

HUGO REPORT #1

BACKGROUND: Over the past half-decade, there have been several committees established for the purpose of studying the HUGOs, to the end of standardizing the categories, modifying procedures of selection, etc. The most recent of these was the one headed up by Dick Lupoff, which was appointed at PacificCon II in 1964, made its interim report at LonCon in 1965, and delivered a final report at TriCon last Labor Day. In addition to the award changes the Lupoff committee recommended, Dick suggested that another, much smaller committee be established to continue the study of the awards, from WorldCon to WorldCon, each making its report at the con following the one appointing it.

Lloyd Biggle, Jr., and John Trimble were appointed by the TriCon business meeting to comprise the first of these continuing study committees, with a final report due at the NYCon III, in August 1967. As Lloyd points out further on, he does not exactly represent the "pro" viewpoint, but rather his own; having been instrumental in the establishment of the "Nebulas," he's very interested in the future of the HUGOs.

As the "fannish" half of the committee, I'd like to explain how I view our mandate. The previous committees were established primarily to examine specific areas of these awards, and to recommend changes. This committee, on the other hand, was established in the interests of continuing study of the whole concept of the Annual Science Fiction Achievement Awards. In that light, our *raison d'être* is to provide a sounding board/clearing house for ideas on the HUGOs &c, with a view to being able to present the membership of the NYCon III sfandom's view of the Annual Science Fiction Achievement Awards: 1967.

Such is the purpose of this fanzine.

To expedite discussion, I'm reprinting that portion of the constitution and by-laws of the World Science Fiction Society, uninc., adopted at DisCon, in 1963, which deal with the awards. I'm attempting to include the amendments adopted at TriCon, tho my phraseology may be somewhat un-legalistic in parts; the sense should be clear.

Further, since the NYCon III committee has already made a change in the awards, we're presenting an article by Ted White, the NYCon III co-Chairman, explaining the reasoning behind their decision to replace the "fanzine" HUGO with a set of fan-awards, which they're calling "PONGs."

APOLOGIA: I'd like to apologize to everyone concerned for the extreme tardiness of this 'zine. The months since the TriCon have seen myriads of changes in the Trimble household, and we've only recently become settled enough to permit me to undertake a publication such as this one. I'll try to make sure that future issues appear as fast as comment warrants. I'll have to admit, however, that with it being such a beautiful day out, and San Francisco Bay sparkling so nicely in the sunshine, I'd rather not be inside, knocking out a fanzine. Sigh. Avanti!

HUGO REPORT #1 is published by the HUGO Study Committee, on an irregular schedule, and edited by John Trimble, 243 Santa Rosa Avenue, Oakland, California 94610, USA. It is available ~~par~~ letters of comment on the subjects under discussion. We'll trade for other fanzines containing discussions of the awards. [or for a 4¢ stamp!] March 1967

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THE RULES: Following are the portions of the by-laws adopted at DisCon which deal with the awarding of the HUGOs.

