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On Business Meetings

I really don't enjoy Business Meetings at WorldCons. Part of it is that I'm missing any number of other things while they're going on at the same time. I would be so much happier if there was nothing programmed against it.

And I tend to find them both boring and overly contentious, but that's what happens at these things, no?

So, this year there were several things that happened and I was there and they were either good or bad or indifferent and stuff. The first one that was big on my list was the attempt to eliminate the Fan Hugos. I love them, I really do, and seeing them go away would have hurt in a way that I hate to admit. To me, the Fan Hugos are one of the deepest expressions of appreciation that fandom can give, and to see them go away would have been painful.

And I was kinda unhappy that it got killed by an Object to Consideration.

You see, I understand why that's an option, why you have to have the possibility to get rid of motions like that, but it also doesn't help at all if you get no real point of debate. And there was no debate at the Business Meeting. I'm one of those guys who wants to be able to weigh arguments. Even if they don't sway me, I wanna know what people are thinking and why and what these things would mean if they happen. I wish we'd gotten that on the matter of The Fan Hugos, and we didn't. Such is the way of the world.

Cover painting by Macy Starkey



That's Michael Thomas up for the Airplane Spin from Hugos Night.

The other, of course, was the matter I refer to as No Cheap Voting, but I officially was called No Representation Without Taxation. Basically, I'm one of those who believes that there should be a Hugo Voting membership, and that WorldCons are too expensive. If it weren't for the Lovely & Talented Linda (and this year the IndieGoGo campaign), I wouldn't be able to attend WorldCons, I might not even be able to be a Supporting Member. The costs for WorldCons are nuts, and I understand how they got to be the way they are, but that doesn't make it any easier to deal with when you're looking at the price tag and comparing it to what it's gonna take to make rent. If you can't afford a Supporting Membership, there's no way you can be involved with WSFS or WorldCon. I understand the argument that we shouldn't divorce WorldCon from The Hugos, and that having a Hugo Voting membership level could be the start down that road. Notice it's not a Voting Fee, the idea is a Voting Membership. Having a cheap, but not free (or next to free) membership that allows you to vote for the Hugos is a good start.

And the No Representation Without Taxation plan would not allow for that to happen.

The folks who were pushing this pointed out that 40 dollars, which is what most WorldCons seem to be gathering around for Supporting, is not a burden. I completely disagree. 40 bucks can mean the difference between making rent and not making rent, and for younger potential voters, it can be a serious wall. Yes, I know that you're getting more than just the right to vote for the Hugos with a Supporting Membership, but that doesn't make it any more affordable. A 25 dollar Hugo voting membership isn't perfect (it's still a bit of a stretch for some), but it does help prevent Stuffing (5, 10, and maybe as high as 20 would make that possible), and it basically is all income that has little to no cost to maintain as a group. They won't be attending, you won't have to provide any materials other than the ballot (so, OK, there's SOME cost), but it would help increase revenue with little cost.

And that brings me to The YA Hugo.

My opinion on the matter has evolved a bit. I'm still not 100% on-board, but I am leaning more towards us giving it a shot. There are still problems (difficult to administer, doesn't reflect the tastes of the target audience) but I've been hearing more and more about why folks want this award and it's been swaying me a significant amount. First, and foremost, there's the argument that there is little in the Hugos right now that appeals to younger audiences. I can see that argument, though sadly we don't collect any data about ages of voters (or attendees) and can't make scientific comparisons. The other thing is the explosion of YA publishing. Part of that is that WorldCon is getting older. I'd love to see us attract younger members, and I think part of that should be coming up with a way to attract younger readers to the Hugos, and thus, to the WorldCon. A YA Hugo could help us in that direction, though one problem is how do you get the target demographic to vote? Part of it might be a Hugo Voting membership (see above!), and part of it would be outreach. When isn't that the case, though?

Of course, the authors of YA want a new category, and I understand that, and I think they make a point, but it also misses a point that I see: that there could be a serious amount of difficulty in administering the award itself. How do we determine what is and isn't eligible? It'd be the only Hugo that is defined by a market category. That is a difficulty, but it also doesn't address one of my (and one that was brought to my mind through talking with James) big concerns: how do we address the desires of the actual youth audience? To me, that would be better served by an award administered by the Hugo admin team, but with a limited voting pool. That's the downside, as those numbers likely wouldn't be high at first.

YA is a growing, excited part of the SF&F world at the moment. Is this going to be true for the long-run? I'd say so, as it's always been a vibrant part, just often not recognized. I'm still not convinced, there are problems that I'm not 100% sure how we deal with, and I think we'd find out real fast if a committee decide to use their discretionary Hugo to test it out, but that doesn't seem to be in the cards.

Oh yeah, WorldCon was great! Everyone did a good job, things that I was worried about ended up working out well, my exhibits didn't work out quite like I had hoped, but the Texas Israeli War exhibit had a few nice touches that ended up being kinda cool. I might have to try it again someday...

I also rode a Mechanical Bull. That was awesome!

