



VOICE OF THE LOBSTER

John [unclear] 78

THE VOICE OF THE LOBSTER #1

is the first issue of a fanzine produced by the Noreascon II committee to encourage discussion of Worldcon management and related topics (more about the rationale on p. 2). Price 50¢ for a single issue, \$2.00 for all issues published (including back issues as long as they last), or free for a published contribution. No trades as such, but if your zine has something worth quoting (or just of interest to us), you'll probably get an issue in return. Send all correspondence to The Voice of the Lobster, c/o Noreascon II, P.O. Box 46, MIT Branch P.O., Cambridge, MA 02139

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You are getting this zine for one or more of the following reasons: (1) You sent money, in which case the number after your name on the address label indicates the last issue you're currently scheduled to receive ("A" means you've paid for all issues). (2) Something you wrote is printed or referred to herein. (3) You are a member of the Noreascon II committee, a newszine, a Worldcon bidding committee, or someone else with a need to know. (4) You are the sort of person we think likely to produce an interesting response. (5) It seemed the fannish thing to do.

Issue #2 should be out sometime around February, depending on how rapidly the response to this one comes in and how much time we have. See you then!

(last stencil typed 11/15/78)

The Voice of the Editor

George Flynn

Welcome to The Voice of the Lobster. You're probably wondering just what sort of publication this is going to be. In Progress Report Zero we described it as a fanzine concerned with "the details of Worldcon planning", but that's fairly vague. In this editorial I'll try to describe where the idea came from, and what we hope to make of it.

There's little doubt as to the basic source of the idea: it was Spicy Iguana Tales. For those of you who didn't see it, SIT was the zine "devoted mainly to in-print conversation with and between people interested in WorldCon planning" produced in 1977 by Greg Brown, then chairman of IguanaCon. Unfortunately, only one issue came out, as Greg became embroiled in bigger problems; but the idea was good. There are some differences, notably that Greg's was a private venture while this is an official publication of Noreascon II. But basically I'd like this zine to be what SIT should have been."

That model was before us when we considered a somewhat different problem. Some of us had expressed concern that Worldcon Progress Reports in recent years were getting increasingly bloated (read "expensive") so we were wondering what could be dropped. One possibility was the letter column, which was a recent innovation; but we didn't like to give up the chance for dialogue with the con members. Then the idea came: Why not have a separate letterzine just for people interested in that sort of thing? It wasn't that simple, of course. For quite a long time our ideas on publications ranged over a wide range of possibilities. But finally we settled on the following list:

1. Progress Reports of the usual sort (but a little thinner), at roughly 5-month intervals, containing the information that all the members of the con should know.
2. The Voice of the Lobster, coming out every two or three months for at least the first year, as a medium for people who want to vent their ideas on Worldcon-running.
3. Regular press releases every month or so, going to a list of newszines, major clubs, etc. (idea stolen from Pete Weston's Seacon Chairman's Newsletter).
4. And the monthly committee apa (Apa:80) for communication within the committee. This may well be the dullest apa in fandom, being mostly copies of official documents, but it's useful in giving us all a record of what's going on.

We also debated what to charge for this zine. Some thought it should go free to anyone who asked, but eventually we decided it wasn't fair for the whole con membership to subsidize a publication that only a few of them would get. So we set a roughly break-even price. As of this writing I've got about 50 paid subscriptions (all but one for the duration), which isn't even as many people as on the freebie list (committee members, newszines, Worldcon bidders, etc.); but I expect this will improve as word gets around.

"But what about the content?" you say. Well, that mostly depends on you. This, being the first issue, is mostly committee-written, but we do have a respectable collection of letters. I hope the balance will be better in later issues. The first couple of articles are fairly heavy going, but they do contain information that should be considered by anyone seriously interested in Worldcons.

As for the format ... well, this is your really basic fanzine. No interior art (but covers are welcome), no fancy graphics, not even typographical uniformity (since some pages were typed by divers hands on divers typewriters). The emphasis will be strictly on getting the information out in reasonably timely fashion. In short, this zine will be stark! minimal! ~~poorly~~ But if the idea isn't totally misguided, the bare words should stimulate enough interest. We'll see how it works.

One thing we haven't said is how many issues there'll be. Our price structure obviously implies at least four, but beyond that we just don't know. We've committed ourselves to putting it out only for the first year (i.e., until late 1979); what happens after that depends on reader interest, available funds, and especially the available time of the people concerned (mostly me). However it works out, it would be nice if later Worldcons took up the idea (hint! hint!).

* * * * *

Now some personal matters. I've never edited a fanzine before (not counting 125 apazines), so please bear with me. To tell the truth, what I'm doing is more assembling than editing, just setting the material down as it comes in and filling gaps; the lettercol in particular, you'll notice, is arranged in order of receipt.

As noted in the colophon, we have no trades as such, but we would like to see anything you have to say about us. I hope those of you whose zines I personally get will keep me on your mailing lists (though I'm afraid my loccing will be even more sporadic than usual for the next two years). I prefer to get fanzines at my R.I. mailing address (27 Sowamsett Ave., Warren, RI 02885), but I only get there every couple of weeks. So if your zine has something to say about Noreascon II, you'd better send it directly to the Noreascon box. (Or to me c/o the Noreascon box - in general there's no need to send separate copies to me and the con, but if you do I'll try to find the extra one a good home.)

I should explain at this point that I am in reality the Secret Master of Noreascon, and arranged the whole bid in order to give myself a pretext for publishing a fanzine at other people's expense. Mind you, if I had a dollar for every time I've written that I'd never put out a zine, I could probably afford it myself....

* * * * *

I ought to mention one superficially similar idea that's been in the air but did not inspire this zine. In Jackie Causgrove's Resolution 2, Joni Stopa had a proposal of a "Worldcon fanzine" - basically an anthology of the best material from fanzines, to be published every year by the current Worldcon committee in order to make convention fans familiar with fanzines. Needless to say, this is not that kind of a zine. It's a lovely idea, but not very practical: the expense of publishing a showcase like that for every member of the con would probably add several dollars to the membership fee, even if you could find somebody to do the work, and a lot of the recipients just wouldn't be interested. Pity. (For those of you who are interested, the same sort of thing does exist, albeit unsubsidized, in the hopefully annual series of Fanthologies. The most recently published is the Fanthology 76, available for \$3.00 from Victoria Vayne, P.O.Box 156, Stn. D, Toronto, Ont., Canada M6P 3J8. A volume covering 1977 should be out Real Soon Now.)

Where Did All That Money Go?

Leslie Turek

Financial information provided by Jill Eastlake

(being an explanation of Boston's Worldcon bidding strategies and their associated costs.)

I don't think anyone really knows for sure the most effective way to bid for a Worldcon or what goes on in the voter's mind when he decides who to support. We know that *we* certainly don't. But we can try to pass on what our theories were, what we did about them, and roughly how much each activity cost. We can't tell you how effective each of them was because we don't have the slightest idea. Maybe some of you who voted will write in your comments about what impressed you most and least about our (or another group's) bidding campaign. It won't affect this year's results, but it might prove to be useful information for future bidders. (And besides, we're curious.)

Sources of Income

The major source of our bidding committee income was assessments from the committee members. "Assessments" is a term defined in our bylaws as money paid in by the members which may later be returned to them (as opposed to "dues" which would not be returned). Another difference between dues and assessments is that the total assessment is the same for each member, regardless of when they joined the committee. That is, late-joining members were required to match the full amount that had already been paid by the charter members (although they were allowed to pay in installments if they wished). This was so that everyone would feel they had made an equal commitment with everyone else.

At the time of Iguanacon, we had 25 members and the total assessment levied on each member was \$90. Twenty of the twenty-five were paid up in full; five were behind, and we were also holding a few partial assessments from three people who had resigned from the committee. Total income from assessments was \$2274.34.

Income from other sources totalled \$942.12. This breaks down as follows:

23.07	Bank interest
269.00	Pre-supporting memberships
250.00	Donation from MESFA
300.00	Donation from Sheraton-Boston (see Parties)
86.30	Donations from individuals
6.25	Button sales
7.50	TAFF/DUFF art auction
<hr/>	
942.12	
2274.34	Assessments
<hr/>	
3216.46	Total income

Summary of Bidding Expenses

814.93	Advertising
425.51	Advertising overhead
648.98	Flyers
321.20	Buttons and stickers
92.41	Slide show
489.43	Parties
466.56	Administrative
<hr/>	
3259.02	Total reimbursed expenses

("Total reimbursed expenses" does *not* include expenses incurred by individual committee members that were not reimbursed by the committee. This includes travel to conventions and most bidding parties that were held.)

Advertising

The main thrust of our campaign was advertising in convention progress reports and program books, particularly Worldcon publications, and *most* particularly Iggy's Progress Report 4, which accompanied the mail site-selection ballots. Although we all agreed that this was the most essential part of our campaign, it was also the most expensive. With costs for Worldcon ads ranging up to \$50 a page, and with an average of five Worldcon publications a year, we spent a total of \$699.93 on Worldcon ads and only an additional \$115.00 on ads in regional convention program books and other fannish publications. We did not do as much regional advertising as we could have - with a good-sized regional being held about every weekend, it would have been easy to spend \$500 a year on such ads. We decided to concentrate on Boskone (where we expected to find strong support), major regionals like Westercon, and cons in the Arizona area, where it seemed that a large proportion of the members would also be Iguanacon members.

Two free ads came our way. We convinced the Iguanacon Committee to subsidize one page of advertising per bidding committee, on the theory that informed voters are better voters. Secondly, *Galileo* magazine offered us a free page in return for a short article about Worldcons. This appeared in their July issue, which was probably too late to affect most of the mail voters.

We also received refunds for two ads that were published late or in the wrong publications by Suncon (1 page) and Iguanacon (1/2 page). The Iguanacon ad was the one that announced our "Name That Con" contest, and it was published so late that it was distributed *after* the contest deadline. Balanced against these refunds, there was also an ad that we paid for that never appeared - our ad for the Suncon post-con report.

We did receive a couple of letters from fans who said that our ad in Iggy PR4 was what convinced them to vote for us. If you apply the old adage that for every person who bothers to write, there are many more who agree but didn't bother to write, you could conclude that the PR4 ad made quite an impact.

Advertising Overhead

This category includes the cost of ad preparation (typesetting, photostats, etc.) and of mailing out the ads and flyers.

It's not really necessary to use typesetting in order to come up with attractive ads. A carbon-ribbon typewriter and carefully laid down transfer type can also produce neat looking ads (although even transfer type is getting to be fairly expensive these days). Our early ads, which featured art by Steve Fabian and James Shull, were done in this manner. But later we were lucky enough to find a local do-it-yourself typesetting place that charges by the hour and were able to typeset most of our later ads without paying a fortune.

Photostating is a cheap way of making reduced or enlarged copies of text or line artwork for use in a pasteup. It's also a good idea to mail out photostats of pasteups rather than the originals in case of lossage.

