: James Dignan, Brian Howell, Barbara Clendon, Peter Clendon, Lyn McConchie, Andrew Dixon, Kath McKay

It was noted that Lynelle Howell (secretary of the meeting) was holding the proxies of Barbara Clendon, Peter Clendon, Kath McKay. Linnette Horne was holding Lyn McConchie's proxy. Maree Pavletich held Brian Howell's proxy. Daena Dixon held Andrew Dixon's proxy. June Young held the proxy vote of James Dignan.

Chair: Simon Litten
Minutes of Previous meeting.
Simon Litten moved, and Malcolm Fletcher seconded:
"That the previous meeting minutes be taken as read"
The motion was carried unanimously.

Matters Arising

SFFANZ Donee status

At present we don't have donee status but are still looking into it. Simon reported he would do this at the completion of Conjunction.

Hall of Fame

The SFFANZ hall of fame is still being worked on.

NZSFW wind up

Still to be resolved.

Website

Work has been started and is continuing.

Publicity

Publicity has been increased this year, particularly to publishers. This has resulted in a larger number of SJV nominations. June advised the meeting that it would be great to get more fan nominations. The listing service for works known to be eligible for nomination will continue this year.

Simon gave a vote of thanks to June for her work on promotion, which was seconded by Malcolm Fletcher. Carried.

Fan Funds

Separate bank accounts have not been set up for these yet, the money is still held in the main SFFANZ accounts. All monies are documented separately. The creation of the accounts will be done after the convention.

Patron

The matter was not discussed by the board in the course of the year, but some discussion was held at the meeting, questioning what benefit a patron would be – monetary or promotion.

Single nominee ballots.

This was discussed as still being an issue, particularly in regard to whether having single nominees reduced the status of the SJVs. Some concern was expressed that if a single nominee could not find a competitor two years' running, it would be unfair not to give it the award. The general consensus though was that the present position on single nominees – where they are held over or another competitor is found, or the no award option is allowed – should continue.

Register of Qualifying works

This is still being created and it is hoped that this service will be up and running shortly.

Email Lists

It was stated by Norman and Simon that there were two separate lists of email addresses. One was the fan

database which contains those people interested in finding about SF events. The other email list is the SFFANZ members' list – that is those people who are SFFANZ members who have an email address.

Financial Report

Norman advised the meeting that SFFANZ made 19 cents this year. However, Norman advised that additional costs for the trophies would soon be incurred. He noted that Weta Workshop had been generous with their time and materials.

It was reported that the monies held by SFFANZ are in a normal account, not a high-interest earning one. Linnette Horne asked whether SFFANZ could secure grants for itself and on behalf of conventions. Norman replied that in order to get a grant there has to be a purpose for them. SFFANZ can help conventions apply for grants but unless SFFANZ has a specific project for which it is applying, then it is unlikely to receive funding.

Suggestions of a SF writers' retreat or writer's house were made as a good project to aim for. Simon Litten spoke on the difficulties Conjunction had in getting funding from Wellington City Council. He believed SFFANZ would find the process of applying for funding rather difficult.

Gary Perkins spoke about how conventions had previously used any surpluses to support future conventions. He questioned why charities are now given money. Norman reported that in many cases conventions will support both a charity and SFFANZ if, and when, they make a profit. It was noted that donating monies to charities was also done for tax purposes.

Norman advised the meeting that the accounts had not been audited.

Simon Litten moved and Lorain Clark seconded

"That the accounts be accepted"

Carried.

General Business

SJV Award Rules review

Simon Litten reported that he had undertaken a review of the rules governing the SJVs and changed them so that they conformed with the present constitution. He also formatted them into a more logical format.

The meeting was advised of the process for the review, which included discussion amongst the board, and notification to the membership through June's SFFANZ newsletters.

It was noted that if the revised rules were not passed then we would be back to the rules which are at odds with the constitution. It was agreed that there was still room for discussion (particularly in regard to categories) on various details of the revised rules, but the revised rules were better than nothing.

Daena Dixon, on behalf of her proxy Andrew, raised questions about how the votes were counted and whether nominees and nominators were allowed to count the votes. Lynelle, as chair of the SJV awards sub-committee reported that rules pertaining to the counting of votes had been drawn up which indicated that no nominee could be present for the counting of their respective category, and that if nominators were present in the room, that there were neutral parties also present. Conflicts of interest, which are inevitable in this group, were noted and dealt with appropriately.