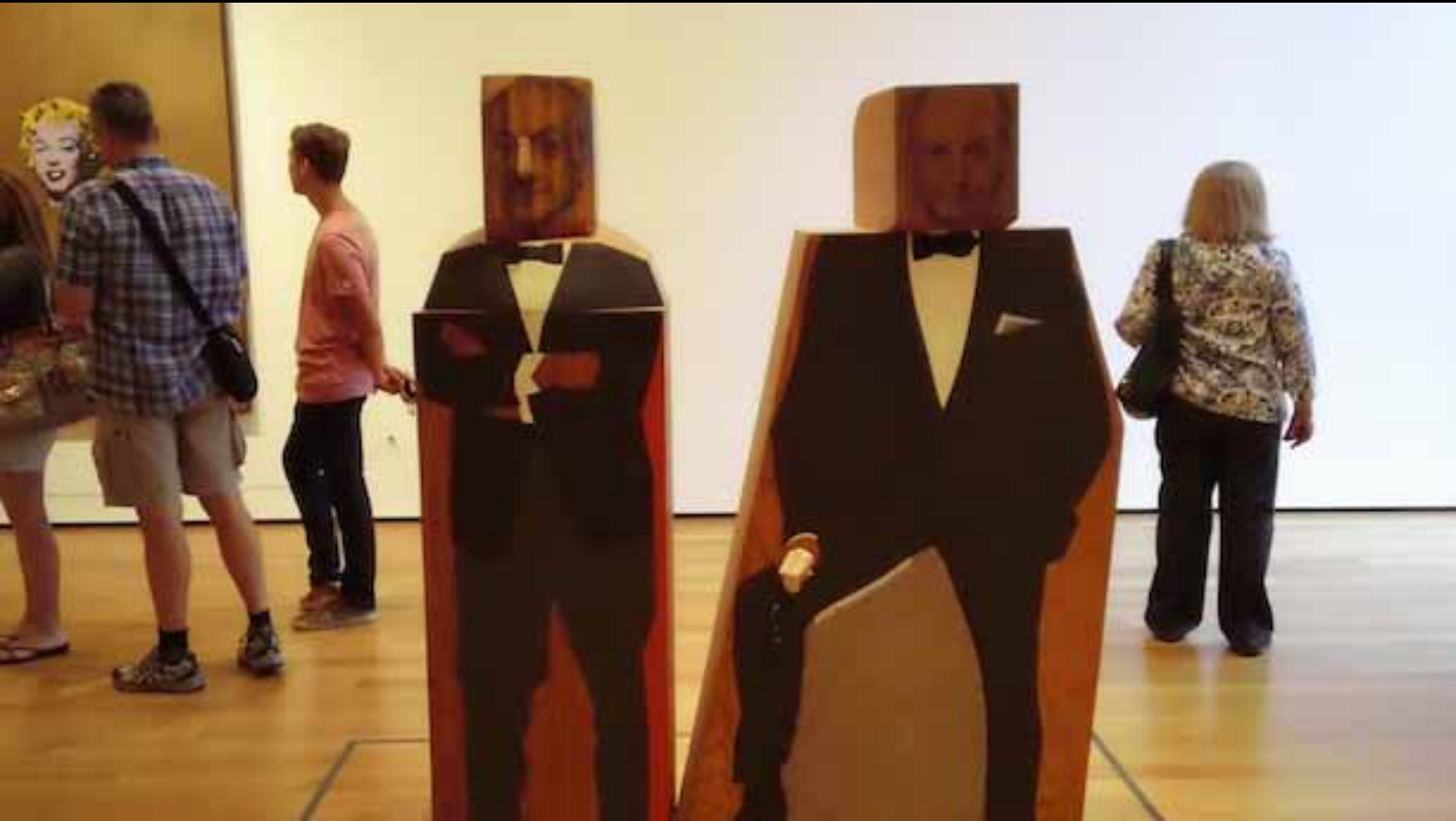


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So, we lost two more Hugos (with 3 nominations!) and it was OK. We got to meet a bunch of great folks (Galen Dara, Patrick Hester, Ryvenna) and spend some time with friends who we don't get to often see (Shirm, John deNardo, Guy Lillian, Mur Lafferty, and Hillary Pearlman) not to mention a ton of folks we see every now and again who we just love love love. It's always a good time at a WorldCon!

So, that cover's by Macy Starkey (yes, related to Mo 'The Thrill' Starkey) and I love her stuff. She's one of those artist who I'd love to see more stuff from. Miss Pearlman is another of those artists, and she was so shocked to see that she got 11 nominations for Best Fan Artist! Espana Sheriff got 14 noms, which I believe is a high for her as well. I haven't seen her in ages! Miss her out this way!

My New York trip was great, though I didn't get nearly enough pictures at WorldCon. New York had those museums and my camera went click click click. I've got a trip to the UK coming up with The Lovely & Talented Linda! We'll get pics of The Cheapside Horde (that's Tudor/Jacobian jewelry) and at tehV&A (I'm betting I'll fill at least two cameras) and more than likely a trip to the Science Museum.

And we've already put out a 5 Cons (5consdocumentary.weebly.com) and a second that is part comedy (it's The Algebreadist bit that 3rd Row did ages ago!) and it's a lot of fun, especially since Brandon Sanderson gives the kind of answer only a MAD MAN could give!