One area of attack that does not involve spending money, but logically falls in with typesetting and suchlike, is the choice of a theme or logo for the campaign. It was decided early on that our mascot should be a lobster, and this theme was enhanced by some excellent artwork by Mike Symes, Cortney Skinner, Eddie Jones, and Mike Moyle. In addition, we wanted to choose a consistent typeface for our committee name. After much haggling (people can get surprisingly emotional about typefaces) we stumbled upon "Shooting Star" and found instant unanimity. It then took ten phone

calls to find a place that could set it. (We hadn't discovered our do-it-yourself place then.) Here is another situation where photostats came in handy. We had the name set only twice - once in all caps and once in caps and lower case, and then used photostats to generate all the various sizes we needed for ads, stationery, etc.

Flyers

In the early days of our bid, we didn't have a lot of information to convey to the voters. Our first flyer was a one-sheet affair that simply gave our name and address, the members of the committee, and the name of our hotel. On the back, we gave brief resumes for all the committee members. This flyer was distributed at Fan Fair in Toronto and a few East Coast conventions. Our second flyer was simply a copy of our ad for the Suncon Program Book; it also listed the committee members, but also attempted to give some idea of our feelings of what a Worldcon should be.

But as soon as we had more information that we wanted to make available to the voters, we decided that we should design one major four-page flyer that should be attractively put together and packed with as much information as we could fit into it. It would contain descriptions of our facilities, the local area, and the committee members. It would be impossible to fit all of this information into a typical ad, and the flyer would give us something to send out when people requested information.

The four-page flyer cost \$197.84 (not including typesetting) for the first 5000. They were printed just before Suncon, and most of them were gone by Iggy, so we had to print up another 1000 more. Most of them were distributed by being set out on the freebie tables at conventions; even when we couldn't attend a convention we made sure to send out a package of flyers. Many people offered to run copies through their newszines (*Karacs*, *File 770*), clubzines (NESFA, NFFF), and APAs. They didn't disappear too quickly from the freebie tables, perhaps because many people were intimidated by the pages of small print. (A certain unnamed BNF was heard to groan, "You really don't expect me to read all this, do you?") But we'd like to think that the people who did take it and did read it were suitably impressed.

One maneuver that eased the cost of printing flyers somewhat was that one of our members, while watching the fund-raising auction of our local PBS station, bid on and won \$100 worth of printing for a cost of only \$65 to the committee.

For Boskone, we designed a special-purpose flyer, aimed primarily at the local Boston fan who regularly attends Boskones, but doesn't normally travel to the Worldcons. We wanted to make absolutely sure that such a person realized that there was a chance that a Worldcon might come to Boston, and to tell him what he could do to help make it happen.

For Iggy, we also produced a supplemental "Iguanacoon Update" flyer, which contained additional material such as the names of our agents, one new committee member, facilities floor plans, restaurant lists, information about our tax exemption, etc.

Of course there were other brochures we were able to get free from the Hotel, the Auditorium, and the Boston Convention and Tourist Bureau. These were also distributed as widely as we could manage.

Buttons and Stickers

We did make up some buttons in the beginning, but when we started to think about ordering them in large quantities we were somewhat staggered by the cost. We tried out selling them rather than giving them away, but it seemed to be too much of a pain to keep track of the quarters. We used NESTA's Badge-a-Minit to make up some committed badges, but that also would have been expensive and impractical for large quantities.

So, we looked into stickers and they appeared to be much cheaper - we could get 5000 stickers for \$61.74 (as opposed to only 1000 1 1/2 inch buttons for \$120). As it turned out, the stickers were a win, but we did go through many more stickers than we expected. Some people manage to bring a button to several conventions, where a sticker gets used at one and then discarded. Also stickers may be used in other ways, as in decorating fannish correspondence, etc.

We ordered two batches of stickers - the first about 3000 and the second 5000 - and we were still a bit low going into Iggy. The first batch of stickers were rectangular, with a shiny silver background and a lobster and the words "Boston" and "1980" printed in blue. Some of us felt that the words didn't show up clearly enough, so the second batch was entirely different: they were elliptical, the printing was white on blue, and they contained only the one word "Boston" in shooting star type. These were much more striking, but we had also apparently sacrificed their individuality, since a few people asked us whether we had gotten the stickers from the Chamber of Commerce.

I don't know how effective the stickers (or buttons) are as a vote-getting device. Unlike advertisements and flyers, they don't convey any information in themselves, but they do tell you that the person wearing the sticker supports us. Fans are pretty independent and not likely to do something just because everyone else is doing it, but I would suspect there's some impact if a fan sees that someone he respects supports a particular bid. (If only to cause him to ask, "Hey, how come you're supporting *them*?")

It also seems that sometimes just the action of asking someone to wear a sticker initiates the decision process. It seems that many people who can easily ignore written appeals find that they have to acknowledge a face-to-face personal confrontation.

Pre-Supporting (and Pre-Opposing) Memberships

Selling pre-supporting memberships for \$1 each is not a money-making proposition. By the time you acknowledge the membership and send out flyers, stickers, buttons, or whatever, you've spent most of the dollar. And then you've got the trouble of keeping track of them all. (It turned out to be discouragingly easy to lose the records of pre-supporting memberships sold informally at convention parties. This does *not* make a good impression.) And if you give pre-supporters a \$1 discount on their Worldcon memberships, then you've got to keep track of that, too.

There is a psychological advantage to having pre-supporting memberships, of course. It gave us a core of people who were publicly on our side and many of them offered to take flyers to conventions and campaign for us. And it also gave us a ready-made list of people to remind to vote when the site selection ballots were sent out. But it wasn't really a major source of income.

I suppose I should explain about pre-opposing memberships. I have a very good friend, Fred Isaacs, who gaffiated from fandom several years ago. He is of the opinion that anyone who wants to run a Worldcon is crazy. (He's right, of course, so I won't mention that he was the treasurer of Noreascon I.) He was also aware that if I were to become a Worldcon chairman, he would see even less of me than we currently manage. So when I mentioned that we were offering pre-supporting memberships, he jokingly asked whether he could have a pre-opposing membership instead. "Sure", I said, "but it'll cost you more". And that's how it started.

(We had great fun trying to explain pre-opposing memberships to the IRS in the space on the tax exemption form that asked about our sources of income!)

Slide Show and Movies

When faced with the chance of being allowed to do bid presentations at Suncon and other conventions, we thought it would be a good idea to prepare a slide show. It would allow us to illustrate our talk with pictures of the committee, our facilities, etc., and it seemed that it would be more interesting for the audience than just people standing up and talking.

The show was fun to put together and not very expensive - many of the slides already existed and just needed to be copied. But the impact it had was very dependent on the situation in which it was shown. If scheduled as a program item in its own right, or as part of a series of bid presentations, particularly if it was preceded by a break that allowed milling around, the room tended to empty quickly and few people would stay to see it. On the other hand, it was very successful at B'Hamacon (77) and Marcon (78), where it was shown to a large captive audience that was in a mellow mood (having just finished a banquet) and wasn't going anywhere because speeches or voting results were yet to come. We also took to showing it at our parties, where there were usually at least a few people interested in seeing it. (We would run through it even if only one person requested it.)

We also had some Chamber of Commerce type films available to us for free. The best of these, "Massachusetts - A Special Place", featured Governor Dukakis trading jokes with Leonard Nimoy, and Arlo Guthrie singing his song "Massachusetts".

And at some conventions, we were able to show "Space 2999", a fanciful satire produced by Craig Mathieson and friends, which had a plug for Boston in 1980 subtly hidden within it.

Parties

There seems to be a general expectation in fandom that bidding committees should hold bidding parties. It's not that they accomplish much, since people seldom want to hear about the details of your bid in the middle of a party. And while meeting and talking to the committee may be helpful, the voters can hardly judge a group's con-running ability on the basis of their bidding parties. It seems, rather, that a *lack* of such parties makes people start to think that your bid is not really serious, or that you're a dull, uninteresting group of people who would put on a dull, uninteresting convention.

But parties can be expensive, ruinously so if you try to cover all of the major regionals. So we decided fairly early on that the committee couldn't possibly manage to finance a full-scale party effort. Committee-financed parties would be held only at Suncon, Iggy, and the Westercon just before Iggy, and any other parties would have to be held and financed at the option of the individual committee members attending the convention.

At MAC, several committee members were willing to absorb the cost of a suite which was used for our bidding parties, a Minneapolis in '73 bidding party, and the Heyer Tea.

At Suncon, the suites were more expensive, so we managed to arrange with the Fontainebleau to get all of our individual sleeping rooms blocked together. That way we were able to hold large parties in a series of rooms. The open rooms weren't always the same each night, but people knew generally where to find us. Having several small rooms had the additional advantage that different activities could occur in different rooms - there could be a folksinging room, a no-smoking room, a room to show our bidding slide show and the various movies we brought (according to a posted schedule, of course).

At Iggy we had the advantage of getting financial aid from the Sheraton-Boston Hotel. It went like this: We said, "We understand that you are willing to send a hotel representative to Phoenix to help us with our bid". Our hotel rep said, "Yes,

we could do that if you think it would do you some good." We said, "Frankly, it wouldn't. But what *would* help is if you took the money you would have spent on his plane fare and used it to sponsor our bidding parties instead." "Hmm...", said the hotel rep. "That's an unorthodox suggestion, but I'll see what I can do." What he could do turned out to be a check for \$300, which was a big help.

At Iggy, in addition to our blocked committee rooms, we also rented a large double to use as our central party headquarters. We didn't have to pay for every night, since we were sharing it with NESFA (who used it for a New England party Thursday night) and the Boston Massaquerade (who used it for a post-Masquerade party on Saturday night). We supplemented the party room with additional members' rooms and this worked out quite well.

Administrative Expenses

There's got to be a certain bare minimum of postage and phone expenses. We tried to avoid making long distance phone calls because they can get very expensive. The rest of the expenses in this category are things that are nice to have but not vital. This includes stationery (with the shooting star logo, of course), a post office box so the committee will have a continuing address, and so forth.

Then there was the committee APA. This was started a year and a half before Iggy and was distributed more-or-less monthly. It contained regular reports, minutes of the meetings, copies of important letters sent and received, and comments from the members about various issues facing us. For example, before we had to decide what our Progress Report Ad rates would be, we distributed a work sheet showing the estimated costs for printing, envelopes, and postage, broken down on a per-page basis to give us a concrete starting point for our discussion. Because it was important to get this APA out quickly, it was xeroxed and had to be mailed first class to many of the committee members. Luckily for our finances, we were able to get most of the xeroxing done free.

Gimmicks

These are not strictly necessary, but add a spark of fanciness to an otherwise dull and unexciting campaign. Some of the gimmicks we used were marshmallows stamped "Boston in 1980" in food coloring handed out at Suncon and various regionals, gourmet jelly beans at Marcon, several hundred feet of computer-printed banner hung over the balcony of the Hyatt at Iggy, and two dozen 12-inch red plastic lobsters (\$21.42) which were set to swimming in selected ice-filled bathtubs. Our opposition countered with a kazoo band and flying saucer guns. None of this cost very much and it was fun.

