

Annual General meeting of SFFANZ, the Science Fiction and Fantasy Association of New Zealand held at Au Contraire, Quality hotel, Cuba Street on August 29, 2010.

Meeting Opened: 11.10am

Present: 16 members

As chair of the meeting, Alan Robson welcomed everyone.

Apologies were received from: Simon Petrie, Stephen Litten and Jan Butterworth. No proxies were being held.

Minutes of the previous meeting, held at ConScripton on June 1st, 2009.

Robin Clarke moved, and June Young seconded "That the meeting take the minutes as read."

Carried without dissent.

Matters Arising:

Donee status

We are now registered as a charity and can accept donations. DUFF money was paid to the current DUFF delegate, Emma Hawke, in September 2009 and she has had her trip.

SFWA wind-up

We have had lots of trouble with this. We have had contact with all known members of the group trying to establish the location of any funds held by SFWA and have failed to secure any knowledge of its whereabouts or any financial records.

Alan Robson moved and June Young seconded "That SFFANZ, having exhausted all possible avenues of enquiry, take this matter no further and consider the SFWA funds to be written off."

Carried without dissent

The mood of the meeting was that although SFFANZ had no formal association with SFWA, there was a need to formally disassociate any connection SFFANZ might have had with it.

Alan Robson moved and Simon Litten seconded "That the minutes of this AGM note that SFFANZ is appalled by the dismal record keeping of the officers of SFWA (and also by the number of financial regulations that the organisation has broken) and that SFFANZ disassociates itself from any connection with the organisation".

Carried without dissent.

Treasurer's Report

Simon Litten, as treasurer, advised that in the course of getting charity registration, he found that the end of year is the last day of February. However, previous reporting of the financial statements has shown a 31st of January end of year. He presented a page of revised income and expenditure to account for the variance in end of year.

The changes in 2008 were adjusted interest, from 2009 onwards the accounts changes related to restatements of member donations and people paying in different currencies. The resultant change is \$56. Simon Litten has also checked and restated the documentation on the accounts presented by Norman Cates at the 2009 AGM.

He reported that SFFANZ has done well in the past financial year. He noted that there has been a big increase in expenditure for the hiring of the Post office box and Phoenix has started charging SFFANZ for photocopying services for the SJV awards.

Ross Temple questioned whether SFFANZ should consider any tax liabilities for the books donated from publishers or SJV nominees. Simon advised that this shouldn't be an issue and has contacted the publishers and advised them on the donee status SFFANZ now has.

Simon Litten noted that there is \$1400 set aside for con funds in a separate account for the bailing out of conventions. Questions were asked about how this money was made available to conventions. It was noted that the funds could be used for convention start-up funds (room hire downpayments) or for bail out where an agreement between SFFANZ and the convention has previously been made.

The general funds of SFFANZ are \$4,900. The general fund would be used for the purchase of new SJV award trophies as the need arose.

Simon Litten noted that monies generated from the sale of t-shirts from previous conventions (of which he has some) are put into the convention fund

Louise McCully moved and Graham Edge seconded "That the accounts be accepted subject to the usual scrutiny".

Carried without dissent.

Election of Officers

The following people stood for nomination:

Norman Cates
Lynelle Howell
Alan Robson
Barbara Clendon
Jan Butterworth
Ross Temple
Jenny Hammond

As there were only seven names for the nine spaces, all nominees were duly elected, with two spaces available for any willing volunteers. Whilst Simon Litten has stood down from the board this year, he has offered his accounting services to SFFANZ.

President's Report

Alan Robson presented his report as President. He noted the book reviews service is going well. He noted that June Young is stepping down from her role as press officer this year, and that she will be sorely missed. While Simon Litten is stepping down from the board, he will continue in the role of publisher liaison. He also noted the website is going very well.

At this point Matthew and Maree Pavletich joined the meeting.

General Business:

Finalist Certificates

The Sir Julius Vogel Award rules have always stated that finalists will be given a certificate. This has never happened in the past, because nobody noticed the rule. However it was pointed out last year, and we produced certificates ("under the counter at mates rates!") and gave them to the finalists. We also took the opportunity to investigate the costs involved in producing certificates and we asked the finalists their opinions about being given certificates.

(a) Costs

Our initial costs using our own resources came out to approximately \$1 per certificate for card stock plus approx. 50c per certificate for ink. Postage was \$15. Envelopes and stiffeners to prevent damage were donated free by SFFANZ committee members. Total cost was approximately \$50 most of which came out of our own pockets rather than from SFFANZ funds.

We obtained 3 commercial quotes:

Quote1: 20 certs @ \$70. 40 certs @ \$130

Quote2: \$15 set up fee then \$1 per certificate + GST. For an average year that would be about \$55 plus GST

Quote3: \$94

Postage would be extra on all of these.

Alan Robson reported that 59% of finalists did not want a certificate. 41% did want a certificate. Many of those who did want a certificate went on to say that they would be happy not to receive one if the cost/effort was too great.

This year the clause about finalist certificates was deliberately removed from the rules on the grounds that the cost and effort is rather large and that there was a clear majority of finalists who did not want to receive certificates.

Alan Robson moved and June Young seconded "That the requirement for awarding finalist certificates to Vogel Award nominees be removed from the rules".

The motion was opened to discussion.

Kevin MacLean questioned whether smaller cheaper certificates could be produced. Norman Cates asked whether it was the cost of the certificates or the effort involved was the real issue here. He also questioned why, if people have already been nominated, do they need a finalist certificate? It was noted that if people wanted confirmation of their nomination, they need only look at the SFFANZ website where all past winners and finalists are listed.

The motion was carried with one dissent.

