

Annual General Meeting minutes of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Association of New Zealand, held on June 4, 2007 at Mercure Hotel, Willis Street, Wellington.

Meeting Opened: 10.09am

Present: 22 members

Apologies: Maree Pavletich
James Dignan

Brian Howell recorded a proxy vote for Maree Pavletich and Lyn McConchie recorded a proxy vote for Linnette Horne.

Chair: Norman Cates

Minutes of Previous meeting.

Norman Cates moved, and Malcolm Fletcher seconded:

“That the previous meeting minutes be taken as read”

Brian Howell moved, and Simon Litten seconded that “That the minutes be accepted as read once they have been amended as follows”:

(in the administrivia section)

“Simon Litten asked the where books sent by publishers for he Sir Julius Vogel Awards were to be stored.
to

“Simon Litten asked where the books sent by the publishers for the Sir Julius Vogel Awards were to be stored.”

The motion was carried unanimously.

The original motion on the floor was also passed unanimously.

Matters Arising

Norman reported that many of the issues were to come up in general business.

Simon Litten reported that the anomaly in the financial accounts for the previous year had been looked at and have been reperformed to remove the anomaly.

SFFANZ Donee status

At present we don't have donee status but are still looking into it. Simon reported that the passage of the Charities Act, which came into effect on 1 March, 2007, means there is a new body called the Charities Commission. Simon is looking into the particulars of the Charities Act but reported that SFFANZ will need to have charitable status before it can achieve donee status.

Hall of Fame

The Stella-nova wiki has a hall of fame on it, which is to be added by SFFANZ. The SFFANZ hall of fame is still being worked on.

NZSFW wind up

Still to be resolved.

Website

This hasn't been looked at as yet, but Norman is keen to find a better way of utilising the website. He hopes to have more time to do that this year and look at a content management system for it.

Publicity

We have had June Young doing a great job of expanding who we are talking to – the media, publishers etc.

Fan Funds

Separate bank accounts have not been set up for these yet, the money is still held in the main SFFANZ accounts.

Financial Report

Simon Litten reported that SFFANZ funds are very fluid, helped in part from some generous donations from two fans particularly. We are still waiting to make payment for the creation of the SJV trophies – we are yet to be invoiced by Weta for these. It was expected the invoice will be sent once all trophies have been made. It is expected this will cost around \$1000.

Simon noted that the financial statements are for the period ended 31 January. This financial year was chosen as Easter can fall before 31 March as shown by next year's convention which runs from 21 to 24 March, so it is not possible to put the accounts through to 31 March

It was also noted that in the last year there was a membership increase of 14 people. Simon hoped this would increase with an active publicity officer. He also noted that the photocopier liability was an outstanding account from three years ago which hasn't been paid.

Keith Smith moved and Graham Edge seconded
“That the financial statements be accepted”
Carried.

Election of Officers

Norman called for nominations from the floor:

Candidates put forward:

James Dignan	Norman Cates	Malcolm Fletcher	Simon Litten
Maree Pavletich	June Young	Kevin MacLean	Colin Dijkgraaf
Brian Howell	Lynelle Howell		

A vote for the election of the nine officers was held. Keith Smith and Kath McKay acted as vote counters. After the votes were counted it was noted that the unsuccessful candidate was Kevin MacLean.

General Business

Patron/sponsor

It was noted that there had been a lot of discussion amongst the board on about this subject. The board had struggled with it because there were a lot of issues surrounding who the best person should be – who was high profile enough. Norman advised the meeting of a list of responsibilities Maree had found for a patron/sponsor and outlined the discussions the board had had on the subject – namely that we hadn't found where a patron had been particularly useful to like-minded organisations eg Philip Mann for Phoenix Science Fiction Society.

It was noted that suggested patrons discussed by the board included Peter Jackson, Philippa Boyens, Fran Walsh, and Margaret Mahy, however, the last had become ill of late and was removed from consideration. Simon noted that the tenor of the board's discussions became difficult due to the need for clear expectations to be provided to the patron, but the board itself was unclear on the issue. Malcolm Fletcher added that the cost/benefit ratio for a patron seemed to show more costs than benefits.