Ruminations

I have to admit that I'm not very happy about a situation where it can cost over \$3000 just to bid for a Worldcon (and remember, that \$3000 doesn't even include all the personal expenditures by the committee members for traveling to conventions and holding parties.) We were able to do it because we had a lot of members, so the burden on each of us was relatively light. But a pricetag like that can easily discourage people from bothering to bid.

Of course a group could mount a campaign that cost less, but would it win? I don't know. What do the fans consider when deciding which group to vote for? Fancy ads, good parties, friends on the committee, con-running experience, or do they just select the city they'd rather take a vacation to? In the old days, when a smaller group of people voted, everyone knew everyone else. Now, with the mail balloting, there are a lot of people voting who don't know much about either group, who need to be informed somehow. So even a minimal campaign has got to include a fair amount of advertising (at prices around \$50 per page). And as soon as you try to travel around to put on parties, you're watching your bidding budget zoom out of sight.

I don't know what the solution is. The only thing I want to say, to those of you who have shown the interest to forge through this article, is don't judge the bidding committees on the amount of money they spend on their campaign - on how much beer they buy for their parties or how many pages of typeset ads they put in Progress Reports. Try to look beyond the hype and look at the PEOPLE who will be running the Worldcon. Look at what they've done, what they say, what people who have worked with them think about them. The only way to get us out of this spiral of ever-increasing expenditures is for the bidders to know that spending money doesn't impress anyone - that the fans are looking carefully at the bidding groups and are making a sensible decision based on their merits.

* * * * *

Some items from Noreascon II's first press release (Oct. 11, 1978):

The committee has set a policy for children's memberships, as follows: Children who are accompanying adults, and not attending the convention in their own right, need not have membership in the convention; however, children who will be participating in the convention as individual persons rather than as dependents will need to purchase attending memberships at the regular rate. The committee leaves it to the parent, guardian, or other relevant adult to decide which category applies in each case, but would like to point out that children who do not have their own memberships must be attended at all times, and will not be admitted to functions without an associated adult.

Over the past month, the committee has been processing the 1160 memberships received at Iguanacon by entering them into the computer and generating test labels. A mailing has been sent to all these members to check addresses and inform them of the voting results and conversion rates. The convention now has members from all states except South Dakota and Maine, all Canadian provinces except Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland, and several other countries.

(The rest of the press release simply announced our victory and duplicated the basic information on GoH's, rates, etc. contained in Progress Report Zero.)

* * * * *

Mass mailings like the one mentioned above have revealed that we've already lost some of our members (or at least the post office is returning the letters we send them). We'd appreciate information on the current addresses of any of the following people (previous locations indicated):

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Barry D. Gehm (Lebanon IL) | Johnny M. Lee (Houston TX) |
| Lester K. Greathouse (Kansas City MO) | Don c/o Lindsay (Hazeldean, Ont.) |
| Susan Guthman (St. Paul MN) | Tom Marcinko (Champaign IL) |
| David Kadecek (San Jose CA) | Dale A. Martin (Lowry AFB CO) |
| Greg Ketter (St. Paul MN) | Jerri Olson (San Diego CA) |
| Leslie Knight (Phoenix AZ) | Donna L. Sutton (Perris CA) |

Setting Membership Rates for the Worldcon

Jim Hudson

PR#1, which has already been written, but will not appear at your doorstep for a few months yet, has a brief discussion of how we wound up with the (UNREASONABLE; TOO EXPENSIVE; choose your own expletive) attending membership rates of \$10 for site selection voters, and \$15 for others who join in the first few months. I'm going to try to describe that process in more detail, since there are some things in it that break with tradition (defined, as usual in fandom, as anything which has happened once before). While this will let us in for considerable potential flack, fandom has always had controversy, and we believe that we should be open about such things. I hope that we will be printing our actual, real, operating budgets in VotL in the future, since those can also be discussed. I, at least, don't like waiting for months after the con before I see how the money was spent (if a report is ever published at all). Besides, your comments may help us, or perhaps aid the next Worldcon down the line to some degree.

When one is planning three years in advance of an event, and with data from smaller and shorter regionals, one does a lot of guessing. To set our rates, we needed to guess what our costs would be, and what our attendance was likely to be, and how many people would join at each level of the rate scale.

Revenues

In planning, we wanted to make sure we broke even in the worst case that was likely to happen, which was the minimum attendance where we would have to use the Hynes Auditorium; (the Hynes, unlike our hotel facilities, charges us a stiff rental fee). That attendance was 3000 attending, with about another 1000 supporting; and we needed to be able to run a good convention at this low attendance. However, we also needed to analyze the possibility of high attendance such as 4500 attending and 1500 supporting: The time patterns we assumed for these were:

	LOW ATTENDANCE		HIGH ATTENDANCE	
	Supporting	Attending	Supporting	Attending
Voting	500	500	500	500
First Period	200	600	400	700
Second Period	200	800	400	1000
Third Period	100	1000	200	1800
At the Door	---	<u>100</u>	---	<u>500</u>
Total	1000	3000	1500	4500

Costs

The costs we estimated are, of course, very rough -- so rough that I wouldn't even stoop to calling them a budget. In any case, here's the overall breakdown, with some details on a couple of areas:

Membership Division	\$6700
mailing labels, mailing permits, postage, foreign postage, bounce fees, at-con badges, hotel liaison	
Guest of Honor expenses, publicity, misc.**	
Publications Division	18800
progress report typesetting and printing: \$7700	
program book typesetting, printing, binding: \$7800	
post-con report: \$2000	
Voice of the Lobster, daily newszine, photography, taping, and closed circuit (though no \$ for that): \$1400	
Operations Division	6790-9730
headquarters supplies and communications: \$980	
truck rental: \$700	
guards, locks, insurance: \$2810-\$4250	
staffing costs and tips: \$2300-\$3800	
Hynes Rental	20000
exhibit hall, auditorium, seat setup and teardown, cleaning, guards, <u>union</u> staff, etc.*	
Program Division	6400
microphones, post and phone in planning, etc.: \$1300	
discussion groups: \$100	
film program: \$5000	
Exhibits Division	1250
art show: \$1000 hangings subsidy, otherwise breaks even	
hucksters: \$200 costs (revenues below)	
misc.: \$50	
Functions Division	3300
masquerade: \$1500; banquet breaks even	
parties: \$1500 (more if more people)	
filksing and misc.: \$300	
WSFS Division (Hugos, ballots, etc., assuming free computer)	1050
Administrative	5350-5850
post office box, stationary, CPA, bidding exp., etc.	
SUBTOTAL (if con held in 1977)	<u>\$69635-73075</u>
25% inflation to September 1980	<u>17410-18270</u>
SUBTOTAL for 1980 convention	\$87045-91345
Revenues (advertising: \$5000; hucksters: \$6000)	<u>-11000-11000</u>
TOTAL TO BE PAID BY MEMBERSHIP FEES (worst case)	\$80345

All classes should pay for the services they receive. Therefore, both supporting and attending members should pay for membership services, publications, WSFS, and Administrative costs, which total (net of advertising income) \$27,395. At 4000 members, this is \$7 each, and it stays relatively constant as the con grows, since we're beyond most scale economies. So, the non-attending rate should average \$7.00. The 3000 of these members who attend must pay an additional (\$80345-\$28000), or an additional \$17 each, which gives an average attending rate in this worst case of \$24.00.

**example calculation: non-profit bulk mail is 73¢/1000/page, with 150 pages in progress reports, and 128 in the program book. So it will cost \$800 in postage and envelopes for US mailing. Foreign AO mail is about another \$900 (see Jan Howard Finder's article in "The Avening Aardvark" for some ideas on that)

* Honest, and that's the special non-profit, non-open admission estimate, at that

Implications for the Rates

Therefore, the basic budget of \$90,000, given the "low" attendance estimates, implied costs of \$7 per person for Supporting, and \$24 per person for attending. With larger attendance, the supporting costs would be the same, or close to it, while the cost per attending membership would be closer to \$20 on the average. Now for a couple of principles:

- o memberships of different classes should pay for the services they receive, as described above.
- o people who join earlier should get lower rates
- o people who took the trouble to vote, for either candidate, deserve a lower rate than those who didn't*

* We think that people who care enough to vote, even if it's no preference, deserve to be recognized and supported in doing so, and that the best way to recognize their trouble is to give them a lower rate. In any case, we decided that way, and we'll see what discussion occurs, and what happens in the future.

The initial rates for supporting members had to be set to allow us to reach an average of \$7 per member, when balanced by the later members. Similarly, the initial rates for attending members had to be set to allow us to reach an average of \$20 to \$24, depending on the numbers later on. For supporting, it was easy: if the 500 supporting voters got memberships at \$5 each, then the later supporting members would get charged \$8, and we would approximately balance. The problem with attending was more difficult, however.

If we charged \$5 attending to voters we would lose \$15-\$19 on each, or \$7,000 - \$10,000 in total. We would have to make that up by having the later attending members pay an average of \$25-\$30, which would have meant an immediate jump to \$20, and rates of more than \$30 starting next spring. Giving a break to voters was fine, but giving a break of \$15 or more seemed like doing too much. So, we decided instead on the \$10 for voting conversions/\$15 for new attending rates, rising to \$20 in January, and to somewhat higher around Seacon. I should point out that it is very hard to use money that comes in at the door. You can't really count on it in your basic planning and budgeting, because it may not come in, and even if it does, it's too late for you to use it effectively at the convention for the attendees. The basic convention has to be supported by those who join in advance, so the rates should provide an incentive to do so.

Obviously, we can't go back now and change what we've done, but we are interested in what you have to say, since it may change our future rate decisions, or affect the plans of future Worldcons. (I should mention that we, like the rest of you, have paid for our memberships; I guess that it won't be surprising, though, that most of us voted).

We have made one conclusion in hindsight: WE SHOULD HAVE PUBLISHED OUR FIRST PERIOD RATES IN ADVANCE, instead of just answering questions, and we recommend publication to future committees. Voters are generally intelligent, and appear able to vote on the overall quality of the bid, not just for a few \$ savings on one portion of the cost, so openness and information will help people make better decisions.

George Flynn here. Since Jim wrote his article, we have in fact set the membership rates for most of the time remaining until the con. Disregarding the refinements for voters and presupporters (which expire at the end of 1978 anyway), the schedule is now:

	Supporting	Conversion	Attending
Remainder of 1978	8.00	7.00	15.00
January-June, 1979	8.00	12.00	20.00
July, 1979-June, 1980	8.00	22.00	30.00
July, 1980-at the door	8.00	not set	not set

Note that we set the jump to the next stage at July 1, rather than "around Seacon" as Jim had hoped. This is because Seacon is just about the time when we'll have to make a final decision on how much space to reserve in the Hynes Auditorium, and we'll need as good a projection of attendance as possible before making that decision. (Raising the rate, of course, is a powerful incentive for people who are going to join anyway to do so before the deadline.)