Ross believed there are a number of conflicts in the working rules. His concern was that points for change get discussed at the AGM, or meetings and nothing changes. He felt that there needs to be a public discussion about the awards. Graham Edge asked why Horror had been included in the awards, when principally SFFANZ is involved with science fiction and fantasy. Simon reported that it was included as the genre of Horror is also included in the SFFANZ constitution. To remove horror would require a change to the constitution, which could not be conducted at this meeting. Maree advised that the inclusion of horror as a genre had occurred after a democratic vote on the subject during the discussions on setting SFFANZ up.

Simon Litten moved, and Malcolm Fletcher seconded

"That the new format rules of the SJV rules be accepted." Carried

Ross Temple moved, and Alan Robson seconded

"That the incoming board of SFFANZ begin a public debate on the structure of the Sir Julius Vogel Awards." Carried.

Discussion followed on how this would be done, and when a report to members would need to be out.

Because next year's convention is June, and thus the award nomination period won't open until March, it was agreed that January 31st, 2009 was a reasonable time for reporting back. It was noted that any change could not be made in time for the 2009 awards, but that revised rules could be presented at the 2009 AGM.

Julian Warner reported that similar discussions about the Ditmars were occurring in Australia. It was agreed that mutual discussions could be useful, and when asked by Daena Dixon whether we could appoint Julian as a liaison between the Ditmars and SJVs, Simon advised that this is something the incoming SFFANZ board could look at.

Further discussion followed about how communication on the awards review would be conducted. Suggestions included a forum, such as space.com Maree Pavletich was particularly concerned that an email discussion list was not appropriate because she did not want large volumes of email. She moved, and Keith Smith seconded:
"That the board not use email for the discussion list of the SJVs".
The motion was defeated.

Election of Officers

Simon called for nominations from the floor:

Candidates put forward:

Brian Howell	Simon Litten	Malcolm Fletcher	Stephen Pritchard
James Dignan	Norman Cates	Alan Robson	Kath McKay
June Young	Maree Pavletich	Lynelle Howell	

A vote for the election of the nine officers was held. Andrew Ivamy and Gary Perkins?? acted as vote counters.

General Business – contd.

Single Nominees in the awards.

Norman reported that at present the SJV sub-committee has the discretionary power to decide whether to hold over a single nominee for another year if another nominee can't be found.

Alan Robson said that to not allow a single nominee was to place a value judgement (by the sub-committee or board) on the work, and SFFANZ officials have no right to do that. He said it was for the voters to decide.

Questions were raised about what happens when a single nominee has no competition two years' running. Do they still get the award? Suggestions were made for getting around this, like speaking to the nominee and asking if they know of other works etc. It was noted that the listing service should provide a pool of works which could be selected in any given year, to help alleviate the problem.

The process of what options were available was questioned by Barry Norris and explained by Norman Cates – that there are two additional options: No award, carry forward.

Rob Campbell questioned whether we needed to go to the lengths discussed, saying "this is not the Oscars". Kevin McLean questioned whether it was possible to advertise which categories would be used in the year to allow people to look for specific works.

In principle it was agreed that provided the options for carry forward and no award were included, a single nominee could go onto the ballot.

Norman Cates moved and Graham Edge seconded:

"That the meeting directs SFFANZ that single nominations are acceptable provided that there is a "no award" and "carry forward" option used on the ballot paper."

Carried.

Alan Robson proposed a vote of thanks to the 2008 SJV awards sub-committee.

The SFFANZ meeting was adjourned briefly to hold the bids for the 2010 National convention.

Convention bidding

The chair put a suggestion to the meeting that as the 2010 worldcon was likely to be held in Melbourne, it might be advantageous for NZ to look at holding its natcon either the weekend before or after the worldcon so as to make use of guests and to attract more attendees.

Concern was raised that holding a convention around that time (August/September) would be away from any holiday weekends, and wouldn't be advantageous to NZ fandom.

The debate was adjourned for the announcement of the SFFANZ board, which is:

Brian Howell	Simon Litten	Malcolm Fletcher
James Dignan	Norman Cates	Alan Robson
June Young	Maree Pavletich	Lynelle Howell

Simon thanked the scrutineers for their work.

A suggestion was made that natcons take a consistent name to assist with brand awareness. There is a precedent for this; English and West Australian conventions (SWANCON) have done this for a while. It was further mooted that whilst a brand name could be used, individual names could be kept by each convention. The board is to discuss this as part of the review.

Au Contraire was the only bid received for the 2010 national convention.

Daphne Lawless and Kelly Buchanan bid for a convention returning to basics with no major guest and cheap accommodation. It was expected to be held the week before the worldcon in Australia. They may try to get guests from the Worldcon too.

No venue or location was given.

Carried by show of hands with 20 for, 10 against and 9 abstention.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 12 noon.