

A PROPOSAL :

By Len Moffatt

TO THE 18TH WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION COMMITTEE:

Please present the following proposal at the Pittcon Business Meeting:

That the membership fee for the World Science Fiction Convention shall be \$1.00, and that members attending the convention shall pay an additional dollar as a registration fee. If adopted, this proposal will go into effect immediately.

Reasons for this proposal: It is an established fact that WorldCons can be succesful--financially, socially, and every other way--without raising the membership and/or registration fee, and without depending on the auctions to keep them from losing money. Each WorldCon committee must know how to shop around to get the best deal for the Convention, must operate on a budget (and resist the temptation to spend money it isn't sure of having when the bills are due), must know how to economize, must utilize the talents and labor provided gratis by the co-operative, good hearted fans and pros. If these simple "musts" are recognized and used the raising of the fee to \$3.00 is unnecessary.

The science fiction field, which in this instance means both "prodom" and "fandom" is not a wealthy one. More fans, and no doubt more pros, would be more inclined to join and support a convention at a buck a head than at three bucks a head.

The auctions need not--and should not--be the deciding factor in whether or not a convention is going to be solvent. Money collected from the auction and/or raffles can be spent on "extras" at the Convention itself, and of course--as is traditional--passed long to the next committee to get them started on the following years convention. It has been suggested that selling the donated auction material in raffles--using only the very best auction material in a shorter auction--might bring in more money than trying to auction off all the material, the latter process consuming more time and seeming to bring in less money each year. The raffle system should be tried, but regardless of its success, again, it should not be considered the convention's "ace in the hole" for keeping the convention out of the red.

Only a "business like" convention committee can do that, no matter what the fee. Considering all this, the proposal to raise the fee to \$3.00 is most undesirable. The succesful conventions which charged one and two dollars a head were not, by any means, "cheap" affairs. But they were inexpensive, and just as enjoyable (if not more so) than the expensive ones, and every fan and pro, poor, rich, or in between, had equal opportunity to participate in and support the convention.

Inflation has already affected prodcom and fandom (in publishing and mailing magazines, for instance.) Let's try to keep it from affecting our conventions too. Who needs it?

-Len J. Moffatt
August 17, 1960

-oOo-

Rick Sneary had some things to say, which seem to fit right in with Len's proposal and supporting words. Rick's remarks were largely prompted by PSMiller's letter lastish, and his views are muchly those of the LASFS. So...Rick....

First, regarding an increase in membership fees to \$3.00. As Treasurer of the Solacon, and from viewing the Final Report of the Detention, it is my opinion that it is not needed. My reasons: (a) The Solacon started with no contributions other than memberships picked up at the Loncon. We asked only \$1.00 for memberships from anywhere, and \$1.00 Registration, for anyone actually attending. Yet, by carefull watching of our money we were never in the red, and at the begining of the Convention we had over \$300 in cash. (b) One-third or more of the membership came in after the Convention starts, so a boost in fees will not mean much more money early in the year. (c) Lack of auction material would not have been a disastrous avent for eather the Solacon or the Detention, as both gave away almost as much as they took in from their auction. (d) Also, I feel that the higher fee will "freeze" out a number of fans who would like to join and get the booklets, without any expectation of attending.

I realize it is nice for a Con Committee to have enough money to do all the things they would like. But when we started on the Solacon we agreed to do it as inexpensively as possable, both to keep from going into debt, and to give the membership as much as we could for their money. We did things ourself, and shoped for the best prices. We were lucky to have the booklets edited by a professional. Rog helped get the Hugo's made at cut prices. We used local talent to the best advantages, and from what I saw, the Detroit gang did the same thing. We had lucky brakes, and people with time to do the work. But, I don't think a Convention Committee should be salected that wants it any other way.

Al Lewis here. To me it seems to boil down to this: New York and London lost money. The fee was raised and the Solacon made Money. The fee was raised again and Detroit made even more money. If Pittsburg doesn't make money, I'll be surprised. And it will be their own fault. The only reason for raising prices at any time is because current prices are inadequate. Current prices have been shown to be more than adequate. If the proposal to raise the fee to \$3 goes through it will be the third raise in four years. In fact the conventions are making more than enough and a reduction of dues seems to be definitely feasible. So why not?

(Reprinted from SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRES #52,
September, 1960 -- A FanHill Publication)