The at-the-door rate is still to be decided. We'd like to keep the rate as low as we can, but that depends on how the cash-flow situation looks as we approach the con. If the rate does go higher than \$30 it shouldn't be by much, since as Jim said you can't do much with at-the-door money; but it does make sense to have some incentive for joining before the con, if only to ease the burden on the registration lines. One of our main aims in the whole process was to keep the ratio between initial and final rates lower than in recent years (so as to spread the cost more evenly over the membership), and we should at least manage to do that. (In comparing these rates with past years', don't forget that inflation should make \$30 in 1980 the equivalent of, say, \$22 in 1976. *Sigh*)

* * * * *

For those of you who like hard data, here are some unofficial membership figures as of November 1, 1978. We came back from IguanaCon with about 1162 memberships, 805 supporting and 357 attending. In September we received 21 new memberships (3 supporting, 18 attending) and 29 conversions to attending membership. In October we received 65 new memberships (13 supporting, 52 attending) and 220 conversions; also, IguanaCon forwarded 11 ballots that arrived at the Tucson box after everyone had left for Phoenix. So if my addition is right, that gives us 573 supporting and 692 attending, for a total of 1265 memberships. (As I said, these figures are unofficial, based on my own tabulations of the incoming mail. Also, they include a number of people who sent insufficient amounts - see my article "A Cautionary Tale" - and haven't made up the difference yet. But they should be quite close to the official count, which will appear in Progress Report 1, along with the return of the traditional map of membership distribution.) Our experience with fannish mailing habits leads us to expect a flood of new memberships and conversions at the last minute before the rates go up.

I didn't bother to explain the title of this zine, did I? Well, the lobster was the symbol/logo of the Boston bid for about a year and a half before we won, so why give up a good thing? And you do all recognize the quotation the title's based on ... don't you?

The Voice of the Locster
(Letters)

((This section is really what the zine is all about. Since this is only the first issue, we don't have any real locs (letters of comment, in case there are any neos reading this) yet. Still, we have gotten a fair amount of mail already, and this column includes some of the more quotable letters.))

((Comments by me, the editor, are enclosed in double parentheses like those around this paragraph. As elsewhere in the zine, OFFICIAL responses are so indicated and distinguished from my personal opinions.))

((We actually got the first complaint about our policies two months before we won the bid. (What other Worldcon can make that statement?) Here's how it happened: You know about our "Name That Con" contest, the results of which were reported in Progress Report Zero. Well, at an intermediate stage in the voting we were down to seven relatively sane names, and a little later we sent a report to the contest entrants listing those semi-finalists along with the full list of entries. It drew this response:))

Tod Levitt
July 15, 1978

All the first place names suck. ... ALL of them display a notable lack of energy and imagination - (with the possible exception of the "Noreascon" names, which lose out for triteness - they're used). You people (who voted on these) are just plain chickenshit. I mean, dammit, a World Science Fiction Convention deserves to have a World Shaking Name.

Where's your courage? Two if by Sea Con - BosClave - ColonyCon - CapeCon are all better and less conventional than your choices. (Well, YankeeCon is fair.) I think you should continue the contest until you get a really great name. You got 2 years anyway.

((Well, you can't please everybody. For the record, the other semifinalists besides Noreascon Two were HubCon, MasCon, Noreascon Too, PineCone, TeaCon, and YankeeCon; I voted for MasCon myself. And while I think of it, be it noted that the official spelling is "Noreascon", not "NorEasCon" or anything else with internal capitals; this should save us a considerable amount of energy in shift-key-pushing. Let's move on to letters we received after we won.))

Ronald M. Salomon
September 3, 1978

Aug. 29-Sep. 1 seems such a short time for a worldcon. New trend? Iggy with 6 days seems about right. I'm just getting used to not sleeping and now that my vision has begun edging more into the ultraviolet things seem so purrty! I just like to get more of a good thing.

((OFFICIAL: First of all, our announced schedule is only one day shorter than Iggy's, not two: we follow the old custom of counting from the opening ceremony, even if some programming does start the night before. As a matter of fact, of the 10 Worldcons before Iggy, 6 were officially 4 days and 4 were officially 5 days, even though every one had only 4 days of full programming. Our schedule isn't absolutely final, but it's as much as we're prepared to commit ourselves to at this early date. One problem with extending the program earlier is that there's another convention in the hotel during the week, so space is tight. We're thinking of organizing tourist-type activities outside the hotel for early arrivals, though. We'll make a final decision on this before the hotel reservation cards

go out.))

((Personally I can see arguments both ways on this. I know that a lot of people will be around six days or longer no matter what the schedule is - especially if the 7-day-minimum air fares continue in effect. But many others can't get away from work or school for more than the weekend, so a longer program is unfair to them. There's also the factor that the longer the con lasts, the more money the attendees must spend. A less obvious but quite important point is that a long con may totally exhaust the people running it: there's a limit to how many days you can go without sleep. Certainly Ron isn't alone in his opinion; Charlie Brown in Locus 214 also said "Only four days long." Anyway, most of the people willing to spend a week at a Worldcon don't need programming to amuse themselves. Well, back to Ron.))

Can't somebody figure out how to get such anomalies as Locus and SFR off of fanzine area awards and "get back to where you once belonged" - ~~in the gutter~~ to fanzines and not large circ semi-prozines and money-makers for people? I mean, really friends, just to name 2 of many, Don C. Thompson and Don D'Amassa are deserving types, while Geis is undeserving (so you can stop snarling, Alter), but the category don't fit the award or something like that.

And give the Gandalfs to the World Fantasy Con.

And don't allow awards in succeeding years to the same work (Star Wars '77 Suncon spec & '78 Iggy best) which locks up one space which could have gone to a more timely entry. Hi, Noah!

((On the first point, the category has now been changed to fit the award: see my article on the Iguanacon business meeting. I prefer the smaller, more fannish zines myself; but as long as there are over 1000 people voting on the Hugos, the large-circulation publications will be the only ones most of the electorate are familiar with. And I think there are enough of them to deserve an award of their own, even if "fanzine" may not be the best name for the category. (But what do you call them? They certainly aren't the same sort of animal as Analog et al., but 'semi-pro' would revive all the old eligibility arguments. Like it or not, most of the voters think they are "fanzines".) But if you don't like the current rules, the thing to do is come to the business meeting and submit an amendment. In the meantime, there are always the FAAn Awards....))

((You aren't the only one to object to the Gandalfs. We're now up to three non-Hugo awards (two Gandalfs and the Campbell) on the Hugo ballot, and a number of people have expressed concern about where this proliferation will stop. It's not a serious practical problem yet - the additional printing expense is trivial, and the sponsoring groups of course pay for the awards themselves; however, it does already add 30% to the time needed to count the ballots. But as Linda Bushyager put it in Karass 37, the Worldcon "lends its prestige to these awards, and people are beginning to confuse them with the legitimate Hugos. ... Why should the Hugos be diluted by their presence?" Putting them on the ballot is entirely up to the discretion of the Worldcon committee, so we'd like to hear what people think about this question.))

((The award SunCon gave Star Wars wasn't a Hugo but a "Special Committee Award". I thought it was in dubious taste myself, but it had nothing to do with SW's Hugo eligibility, which under the rules was quite properly this year. -- Ron had a lot of other things to say, but mostly practical suggestions, rather than the sort of policy questions that belong here. Such as....))

David Emerson
September 19, 1978

Gougers!

Fifteen is outrageous for a ground-floor rate. The Great Hoo-Hoo will GF™ you for this.

Sign me up for attending membership anyway. And take back your barrel.

((We had a few oral complaints about our membership rates, but so far this is the only letter we've gotten on the subject. (The newszine DNQ 8 did remark that "the membership prices ... are at an all-time high.") Elsewhere in this zine you'll find an article by Jim Hudson explaining how we set our rates. The basic point is a philosophical one, our decision that the spread between "ground-floor rates" and at-the-door rates shouldn't be as great as at some recent Worldcons, but that the cost should be shared more evenly by all the attendees. -- And no, I don't know anything about the barrel.))

Elaine Stansfield
September 25, 1978

I don't think anyone can contest the fact that Iguanacon was terrific and the committee did a marvelous job in the face of some great difficulties. But cons can always be improved, and I'd like to suggest a few things which came to mind: (a) a very simple convenience would be paper bags with handles instead of the large envelope for our registration package. (b) Any meeting room at which the GoH is scheduled to speak must be a large room, and really ought not to conflict with any other important meeting. (c) Some possible coordinating of meeting rooms with subject matter might be attempted so one is not scuttling like a grasshopper. In other words, I missed a lot of meetings because I was in the wrong building to visit two panels or talks of like interest. (d) In fact, some of the conflicts looked like the 3 major TV networks competing for prime time. Let's not do that. (e) Lots of bulletin boards is definitely indicated. (f) Can anything at all be done about assigning double rooms to people who want to split the cost? Hell, supposedly we're all friends, not really strangers, who only need a place to crash! (g) I think it's OK with most of us to have the movies listed daily, rather than an advance program which just doesn't come off, right?

((OFFICIAL: (b) We believe that nothing should be scheduled opposite the main GoH speeches (though that doesn't necessarily apply to every time a GoH appears on a panel, say). (f) I'm sure you can see that the committee can't officially have anything to do with organizing "crashing" in the strict sense, and for room reservations you have to deal directly with the hotel; as mentioned in a later letter, it's too much hassle for the committee to get involved in this.))

(((a) It strikes me that shopping-bag registration packets would be a lot bulkier than envelopes, and that there'd be some danger of stuff falling out before you got it. (c) This will be much less of a problem in 1980, because all of our programming will be in a single hotel or the directly connecting Hynes Auditorium. (f) Some people gamble on taking a double themselves and finding a roommate at the con; since "we're all friends", it usually works out. ("Lots of bulletin boards" are obviously a help

toward accomplishing this.) (g) From our experience at Boskones, it's not impossible to have a film program that does come off (this year we did get two minutes off schedule once),)

Charles Seelig
September 26, 1978

There are at the moment two things I'd like to see happen at World-con. A couple of issues back in Proper Boskonian, someone ((Jim Hudson, in PB 15)) suggested that there should be Hugo Awards for individual pieces of art. Since this would be the first time that this would occur, the categories should just be two, Color and Black and White. Nominations could be sent in the same way as story nominations are; the name of the work, the artist, and when and where it was published. The Hugo Award for best overall artist could still be included along with the other two awards. My other suggestion is to have a seminar or workshop on the publishing of fanzines and APAs. This has probably been done before (in fact I'm sure of it), but why not do it again?

((We're way ahead of you: see again the article on the IguanaCon business meeting. This is just what's being considered, except that no one else has proposed keeping the present award along with the new ones. -- Fanzine workshops have indeed been held in the past, and will be again.))