The meeting agreed that the matter needed to be resolved, even if a patron/sponsor was not sought. Graham Edge moved, and Brian Howell seconded:
“That SFFANZ not seek a patron at this point in time.”
Carried unanimously.

New Zealander status for SJVs

Questions were once again raised as to the definition of a New Zealander for the awards. It was confirmed by Norman and Simon a New Zealander, for the purposes of the awards, is defined as a citizen or resident as per the Citizenship Act. It was thought that this was the simplest way to define it.

Lyn McConchie questioned whether there were particular methods in place for checking citizenship status, and it was agreed this would need to be looked at on a case by case basis.

Lyn gave a brief history of why she raised the issue – mainly that authors who, whilst born in NZ, had spent much of their lives overseas, were claiming citizenship and nominations for the SJVs. It was agreed that it was better to be more inclusive than exclusive in terms of getting nominees and nominations.

Concern was also raised about overseas Nzers “double dipping” - that is running for the Vogels and the Ditmars. The meeting generally didn't have a problem with this. It was reported by David Cake (FFANZ delegate) that the Ditmar restrictions were the same as ours.

Number of nominations – single nominee ballots

To provide history, it was reported that three nominees were not included on the ballot paper because they were the only nominees in those categories.

Discussion on the issue followed. It was noted that if there is only a solo nominee, there are options open, such as “no award” or the category can be held over. Suggestion was also made that a “special award” could be given if the board felt it appropriate. Concern was raised about possible trivialising of the awards if there were only one nominee – particularly if it was self-nominated.

June Young indicated that with more publicity this situation may not arise in future.

Lyn McConchie advised that the Nebula selection process is a 3-tier system.

A suggestion was made to make the categories more flexible to avoid single nominees. Agreement centred on the idea that if there are less than three nominees shortly before nominations close, the board should find more.

This may be an ongoing issue.

Register of qualifying works

Simon Litten reported that he would like to set up a list of qualifying works which can be added to during the course of the year. Authors, publishers and the general fan population can add to this as the year goes on. Because much of the work created by New Zealanders is published overseas, this sort of register would help with nominations.

Jenny Hammond who works as a national librarian offered her assistance in this area.

Secret Ballots

A question was raised to some board members about the desire for secret ballots for the SJVs. This was raised at the meeting to gauge opinion from the SFFANZ membership. Norman reported that the Hugos (on which our SJV system is modelled) requires name and address on ballot papers. It was agreed by the meeting that the details on the voting papers were necessary for validation. Suggestions included removing the name and address section before counting begins, but it was agreed this would make them difficult to audit.

The new committee is to discuss this issue.

Government Sponsorship

Stephen Pritchard raised issues conventions are now having in getting funding because government bodies are not able to distinguish the separate nature of these one-off events. Because Icon was denied funding by Wellington City Council, Conspiracy2 was declined even though the events were unrelated. Stephen asked whether SFFANZ could make funding applications on behalf of conventions. Norman reported that this is what SFFANZ is set up to do. Legally binding together the two organisations would have to be handled carefully.

Email contact list

Stephen Pritchard also raised this issue saying Conspiracy2 had also run into issues here with the anti-SPAM legislation – that of using another group's distribution list. He questioned whether SFFANZ could send emails on behalf of conventions. He understood from the law (Privacy Act 1993) that conventions were not allowed to use the fans database.

Lesley Walker moved and Keith Smith seconded:"

"That the board be tasked with looking at the legal issues regarding email lists and connections to convention committees, to report back to the next annual meeting."

Carried with 1 dissension.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 11.38am.

Convention bidding

Conscription was the only bid received for the 2009 national convention.

Kevin MacLean (Chair), Malcolm Fletcher, Alan Parker spoke on behalf of the Conscription committee.

The convention is to be run over Queen's Birthday weekend of that year (June 1-4) and have a writing theme. Guest of honour is Julie Czernada and she will be running a writing workshop. Robbie Matthews of ASIM will be the Fan Guest of Honour.

They are looking to host the event in an inexpensive hotel, have two main streams and meal breaks.

Carried by show of hands with two absentions and three against.