Multiple Award Nominations For One Person In A Single Category

Alan Robson explained that this year an arithmetic anomaly, which had not previously been considered, meant that a single person had a lot of nominated works in the final lists.

Alan Robson moved and Norman Cates seconded "That we should limit the number of nominations that any one person can have in the final list for any given category."

This was opened up for discussion.

Simon Litten advised the final ballot list of nominees – the five highest works by number of nominations received shall be on the final ballot, unless ties exist – in which case the category goes to six or seven nominees.

Concern was raised about the potential unfairness this motion might have to the nominees who have done a lot of work. It was noted that something similar had been tried in the UK SF awards and it had been seen as potentially punishing the voters for making incorrect choices.

It was asked whether the Hugos or Ditmars had had this situation and how they had dealt with it.

Norman Cates assured the meeting that the SFFANZ board did not believe the author was trying to rig the system, but had placed all information pertaining to their eligible works on their website and asked friends and family to support them.

Maree Pavletich advised that as more nominees put their details on websites this situation was going to be more prevalent.

Ross Temple questioned whether it would be better to restrict the nomination process rather than the nominees. He noted that the awards are about nominating the best works, not everything we can. It was suggested that no person may nominate more than one nominee per category.

A vote was then called on the motion – It was carried with 10 votes for the motion, five against and three abstentions.

The next discussion centered on what the limit of items by any one nominee should be on the ballot. It was generally thought that the mechanisms for limitation could be problematic.

Ross Temple suggested that the SFFANZ committee be given a mandate to set a limit on a case-by-case basis.

Ross Temple moved and Simon Litten seconded (after amendments were made from the floor) “That we delegate to the board the discretionary power to limit the number of multiple works by any one creator in any one category based on precedent where possible.”

Carried with one abstention and one dissenting vote.

Number of Trophies to be Awarded

Alan Robson reported that two requests for additional trophies had been received after the 2009 SJV awards ceremony because there were multiple people involved wanting multiple trophies. The board has agreed to honour the two requests.

Alan Robson noted that the more trophies we award, the quicker our stockpile of 64 trophies reduces and we will be forced to create more. Weta produced our first 100 trophies for us at no cost, however, there are no guarantees of future donated production. Quotes for production costs have been between \$100 and \$300 each.

Ross Temple suggested that as a default we give only one trophy to any one group winner, but additional trophies can be given at winners' cost. Or certificates can be produced for the extra winners.

Maree Pavletich suggested one trophy per work, with no certificates. She questioned whether WETA had been approached to make more, and whether they were happy to do so. She was concerned that our stockpile will go down if we are suddenly asked to hand out 15 trophies if a large group, such as a film crew, asked for individual trophies.

Bill Parkin questioned what insurance coverage costs might be on the trophies, as a means of valuing them. Norman Cates suggested that we could come up with a number, but it would be a guess. But he noted that an insurance company was unlikely to insure an individual SJV trophy.

Alan Robson summarised that the feeling of the meeting was strongly in favour of one trophy per work, and produce others at cost or produce certificates for additional winners within a group.

Alan Robson moved, and Ross Temple seconded “That Sir Julius Vogel Awards given to a nominated work that involved multiple people will consist of only one trophy”.

Carried with one dissenting vote.

It was noted that the SFFANZ board still has discretionary power to give out additional trophies or certificates are required.

Standard Web Page And Names For NZ Conventions

Alan Robson advised the meeting that Louise McCully had put forward a proposal to have one standardised name for conventions and a single website for use by any conventions. He noted that organisers of future conventions are under no obligation to pay any attention whatsoever to the results of this discussion and they should regard themselves as free to ignore any or all of the points raised in this discussion.

Louise McCully moved, and Jenny Hammond seconded “That there be one central website for all

conventions”.

Louise McCully explained her reasoning behind one single convention name and website. She explained that it would be easier for conventions and help with branding and visibility of NZ conventions – people would just be able to search for one website and find out about future conventions. It would also allow conventions to be more creative as they would have to spend less time working on website code and so on.

Questions were raised about whether conventions would be expected to pay for the domain name, who was going to administer the site, and whether the webmaster would be paid for their time and effort, which could be considerable.

Concern was raised that while this is a great idea, finding people to commit to helping out could be an issue. It was suggested that a Content Management System could be used. Whilst this has been something Norman Cates has been working on in the background, he has been unable to find people to help him get further with the project.

Questions were raised about whether the convention sites could hang off the SFFANZ website. Alan Robson (the current web administrator) said this was not possible, but that links to the convention pages could be done. He said there were political objections to SFFANZ promoting individual conventions when these are run separately from SFFANZ and from a technical viewpoint he could not allow a convention web administrator access to the SFFANZ site.

It was agreed that more manpower was going to be needed to get such an idea into action, but that SFFANZ as an organisation could not be responsible for taking this on.

Bill Parkin moved, and Ross Temple seconded “That should an organisation produce, administer and provide such facilities, SFFANZ will endorse the effort and provide links to such a website”.

Carried with two abstentions.

Vote of Thanks

Alan Parker thanked SFFANZ and particularly Alan Robson and June Young, for their support of ConText, the bid for the 2011 convention.

Alan Robson noted that bids for the 2011 and 2012 conventions would be held at the closing ceremony, as per the wishes of the Au Contraire convention committee.

Meeting closed 12.59pm.

At the closing ceremony, Alan Parker's ConText was ratified as the 2011 convention. No bids were received for 2012. Consequently, bids will be called for up to 30 November, 2010. If no bids are received, we will try again on 31 March 2011, and if no bids are received, SFFANZ will begin contingency planning for the hosting of the AGM and awards if there is no convention. If no bids are received by ConText in 2011 then the contingency plan can be debated and ratified.