Harry J.N. Andruschak
September 29, 1978

What I am interested in is that part of the WSFS Constitution known as Article II, section 12. "Special Category." What does this mean? In my opinion, to give a Hugo to persons who might not otherwise get one, for work in the SF field that amounts to Hugo quality. ...

((Harry then went on to propose a particular candidate for such an award, and we have a letter from someone else proposing a different candidate for a "special Hugo". Sorry, but that's not what Section 12 means. "Special Category" means exactly that, a category within which candidates can be nominated and voted on by the members of the convention. For example, Aussiecon proposed the category "Best Contribution to the Field" (though the nominations scattered so widely that they left it off the final ballot). Any concon can give a special award to a deserving individual (like the one mentioned above that SunCon gave to Star Wars), but that's not a Hugo; under the rules that term is restricted to awards chosen by the membership. (Section 13: "The name (Hugo) and the design shall not be extended to any other award.") Unfortunately a number of Worldcon committees in the past have disregarded this rule, but we don't intend to.))

John Charles McCormack
October 1, 1978

One area of Worldcon planning that has not been fully explored is the bringing of the Pro Writers to the fans and the neo-fans on a personal level. The genre lunches were fine for this up to a point but limited to only one time per con. Your idea ((?)) of a few fans banding together to buy lunch, breakfast, dinner, drinks, whatever is great but you might get more interest in it if you auctioned off writers that have volunteered to be "sold" to their fans for an hour or so.

The proceeds of the auction could go to some worthy cause or into the general con fund but whatever is done you have an obligation to make the professional accessible to the neo-fan. I was a neo-fan myself and not too many years ago so I know what it is like at your first Worldcon trying to ~~see-you~~ favorite writer or artist and not being able to see him except at the Meet-the-pros Party (which is always a bust) or at a panel discussion with a few hundred other fans. So don't program only for the old-line fan but for the poor jerk at his first con who just wants one thing - a chance to talk to his favorite pro. Give him that chance!

((There's one serious problem here: not all the pros want to meet the fans. Some come to cons simply to meet each other or to make deals with publishers. Even those who are friendly toward fans may have to stay aloof in self-defense, since they'd be swamped if they tried to meet everyone who wants to meet them. At best the idea of auctioning off their time could make them available to a very few of these people. But we'll see what we can do.))

I know that it is too soon for the hotel to set rates but they must have given you a probable range of rates and I think that it would help fans set a budget if you gave them some idea of the rates. Also I hope the hotel is handling reservations as it eliminates some headaches for the concom and lets everyone know up front the score.

((OFFICIAL: We agree, and the hotel will be handling reservations. As for rates, we do have a rough idea, but we don't want to publish them until they're definite, so people won't set their budgets on the basis of incorrect figures.))

Mike Glycer
October 10, 1978

Although substantial work has gone into drafting a sophisticated constitution which will prevent the worldcon from being ruined in the hands of incompetents, it seems to me that some of the Society's basic business is still handled in the most cavalier way. Sometimes the fault rests with the very same people pleading for a well-regulated worldcon.

The WSFS, Uninc., exists to put on the worldcon and give out the Hugos, it says in the constitution. Yet have you ever tried to get complete ballot figures for the Hugos? Have you ever tried to get a numerical breakdown of the site selection votes? Forget it!

Public release of ~~these/data~~ this data remains to this day a whim of committeemen and bidding representatives. In the past whenever anyone bothered to defend this status -- rather than just bull ahead -- a high premium was placed on losers' embarrassment. Well, since then I've been on a losing worldcon bid. The voting figures were given out. I'm still alive. The fact may not be unanimously lauded...but I frankly think it's nobody's right to suppress this information. If it requires a constitutional amendment to mandate publication of these figures I'll propose one. However one would think that with so many fans indicating a concern for the worldcon's survival that the first thing they'd put in order is the Society's balloting procedures.

No doubt all this boils down to the fact that nobody except newszine editors cares about the actual numbers anyway. However back in the murk there is a principle involved. It's the same reason I am concerned about a constitution providing for a Board of Directors. All this frat house secrecy accumulates to a degree of thickness that verges on the sinister.

Any individual act of keeping public matters private may be argued, but the net result is an ignorant fandom led by an initiated few.

((I quite agree that voting results should be published. I'd be very uneasy if it were announced, "Jones has beaten Smith for Governor, but we're not releasing the figures," and the same principles should apply to a Worldcon committee, which is also responsible to its electorate. There's always a risk of fraud, and publication is one way to at least minimize this. (Some have suggested having an independent agency count the ballots, the way SunCon did it; but I'm bothered by the idea of letting things out of fannish hands, especially with the strange ballot system we have.))

((The argument is less strong for the Hugos, for which the nominees don't actually campaign (no laughter, please), and in fact there's always been a strong tradition of keeping the Hugo count secret. I only know of three Worldcons that gave out actual figures (as opposed to the order of finish), the last being L.A.Con in 1972. But the site selection is another matter: I think the figures were always announced when the voting took place only on the spot (up to 1971), and it's been usual on the more recent mail ballots too; as far as I know, 1977 was the first time that a contested result was kept secret.))

((See the article about the Iggy business meeting if you don't understand the references to "a Board of Directors", etc. Mike will no doubt have more to say about all this in his provocative newszine, File 770 (hexaweekly, 4/\$1.50, from Mike Glyer, 14974 Osceola St., Sylmar CA 91342).))

Laurie D.F. Mann
October 11, 1978

I got the impression somewhere, and I hope I'm wrong, that Noreascon's officers may be changed during the course of the next two years. Although your committee is stable enough to provide the needed continuity, I really feel you ought to stick with your current officers. If this was a misinterpretation on my part, I apologize.

((No fear, we have no such plans. Since we're a corporation we do have to elect our officers periodically, and our bylaws set the election every October; the current officers were just re-elected without opposition. There are also provisions for throwing the officers out, just in case: better that than having half the committee quit if they don't like what's going on.))

David Bratman
October 19, 1978

First off, i'm glad that you took the name "Noreascon Two" for your Worldcon. When you announced the naming contest, i feared that you had given up on the fannish tradition (insofar as there is one) of giving the same name to different worldcons in one city. Some of the other names are funny, but not very attractive.

((Take that, Tod Levitt!))

And i notice you are planning for a 4-day convention, which doesn't sound too long. Please stick to those dates if you can, so that confusion does not reign when we're all trying to decide when to make hotel reservations for.

((See comments to Ron Salomon about this.))

James R. Madden
October 23, 1978

Question #1: Will there be an "official" area-room-location for those strange ones among fandom who worship the activity known as "filk-singing"? A piano for Filthy Pierre would be very nice and notice in the program book as to time and location would be most helpful.

((No problem: there's been an "official" filksing at all recent Boskones - and sometimes a couple of unofficial ones at the same time elsewhere in the hotel's function space.))

Question #2: If a LARGE bulletin board and a supply of 3x5 cards could be provided (along with thumbtacks), personal notices would be a lot more readable than the usual blackboard-and-missing-chalk-with-no-erasure system. If the cards were dated, then those no longer applicable could be culled from the board; no cards larger than 3x5 would be tolerated.

Question #3: In the area of programming, could panels and talks in the same area be scheduled at different times instead of two or three panels on fantasy or "world building" going on simultaneously? By having dissimilar panels at the same time, more fans could attend talks in their areas of interest.

((We'll do the best we can - though I fear there's no solution for those of us who are interested in everything. Clearly there's a lot of interest in the bulletin board question, as can be seen in the next letter.))

Joanne Burger
October 23, 1978

Many people are now arriving at the con two to four days in advance of the start of the con (mainly due to the airplane rate structure). It is very difficult to tell who is at the hotel for the SF con and who is not. If you would provide, somehow, a cheap ID tag for congoers, it would at least help in knowing who was there for the same reason as yourself. There are at least a couple of ways it could be done. You could send them out with the last progress report; you could have a table in the lobby (etc) where people could pick up a ID tag several days before the con. This would not allow you to enter anything during the convention, it would be just a convenience for the early comers. It could be a stickon type tag, with some sort of rubber stamp logo, for instance. This should not be too terribly expensive and it would help the early comers.

((Another possibility that we've considered is simply opening registration early, as soon as a significant number of people are around. This would be especially useful if we arrange pre-con activities as mentioned above, ~~or for signing up workers~~. We can't promise this yet (for one thing, we'd have to have our registration files in order earlier), but we'll probably do something along some of these lines.))

I liked the freebie table at IguanaCon - the pegboard with string pockets should be used more. However, the message boards left much to be desired. Any message on the board should be dated, and it would help if there were separate boards for those wishing rides, announcing parties, trying to set up meetings/games etc. In other words, at least three announcement boards. A lot of thumbtacks is needed too. Or, you could use blackboard type material and scotch tape or masking tape.

If you have a room for dungeons & dragons type games it should be open all night. Closing the room at midnight cuts off games just as they are getting started.

((There's certainly a consensus for lots of bulletin-board space - usually I didn't even try to pick my way through the one at Iggy - and maybe for requiring dated messages. Though how one can persuade anarchic fans to write their messages according to rules....))

JoAnn Wood
October 24, 1978

I must protest your policy ((see p. 10)) of charging for memberships for children under 12 years. No other convention has ever charged for children. ((Not quite true: L.A.Con had a \$3.00 rate for children under 12.)) Previous conventions have assumed that if parents are paying for their own attending memberships, that that constituted sufficient income to the convention. After all, something should be done to encourage parenthood or we will become a society of "The Marching Morons". One cannot leave children under 12 at home alone. Since one cannot stay with an older child every minute at a con, and since two parents seldom stay together every minute at cons, it may well be necessary for an unaccompanied child to enter a function room to search for a parent. Is it really necessary to require a child to buy a con membership to enable him or her to find their parents?

Another point, this policy on children's memberships was not stated when you made your bid. It was decided after you had won. I think that this is extremely unfair, since parents are obligated to purchase attending memberships at a higher price for their children. In all fairness, I feel you should at least set a lower children's membership price (say around \$5) which does not guarantee mailing or voting privileges. The child receives a program book and admission to events and, of course, a badge.

There are older children of fans who attend conventions with their parents. Many of these children are not fans and are not interested in the convention. Still, they are not attached to their parents every second. You are forcing them to purchase con memberships if they ever want to look for their parents.

Please publish this letter.... There may be persons out there who share my feelings that it is unfair to declare a policy like this after you win a bid.