And have I mentioned that we're Guests of Honor together at Westercon next year!

Expect another issue middle of Next Week, and a start of a wider look at the potential YA Hugo!

Also, you guys rule!





Letter Graded Mail sent to Garcia@computerhistory.org

And now... Lloyd Penney!!!

Dear Chris:

You're in San Antonio right now, and I am stuck here in Toronto, but at least now I can get caught up with the outstanding Drink Tanks (yes, they are!), and you're too busy to create any more of them! Here's comments on issues 351, 352 and 353.

Nothing wrong with T-Dot! It was a great time. Exhausting. The only time I was this beat after a WorldCon was following LACon IV... well, maybe Reno, too.

351...It was a shame to learn of the passing of Iain Banks, but even more of a shame that I hadn't read any of his works. I will need to remedy that failing on my part as soon as I can. Sometimes, I feel that where I am is the back end of science fiction...I urged one of our local cons to bring in Banks as a guest, but that never happened. We have a genuine surfeit of admirable authors to bring in to conventions, and we never got to Iain Banks.

There's a lot of great Banks out there to get your nose in. I would say that *The Algebraist* is a good point to start in!

352...I admire John Hertz's choices for SF classics, and I have them all, but it has been some time since I've read them. I had a difficult time getting through *The Glass Bead Game* (my copy is titled *Magister Ludi*), but it was ultimately rewarding.

I like *The Glass Bead Game* (and I'd say that it's better than *Siddhartha*, though the latter is much easier reading).

Conventions are going to be rare for us until I get some work, but until then...our plans for cons are SFCOntario 4 this coming November (we've got a dealer's table), Ad Astra 2014, CostumeCon 32, and I hope, Loncon 3. Still no guarantees.

I was talkign with Dave Kyle about his GoHship at SFCOntario and he was hilarious. I said "Hey, they're really excited to have you as their Fan Guest." and he responded - "Well, I'm sure they were excited about you as their guest in their own way." He cracked me up!

My loc...even though I was at two events in Toronto with Jim, I still didn't get a chance to talk to him! I guess e-mail is the only way. Check my Facebook page in the photo section, and you will see photos of us from the Murdoch Mysteries event at The Old Mill. Great fun! Also, you should be able to see screen captures of Yvonne in the show. If you can't find them, let me know, and I will e-mail them to you.

I like Jim! I'm lucky that I've had the chance to chat with him maybe half-a-dozen times, mostly because I went to those Eastercons. I was really happy to see how much money we raised at the Fan Fund auction. Sadly, I declared Parity between the Dollar, the Euro and The Pound, but no one paid in anything but dollars!

Killing the Fan Hugos is not the way to go about, I agree. But, they desire to kill them comes from older fans who don't like seeing the kids coming in and being nominated for and winning the rockets they honestly think are theirs to win. They don't like these mew-fangled blogs and vlogs and other e-publications many of them cannot access, in more ways than one. Time marches on, folks, and newer members will nominate and vote upon the newer technologies. They feel pushed out, and perhaps they are right, but they complain about this, but do not attend Worldcon, and therefore cannot do anything about their complaints. I doubt this will get any traction at the business meeting. We've grown up to see the Hugo as the pinnacle of fannish achievement. You've got one rocket, I got a nomination a few years ago, and it took a while for me to come down from that. Perhaps we're The Wrong People, but if that's the case, I don't think I'd want to be among The Right People.

Yeah, it got beatered and beatered bad. That's a plus. I do wish we'd debated it, but what you gonna do? I still think there's somethign special about 'zines, and I really don't think they can compete with blogs, which are very different beasts.

353...I've been getting apazines from Bill Wright, and I've wanted to meet him, but it looks like it shall not be. Good to hear from Genevieve and Evelyn again. We probably spend a little too much money on pizza, but we just don't have the time to make it from scratch. Pizza is a garbage food, like stew, chilli and jambalaya, whatever you've got lying around, in it goes into the pot, or in this case, onto the pizza. When we were in Holland in 1990 for the Worldcon, we had a pizza we ordered from a pizzeria in The Hague. There are North American toppings, and then there are European toppings, such as sliced beets, sliced eggs, sliced Brussels sprouts, tuna, artichoke hearts and asparagus tips. Whoa, culture shock! We asked for pineapple on our pizza, and we blew their minds.

I realised that I hadn't seen Genevieve in the flesh for more than two months until the other day! See Evelyn all the time, but not Gen. We ate well that night! I do love Pizza. I had some tonight! I am going to do a Duck Confit Pizza with shallots, garlic, and basil.

It's getting late in the afternoon, and Yvonne's coming home shortly, and I've got to have dinner ready for her. What are having? Pizza... Well, it is a Friday, and it's a long weekend! Have yourself a great time in San Antonio, and we're off for a lakeside picnic tomorrow morning. Maybe I will see if I can access the Hugo ceremony online, but I expect to spend Saturday in the park, Sunday at a steam engine event west of Toronto, and Monday making steampunk earrings and necklaces for our dealer's table at SFContario 4. See you with the next issue!

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