((The answer that follows is by Tony Lewis, who formulated the policy in question:))

((You raise a number of valid points. First, let us agree, in part, that we should have announced the children's membership policy in advance. However, we never even gave a thought to a children's rate until this point was brought up at IguanaCon. Until recently there have not been many children at the Worldcons; this is no longer the case, as one can see by observing the most recent ones. Many of our policies were not announced before the voting, in part because they had not been set yet; some have even now not been formulated. We will continue to make policy decisions as time goes on. Perhaps some of these decisions will be anathema to some and would have influenced their voting. There is really nothing that can be done about this. To specifics:))

((Throughout your letter, the age limit of 12 is used. While it is

true that several recent Worldcons have used this as a cutoff, we have set no age limits for membership. A fan is a fan, whether 8 months or 8 years or 80 years or more. It is not for us to set an arbitrary point in time at which one becomes a fan. Rather, we tried to define it operationally - someone attending the convention and running around and enjoying it as an individual, regardless of age. Also, we have given the parent, guardian, or whatnot the right to make the decision. Children who are roaming the convention as individuals are taking up as much of the facilities and getting as much benefit from the con as those who are older chronologically. On a more fannish level; any child running loose is not going to be allowed to interfere with other fans unless that child has paid (the same as the adults) for the privilege of being as obnoxious as adult fans.))

((On a more positive note: since there will be a number of younger fans at Noreascon II as members, we are going to have a portion of the program directed at them. Possibilities include puppet shows, magicians, etc. All items of this type will be arranged to appeal also to other age groups. Any suggestions along this line would be appreciated. However, if a child is indeed uninterested in the con (a proto-mundane) and is there because it is cheaper than a baby-sitter, then that child need not have a membership purchased. But (and here's the kicker) the parents or guardians are going to be responsible for that child and will have to see that the child is kept out of the way of paying members. We will, of course, provide some sort of baby-sitting service to make things easier.))

((Children who have lost their adults or need to find them in a function room can enlist the aid of a committee or staff member who will be overtly labeled. I believe that children unable to cope with this method should probably not be running around unaccompanied.))

((I am sure that this will probably not convince you that we are right in our policy, but I hope you will believe that our decisions are thought out, weighed, and not capricious (and are subject to change if circumstances warrant). -- Tony Lewis))

Rebecca Lesses
November 5, 1978

I would like to make a programming suggestion. At this year's Worldcon the committee provided for feminist SF programming. It would be good if someone on the Noreascon II committee could organize this for the 1980 Worldcon, because feminist SF fans are a large segment of SF fandom. I do not know who would be qualified to do this, but I am sure people who have run it or helped run it in the past would have suggestions....

((Obviously I'm not particularly qualified to comment on this myself, but we'll be receptive to any suggestions. Certainly feminism has been one of the strongest currents in fandom for the last several years.))

((And I think that about does it for this lettercol. We're behind schedule, of course; this zine was supposed to be ready November 1, and as you can see from the date on the previous letter, we didn't make it. This time I was able to print just about all the general comments we received; whether this is also true of #2 depends on how much more mail we get. See you then.))

The IguanaCon Business Meeting

George Flynn

There have been a few reports in the newszines about the IguanaCon business meeting, but these have mostly been fairly perfunctory. I thought I'd try to give a fuller account of what happened and what it all means. The texts of motions are accurate (I have a copy of the official minutes), but the interpretations are my own.

It occurs to me that some of you may not even know what the business meeting is. The World Science Fiction Society (WSFS), says its constitution, "is an unincorporated literary society whose functions are (A) To choose the recipients of the annual Science Fiction Achievement Awards (the Hugos), (B) To choose the locations and Committees for the annual World Science Fiction Conventions, (C) To attend those Conventions, and (D) To perform such other activities as may be necessary or incidental to the above purposes." The WSFS Constitution contains the rules governing these functions (especially A and B), and a business meeting is held at every Worldcon to consider constitutional amendments and other necessary business. (The business meeting used to do the site selection for future Worldcons itself, until the mail ballot was established in 1972.)

At IguanaCon the business meeting had three sessions: the "preliminary" meeting Saturday afternoon adopted Standing Rules and allocated time for debate; the "preliminary" meeting Sunday morning considered committee reports and surveyed the agenda (so people would understand what they'd be voting on); and the main business meeting Monday morning actually took action on the various constitutional amendments under consideration. Only 19 people showed up on Saturday, but there were about 50 on Sunday, and 51 signed an attendance list on Monday. At the podium were Presiding Officer Bob Hillis (for the thirs year in succession), Parliamentarian Jack Speer, acting Secretary Donald Eastlake (replacing Larry Smith), and acting Timekeeper Mike Lalor (replacing Yale Edeiken).

I'm going to organize this report according to the various kinds of business considered, rather than chronologically (though the two weren't that different). Unfortunately I don't have the space to include the whole WSFS Constitution, which would probably fill about 4 pages in this typeface; but most of you should have access to the text in the IguanaCon Program Book or Progress Report 3. (Amended versions will of course be appearing in the Seacon, and later Noreascon, Progress Reports.)

Standing Rules

These are also too long to give in full, but the original version also appeared in the Program Book and P.R.3. They were formulated about a year ago (with some minor changes later) by Bob Hillis and Larry Smith, and were the first order of business Saturday. What I'll do is give the text of those that were amended, and summarize the others.

RULE 1: Business of the Annual Meeting of the World Science Fiction Society shall be transacted in one or more sessions called Preliminary Business Meetings and one or more Main Business Meetings. The first session shall be designated as a Preliminary Business Meeting. At least eighteen (18) hours shall elapse

between the final Preliminary Business Meeting and the one or more Main Business Meetings. In so far as practical, the Business Meeting sessions shall be scheduled so as not to overlap with the Convention main programming.

(Amended to allow more than one "preliminary" meeting, and the last sentence added.)

RULE 2: (Describes functions of Preliminary Business Meeting.)

RULE 3: The deadline for the submission of non-privileged new business shall be two hours after the official opening of the convention or eighteen hours before the first Preliminary Business Meeting, whichever is later.

(The original version had a deadline 15 days in advance.)

RULE 4: (Format in which proposals must be submitted.)

RULE 5: (Debate limits: 6 min on short motions, 20 min on long.)

RULE 6: (Debate limit on amendments: 5 min.)

RULE 7: (Amendments changed only with consent of maker.)

RULE 8: (Provisions for closing debate or tabling.)

RULE 9: (Motion to postpone indefinitely not allowed.)

RULE 10: (Request by 10% needed for division of the house.)

RULE 11: These Standing Rules, and any others adopted by a Preliminary Business Meeting, may be suspended for an individual item of business by a two-thirds majority vote.

(The words "of those present" at the end were dropped.)

RULE 12: (Definition of "point of information".)

RULE 13: Citations to Articles, Sections, or specific sentences of the Society Constitution or Standing Rules are for the sake of easy reference only. They do not form a part of the substantive area of a motion. Correct numeration of Articles, Sections, and Rules and correct insertions and deletions will be provided by the Secretary of the Business Meeting in the Constitution and Standing Rules, as amended, which are Certified to the next World-Con. Therefore, motions to renumber or correct citations will not be in order. The Secretary will also adjust any other Section of the Constitution or Standing Rules equally affected by an amendment unless otherwise ordered by the Business Meeting. Any corrections of fact to the Minutes or to the Constitution or Standing Rules as published should be brought to the attention of the Secretary and to that of the next available Business Meeting as soon as they are discovered.

(About all that was done here was to add "Standing Rules" five times.)

RULE 14: (Smoking and non-smoking sections.)

RULE 15: The World Science Fiction Society Business Meeting is a mass meeting of the Society's membership which the Convention is required to sponsor in accordance with the WSFS Constitution and these Standing Rules. Therefore, (1) the quorum is the number of people present and (2) the decisions of the Chair as to who is entitled to the floor are not subject to appeal. The motion to adjourn the Main Meeting will be in order at any time after the amendments to the Constitution proposed at the last World-Con Business Meeting for ratification at the current Business Meeting have been acted upon.

(The original version was essentially only the last sentence of this one.)

The original RULE 16, which provided for the Staff of the Business Meeting to count the site selection ballots, was withdrawn.

RULE 16 (orig. 17); (Presentations by bidders for following year.)

The original RULE 18 provided for the selection of a NASFiC site whenever an overseas site is chosen for the Worldcon; it was defeated after debate. (I wasn't there and don't know what arguments were used, but the NASFiC has always been a highly controversial question.)

RULE 17 (orig. 19): These Standing Rules should be published by each Convention Committee at the same time as the current Constitution and pending amendments for ratification are published.

(The specification that they appear in the Program Book was dropped.)

RULE 18 (orig. 20): (How to amend or suspend the Standing Rules.)

Committee Reports

The first of these was from the WSFS Constitution Drafting Committee, and requires some background. For some years various people have been arguing that there should be a permanent organization to oversee the Worldcons, see that they obey the rules, and take action in the event of a committee's completely falling apart or the like. The SunCon business meeting endorsed this idea to the extent of appointing a committee to come up with a definite draft of a new constitution along these lines. The members of the committee exchanged prodigious quantities of paper, and last winter they did come up with a draft, which ran to 14 pages single-spaced. (A copy can be obtained from the Secretary of the committee, Larry Smith, 875 Oakland Park, Columbus, OH 43224; I believe \$1.00 will cover the cost.) However, it soon became apparent that the draft wasn't satisfactory even to those who favored the basic idea, so the committee decided to go back to the drawing board. Instead of submitting a new constitution this year, therefore, they simply proposed a resolution to keep them going:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

A permanent body, the World Science Fiction Society, Incorporated (WSFS, Inc.), should be established, independent of any Worldcon Committee, whose members will be the members of the current and upcoming Worldcons. The Board of Directors of WSFS, Inc. should be selected by the members of the Society and by current and recent Worldcon Committees.

WSFS, Inc. should be responsible for the administration of voting for selection of the Hugos and the sites of future Worldcons. No change should be made in either Hugos or site selection as a result of the establishment of WSFS, Inc. except as necessary to administer the voting.

In cases of a Worldcon Committee becoming unable to properly manage its designated Convention, either because of internal collapse or misconduct, then, after investigation and due process, the Board of Directors should have the right to remove the name "World Science Fiction Convention" and the awarding of the Hugos, site selection, and the holding of the Society's Business Meeting from the control of the guilty Committee and to award them to another responsible group.

Therefore, it is moved that the current WSFS Constitution Drafting Committee with such deletions and substitutions as its current

Chairman shall consider proper be empowered to continue its current activities and present its next report at the Thirty-Seventh World Science Fiction Convention in Brighton, England in 1979.

This resolution was passed. (Bear in mind that this doesn't mean the business meeting has actually endorsed the idea, only that it has authorized the committee to come up with a specific proposal which can then be debated on its merits.)

There are strong arguments on both sides of this issue. Some of the opponents say it's all a plot by a power-hungry clique to take control of the Worldcon in perpetuity; certainly there would be temptations in this direction (though I think anybody who'd want to run the Worldcon in perpetuity would have to be crazy; once is bad enough). On the other side, there's the danger that one of these years a Worldcon committee will totally collapse (as some recent ones have seemed to come close to doing). As you may gather, I'm highly ambivalent about the whole thing myself. I could easily spend half this zine just explaining all the implications of this one proposal. Fortunately, someone has done the job for me. In Avenging Aardvark's Aerie #10 (misnamed in Jim Hudson's article, by the way) there's an article by Larry Smith, Ross Pavlac, and Bob Hillis (the chairman of the drafting committee) about all the ramifications of the subject; copies may still be available for \$1.50 from Ross Pavlac, 4654 Tamarack Blvd., #C-2, Columbus, OH 43229. The article is frankly favorable to the Board-of-Directors idea, but it's 15 pages long and remarkably comprehensive. (I'm not aware of anything comparable from the opposing viewpoint, but if someone's written one I'd like to see it.) The proposal is of extraordinary importance for the future of the Worldcon, and anyone who cares about the subject should make an effort to become familiar with the arguments pro and con. But with that I'll drop the topic for now.

The second committee report was from the Art Hugos Committee. This derived from a proposal by Jim Hudson that the current Hugo for Best Professional Artist be replaced by one or more for the best individual piece(s) of art during the given year. Jim introduced this proposal at the SunCon business meeting, which decided to appoint a committee to study the idea. The committee consisted of Jim Hudson, Rick Sternbach, Steve Miller, Andrea Mitchell, and me (I was Devil's Advocate, since I didn't think the idea was practical). Generally speaking, the committee liked the idea, but wondered how well it would work; the practical questions included how much exposure artwork of various kinds gets, and how badly the nominations might scatter over a large number of works. So a consensus was reached that the idea should be tried out before final passage. We therefore submitted two motions, both of which were passed:

MOVED: To keep the committee in existence, as currently constituted, for another year (until SeaCon).

MOVED: To request assistance from SeaCon in testing the proposed Art Hugo nomination and voting process.

The "proposed ... process" would be governed by a constitutional amendment that the committee submitted this year but withdrew before it could be voted on. The text is included here for your information:

MOVED: To replace the current Article II, Section 7 of the WSFS Constitution with the following (and renumber accordingly):

SECTION 7: Best Color: A piece of science fiction or fantasy art done in full color and published for the first time in

the previous calendar year. Publication date takes precedence over copyright date. An artist may withdraw a piece from consideration if he or she feels that the version is not representative of his or her art. The convention committee may relocate art into a more appropriate category if it feels that this is necessary.

SECTION 8: Best Monochrome: The rules shall be the same as for Best Color, but applied to all Monochrome art work.

I think that's clear enough; it would simply apply to art the same system now used for the fiction Hugos. As I said above, this amendment was not taken up this year, but its provisions will govern the test balloting. We have in fact obtained permission from SeaCon to carry out the test, and a page asking for nominations will appear in their next Progress Report. It remains to be seen what kind of response we'll get.

Old Business: Ratification of Amendments

Any amendment to the WSFS Constitution has to be passed at two successive business meetings before it becomes effective. Two such amendments were passed for the first time at SunCon and thus had to be ratified this year. These were printed in P.R. 3 and the Program Book, but I'll repeat them here anyway.

The first was passed nearly unanimously (I only spotted one "No" vote):

MOVED, to amend Article II, Section 9, of the WSFS Constitution by deleting the existing Section and inserting the following text:

SECTION 9: Best Fanzine: Any generally available fannish publication devoted to science fiction, fantasy, or related subjects which has published four (4) or more issues, at least one (1) of which appeared in the previous calendar year. The words "fanzine" and "fannish" shall be defined only by the will of the membership, and the Convention Committee shall impose no additional criteria.

The changes here are that "Best Fanzine" replaced "Best Amateur Magazine"; "fannish publication" replaced "non-professional magazine"; and the second sentence is new. This one is my own baby. The background is that for several years there have been arguments about the eligibility of the so-called "semi-pro zines" for the fanzine award (Locus, Algol, and SFR are the usual names on the list). The argument was that they weren't amateur, but nobody could come up with a definition of "amateur" that was both clear and enforcible (the Olympic Committee hasn't had much better luck in 80 years). After years of inaction, SunCon actually tried to enforce the existing rule - and withdrew in confusion amid protests from both sides. I had some involvement in this, and decided something had to be done; hence the present rule. It takes the Worldcon committee out of the business of trying to define "amateur" and leaves it up to the voters to decide what a fanzine is. (See p. 16 for additional remarks on this.)

The second amendment was also ratified without opposition:

MOVED, to amend Article III, Section 1, of the WSFS Constitution by adding the following text at an appropriate location:

To be eligible for site selection, a bidding Committee must state the rules under which the Convention Committee will operate, including a specification of the term of office of their

chief executive officer or officers and the conditions and procedures for the selection and replacement of such officer or officers. Written copies of these rules must be made available by the bidding Committee to any member of the Society on request.

This was proposed by Don Eastlake, and was suggested by a number of cases of apparent disorganization in recent Worldcon committees. It seemed to be completely non-controversial, but it probably won't make much difference. (We had our by-laws available at Iggy, but I'm not aware that anyone wanted to see them. And of course a committee can always change its rules after it wins.)

New Business - Constitutional Amendments

The original agenda contained 9 items of new business, all of which were constitutional amendments. However, the pre-preliminary business meeting voted not to consider two of these, and a third was withdrawn without debate. The remaining 6 were considered by the final meeting; 5 were passed (but must be ratified at SeaCon to become effective) and the sixth was postponed.

New Business Item 1 was the amendment proposed by the Art Hugos Committee, the text of which was given above. As indicated there, this amendment was withdrawn by the committee. However, if the test previously described is successful, it's quite likely that this or a similar motion will be introduced again next year.

Item 2 was moved by Leslie Turek and seconded by Tony Lewis; it was passed unanimously:

MOVED, to amend Article III of the WSFS Constitution by adding the following:

Site selection ballots shall include name, signature, address, and membership number; spaces to be filled in by the voter. The name and address information shall be separated from the ballot and the ballots counted only at the convention with two witnesses from each bidding committee allowed to observe. Each bidding committee may make a record of the name and address of every voter.

(Note that this would effectively replace the withdrawn Standing Rule 16, as originally numbered.) This seems clear enough, but I might as well reprint the explanation submitted with it:

Site selection balloting and vote counting have often been handled in an ad hoc and haphazard manner. Because of the critical importance of the selected Convention Committees to the Society and the increasing amounts of money involved in the Worldcon, this process should be regularized and procedures adopted to assure against any tampering. Fortunately, this is simple to do and this proposal does it as well as possible in the WSFS context. The additional information to be included on the ballot is the same as for the Hugos. The requirements for poll watchers from the interested parties should be clear enough. Two witnesses are provided for so they could spell each other if vote counting takes a long time. (This proposal does not prohibit the practice of having the representatives of the bidding committees actually assist in the counting.) The ultimate protection is the last sentence which would, in the unlikely event of a serious controversy, allow a bidding committee to take a sample poll

of the voters or determine if any were fictitious. Hopefully, the mere adoption of these safeguards will eliminate any problems.

This matter is really quite important, and we've been lucky that no serious problem has ever come up yet. The next issue of this zine will probably contain an article by Don Eastlake describing this year's vote-counting process.

Item 3 was proposed by Tony Lewis and seconded by Don Eastlake. However, the original version was extensively modified, first by submission to a committee for redrafting, and further in the course of debate. The final version appeared to pass almost unanimously:

MOVED, to amend Article III of the WSFS Constitution by adding the following:

Members of the Society paying the minimum voting fee towards membership with their site selection ballots shall be members of the selected convention with the right to receive all generally distributed publications. Those who have voted may convert to members with the right of general attendance at the selected convention and its Business Meeting by paying, within 90 days of site selection, an additional fee, set by the selected convention committee, of not more than the minimum voting fee and not more than the difference between the voting fee and the attending fee for new members.

The minimum voting fee can be modified for a particular year by unanimous agreement of the current convention committee and all bidding committees who have filed before the mail ballots are set.

The minimum fee in force shall be listed on all site selection ballots.

This one was changed so much that the original explanation isn't altogether applicable. (The original set a minimum conversion fee, while this version sets a maximum conversion fee.) It sounds complicated, but it's simple enough when you consider specific numbers. The "minimum voting fee" is in the Constitution itself (Art. III, Sec. 1), and is currently \$5.00. The first sentence says that all voters paying this fee automatically become supporting members (in the usual terminology) of the con voted on; this has been the practice of all recent Worldcons anyway. Any voter can then convert to attending membership within 90 days (i.e., roughly by the end of November) by paying an additional \$5.00 or less ("not more than the minimum voting fee"); if the attending fee for new members were lower than \$10.00, the total amount paid by voters (voting fee + conversion) couldn't exceed this amount. If the voting fee were to be changed, either by constitutional amendment or by the unanimous-agreement clause, all these figures would be changed proportionately.

Basically this proposal sets some guidelines for membership fees, in particular by setting an upper limit to the fees that can be charged to site-selection voters; it has no effect on the rates for anyone but voters. In this version there is nothing to keep the winning committee from offering voters a rate lower than the guidelines, which still leaves room for bidders to campaign by offering cheap memberships; this may be unfortunate, but it's what the business meeting wanted. While this proposal has not taken effect yet, note that the membership rates announced by Nor-eascon II are in compliance with it (\$5.00 conversion fee for voters, available until the end of December).

Item 4 was proposed by Don Eastlake and seconded by Jill Eastlake; it also passed almost unanimously:

MOVED, to amend Article IV of the WSFS Constitution by adding Standing Rules to those rules in accordance with which the Business Meeting is to be conducted, adding Standing Rules to the items to be printed by the Convention Committee, and substituting the following for the present Section 3:

The conduct of the affairs of the Society shall be determined by this Constitution together with all ratified amendments hereto and such Standing Rules as the Business Meeting may adopt for its own governance.

This is just a tidying-up amendment, giving constitutional sanction to the Standing Rules which had already been adopted (and ensuring that a business meeting can adopt its own rules, rather than any that an officious conglom might try to impose).

Item 5 was another that was heavily modified from its original version. It was proposed by Jill Eastlake and seconded by Leslie Turek (you may have observed a certain pattern in all this; however, you'll see that not all the amendments came out of Boston). There was significant opposition to this one, but it passed by what I estimated to be a 2-1 margin:

MOVED, to amend Article III of the WSFS Constitution by striking out all of the present Section 3 after the first sentence and inserting the following:

Each site selection ballot shall list the options "None of the above" and "No preference" after the bidders and with equal prominence. A ballot voted with first or only choice for "No preference" shall be ignored for site selection. A ballot voted with lower than first choice for "No preference" shall be ignored if all higher choices on the ballot have been eliminated in preferential tallying. "None of the above" shall be treated as a bid for tallying. If it wins, the duty of site selection shall devolve on the Business Meeting of the current Convention. If the Business Meeting is unable to decide by the end of the Convention, the Committee for the following Convention shall make the selection without undue delay. When a site and committee are chosen by a Business Meeting or Convention Committee, they are not restricted by region or other qualifications and the choice of an out-of-rotation site shall not affect the regional rotation for subsequent years. If no bids qualify to be on the ballot, the selection shall proceed as though "None of the above" had won.

Originally this just included the provision striking out most of Section 3. The passage in question says the rotation system can be set aside by 3/4 of the voters; this is a relic from the days before the mail ballot, and it's hard to see how one could do it under present conditions. The rest of the amendment was added to handle a couple of other problems.

The "No preference" option is basically a way to let people take advantage of the low membership rate for voters (as would be required if Item 3 gets ratified), without having to make a choice among the bidders. Such an option in fact existed this year, with Flushing on the ballot; but that was a clumsy (and perhaps confusing) way to do it, while in other years there's been no convenient way to cast a no-preference vote. This

a final financial statement within a year.

The original version was a lot tougher, requiring that the committee "operate in a non-profit fashion" and publish "an audited final financial statement" in 90 days. But as the debate pointed out, "non-profit" and "audited" are both terms with very specific legal meanings. CPA Joseph Lattin explained in gruesome detail the red tape (and expense) that the use of "audited" would entail, and scared most people off the idea. The reason for the proposal is obvious enough: Recent Worldcons haven't been as well organized as one might like, and in many cases have failed to publish adequate financial reports; a lot of people are concerned about where the money's going. Nevertheless, a lot of us also wonder if the requirements of this amendment might be too stringent. (As I recall it, the Noreascon committee split down the middle on this one. We obtained a ruling that, even if ratified, it won't apply to Noreascon, since our selection was made before this came up. Nevertheless, we do intend to issue financial reports as complete as we can manage.)

Other Business

The biggest item was of course the announcement of the site-selection result. On Sunday morning Bob Hillis announced with a straight face that Flushing had won, but that Boston had a majority of the valid ballots and thus was selected. Unfortunately, most of the people not privy to the actual results seem to have believed him, and soon the whole con was buzzing with this "news". It thus became necessary for Hillis to open the Monday meeting by explaining that he had been joking (Flushing really got only 61 votes); I wonder if the facts ever fully caught up to the rumor, though. I would give additional details about the voting, but these have already been published elsewhere, and presumably will be included in Don Eastlake's article about the ballot-count (probably in Issue #2). So I'll leave this subject for now.

Item 10 of new business was not a constitutional amendment, but the following proposal by Larry Ruh and Leslie Turek:

MOVED, to request SeaCon '79 and Noreascon II to each contribute \$50 towards the expenses of the WSFS Constitution drafting committee.

It passed unanimously. (I don't know about SeaCon, but we paid our \$50 on the spot.)

A final motion was passed to commend the podium staff and especially the presiding officer, Bob Hillis.

I believe that covers all the business of any significance. Of course I haven't mentioned such incidents as the delay of Sunday's meeting because the building was locked (it was in the same building as the huckster room and art show, and they didn't have enough guards to open up on time; eventually they did let us into the business meeting area only), or the surprise financial report delivered by IguanaCon Treasurer Sharon Maples (the first time anything like that has happened, and greatly appreciated, even if it was incomplete), or the informal "workshop" to discuss the new draft constitution, or.... But this article is 11 pages long already, and probably amounts to More Than You Ever Wanted to Know About Business Meetings. So I'll stop.

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in 1981, Central in 1982, Eastern in 1983, and so on. If an overseas bid wins any year, the zone whose turn it would be gets a NASFiC ("interim continental convention"), and the rotation goes on as scheduled in the following year. It happens that Australia is bidding for 1983. If they win, then under the current system there would be an Eastern-zone NASFiC in 1983 and the scheduled Western-zone Worldcon in 1984. Suppose the above proposal passes, however. Then there would be a four-year cycle, with the overseas zone getting 1983 and the next Eastern-zone Worldcon due in 1984.

Now the plot thickens. Both Los Angeles and Washington, for reasons of their own (which don't really concern us here), would like to host the 1984 Worldcon. Under the present system, L.A. would be eligible; under the proposed amendment, D.C. would be eligible. The stage is thus set for a considerable political struggle.

Nevertheless, as I said above, there's a real issue here: what is the best thing for the overseas fans? The D.C. in '84 supporters report that the overseas fans they've talked to are in favor of the change (cf. Alexis Gilliland's letter in File 770 #8). Thus far I haven't seen any independent opinions from overseas fans on the subject, one way or the other; but it's early yet, and presumably some opinions will surface by SeaCon. The 4-year rotation does conform to the de facto spacing of overseas Worldcons in recent years. In any case, the people at IguanaCon decided that the SeaCon business meeting would know more about it than we did, and so voted to pass the buck to them. If the amendment passes at SeaCon and is ratified at Noreascon, it would still be in time to take effect in 1983.

(Historical note: At St. Louiscon in 1969 we magnanimously voted to set up a rotation system including an overseas zone, but it was overwhelmingly rejected at Heicon the next year - partly for fear that American pros wouldn't attend an overseas Worldcon if there were a NASFiC to go to, partly because of doubts that the foreign fans could assemble bids often enough. This episode has made a lot of us skeptical of similar proposals. However, the system proposed then was quite different in structure, and foreign fandom has developed greatly in the past decade, so the old objections may no longer apply. But I'd like to see evidence of it.)

As for the domestic applications, the change would have the advantage that no zone would have to go 6 years between Worldcons, as commonly happens now. There would still be a NASFiC in the overseas-zone year, but it could be in any of the North American zones. (However, its site would always be selected at a Western-zone Worldcon; there is dispute over whether this matters.) The whole question will bear considerable thought - though I suspect most people will make up their minds on the basis of local advantage.

Item 9, the last of the constitutional amendments, was proposed by Sid Altus and Lou Tabakow. After significant amendment, it passed by a vote of 20-9:

MOVED, to amend Article I, Section 5, of the WSFS Constitution by striking the words "of the membership" and "and should publish or have published by the following Convention Committee a final financial report" and appending the following:

Each Convention Committee shall retain an independent certified public accountant at least a year before their convention and shall publish a financial statement compiled and reviewed by said accountant within ninety days after their convention and

a final financial statement within a year.

The original version was a lot tougher, requiring that the committee "operate in a non-profit fashion" and publish "an audited final financial statement" in 90 days. But as the debate pointed out, "non-profit" and "audited" are both terms with very specific legal meanings. CPA Joseph Lattin explained in gruesome detail the red tape (and expense) that the use of "audited" would entail, and scared most people off the idea. The reason for the proposal is obvious enough: Recent Worldcons haven't been as well organized as one might like, and in many cases have failed to publish adequate financial reports; a lot of people are concerned about where the money's going. Nevertheless, a lot of us also wonder if the requirements of this amendment might be too stringent. (As I recall it, the Noreascon committee split down the middle on this one. We obtained a ruling that, even if ratified, it won't apply to Noreascon, since our selection was made before this came up. Nevertheless, we do intend to issue financial reports as complete as we can manage.)

Other Business

The biggest item was of course the announcement of the site-selection result. On Sunday morning Bob Hillis announced with a straight face that Flushing had won, but that Boston had a majority of the valid ballots and thus was selected. Unfortunately, most of the people not privy to the actual results seem to have believed him, and soon the whole con was buzzing with this "news". It thus became necessary for Hillis to open the Monday meeting by explaining that he had been joking (Flushing really got only 61 votes); I wonder if the facts ever fully caught up to the rumor, though. I could give additional details about the voting, but these have already been published elsewhere, and presumably will be included in Don Eastlake's article about the ballot-count (probably in issue #2). So I'll leave this subject for now.

Item 10 of new business was not a constitutional amendment, but the following proposal by Larry Ruh and Leslie Turek:

MOVED, to request SeaCon '79 and Noreascon II to each contribute \$50 towards the expenses of the WSFS Constitution drafting committee.

It passed unanimously. (I don't know about SeaCon, but we paid our \$50 on the spot.)

A final motion was passed to commend the podium staff and especially the presiding officer, Bob Hillis.

I believe that covers all the business of any significance. Of course I haven't mentioned such incidents as the delay of Sunday's meeting because the building was locked (it was in the same building as the huckster room and art show, and they didn't have enough guards to open up on time; eventually they did let us into the business meeting area only), or the surprise financial report delivered by IguanaCon Treasurer Sharon Maples (the first time anything like that has happened, and greatly appreciated, even if it was incomplete), or the informal "workshop" to discuss the new draft constitution, or... But this article is 11 pages long already, and probably amounts to More Than You Ever Wanted to Know About Business Meetings. So I'll stop.

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A Cautionary Tale

George Flynn

Like most Worldcon bidders, the Boston in 1980 Committee offered "presupporting memberships" to people who contributed \$1.00 or more to help support our bidding campaign. We voted to give these people a discount of \$1.00 on their memberships if we won, and later we added an additional \$1.00 discount for those who took part in the site-selection voting. As described in Leslie's article, we also invented the concept of "preopposing memberships" as a joke (they get the extra discount for not voting). All this was well and good. Then we made our mistake: we advertised these discounts in Progress Report Zero.

What we neglected to consider was that not everybody in fandom knows what a presupporting membership is, much less a preopposing membership. The text of PRO simply read, "If you were a pre-supporting or pre-opposing member of Boston in 1980, you get a \$1 discount when you join," etc., without defining the terms. We didn't suspect our error until early October, when a significant number of conversions started coming in at the discount rate from people who weren't on our list of presupporters (about 50 of them so far, but there'll probably be more). Subsequent correspondence revealed some of the problems.

Some people apparently thought that, since anyone who voted for the site selection became a "supporting member", a "presupporting member must mean someone who cast a mail ballot before IguanaCon. Others seem to have thought they were contributing to us, ~~when they sent~~ their \$5 voting fee to Arizona. (Some such checks are made out to "38th Worldcon" all right, but are marked "Donation" or the like in the Memo space. That's what we get for including voting instructions in our advertising.) It's a rather delicate job explaining this distinction to them. And most bizarre of all, a fair number of Baltimore's presupporters think that "preopposing members" refers to them! (We have a letter from one of them - just too late to make this issue's lettercol - saying this interpretation was perfectly obvious and we're a bunch of "cheap chisellers" to ask for more money. *Sigh*) We've had an interesting time trying to straighten all this out (especially in the case of a few people who also didn't include money when they vote.). And the flood of conversions and memberships just before the rates go up is still to come...

The lesson of all this is clear, and future Worldcon committees should take heed: Whatever you decide to do about giving discounts to your presupporters, you'd better handle it by simply mailing refunds to the people on your list. Don't invite mass confusion by announcing the existence of discounts, unless you're prepared to spell out in detail just who's entitled to them. (And even if you do, some will misread it, of course.) Well, already we seem to have made a mistake no previous Worldcon ever made ("our two-year mission ... to go where no Worldcon has gone before?"); what next?

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(What's next, actually, is issue #2 of The Voice of the Lobster. Already I have two articles promised - Leslie Turek on the first days after we won, and Don Eastlake on the saga of the ballot-counting. As for the rest of the zine, just keep those cards and letters coming: we want this to be a dialogue. So long for now.)