- 2.01 The selection of the annual HUGOs and the categories for which awards will be made are as follows:
- 2.02 Best Novel: A science fiction or fantasy work of 35,000 or more words appearing in print for the first time in the previous calendar year. Magazine serials are eligible only if the last installment is published in the subject year, and if a story appears in multiple form, the author may pick which edition he wishes to be the eligible one, even if this means taking his work out of competition in one year so that it might be eligible the next. Previous winners are not eligible.
- 2.03 Best Novellette: A science fiction or fantasy story of from 10,000 to 35,000 words published for the first time in a magazine, or appearing for the first time in a collection or anthology, during the previous calendar year. Previous winners are not eligible, nor shall a story be eligible more than twice. Publication date, or cover date in the case of a dated magazine, shall take precedence over copyright date. Individual stories appearing together as a series are eligible only as individual stories, and are not eligible taken together under the title of the series.
- 2.04 Best Short Story: A science fiction or fantasy story of less than 10,000 words [all portions of the previous section, other than the word limits apply to this section, also].
- 2.05 Word Limits: Any story within 5000 words of the boundaries listed in Sections 2.02, 2.03 and 2.04, above, may be moved across that boundary by the convention committee if it appears that the story would fit in the adjacent category better.
- 2.06 Best Dramatic Production: Any production, single or series, directly related to science fiction or fantasy, in the fields of radio, television, stage or screen, which has been publicly presented for the first time in its present form during the previous calendar year. In the case of individual programs presented as a series, the separate programs shall be individually eligible, but the entire year's production taken as a whole under the series title shall not be eligible.
- 2.07 Best Professional Artist: A professional artist whose work was presented in some form in the science fiction or fantasy field during the previous calendar year.
- 2.08 Best Professional Magazine: Any magazine devoted primarily to science fiction or fantasy, which has published four or more issues, at least one issue appearing in the previous calendar year.
- 2.09 Best Amateur Magazine: Any generally available non-professional magazine devoted to science fiction, fantasy or related subjects, which has published four or more issues, at least one appearing in the previous year.
- 2.10 Special Category: A special category may be created by the convention committee, with the winner to be selected by vote in the same manner as the winners of the other categories. Such special categories will not carry forward to the next year.
- 2.11 Additional Awards: The name and design of the HUGOs shall be restricted to the awards listed above, and shall not be extended to any additional awards.

2.12 No Award: At the discretion of the individual convention committee, if a lack of votes in a specific category shows a marked lack of interest in that category on the part of the voters, the award in that category shall be cancelled for that year.

2.13 Nominations and Voting: Selection of nominees for the final award voting shall be made by a poll conducted by the convention committee under rules determined by the convention committee. Final award voting shall be by mail, with ballots sent only to society members [as defined in paragraph 1.02 (paid-up members of the current convention) above]. Final ballots shall include name, address, signature and membership number blanks to be filled in by each voter. Final ballots shall standardize the alternatives given in each category to no more than five. Assignment of nominees nominated in more than one category to their proper category, and determination of eligibility of nominees, shall be determined by the convention committee. Each person shall vote for as many of the nominees in each category, in order of preference, as desired in the final ballot.

2.14 Tallying: Counting of all votes shall be done by the convention committee, which is responsible for all matters concerning the awards. In tabulation, the committee shall first tally each voter's first choice in each category. In the event that a majority vote is not obtained in any category, the nominee with the lowest number of votes shall be eliminated, and the second choice of each voter who awarded first choice to the eliminated nominee shall be awarded to the nominees remaining. This process shall be repeated until a majority vote is obtained in each category.

2.15 Award Eligibility: No member of the then current convention committee, nor any publication closely connected with them shall be eligible for an award.

2.16 The HUGO award will continue to be standardized, as to the design of the rocket ship, on the model presently in use. The design of the base shall be determined from year to year by each convention committee.

In a further amendment to the by-laws, the TriCon business meeting approved adding a provision that [from NYCon on, inclusive] any group bidding for a convention is honor-bound to abide by the society rules, and must promise to so abide in order to be entered into nomination.

SOURCES: My source for the text of these rules is primarily George Scithers; the main text and form is from his "A Question of Continuity," as published in YANDRO and the Cult, and the amendments passed at TriCon are from a letter sent in answer to my request for them. I have interposed them into the proper sections, and that part of the wording is mine.

--john trimble.

Join the NYCon

In order to be able to vote in the final HUGO balloting, you've got to be a member of the NYCon III. So you'd better join now! Membership is \$2 for non-attending members, and \$3 for attendees. Send NOW to:

25th World Science Fiction Convention, P O Box 367, Gracie Square Sta.,
New York, N Y 10028.

And why not plan to attend this Labor Day weekend; Statler Hilton, N Y.C.

the HUGOS

by Ted White

the PONGS

I'd like to get historical. The history of the HUGO Awards has been fraught with change, and disputed change. One has only to refer to the list of awarded HUGOs published in the TriCon Program Booklet to see this. There has hardly been a year in which the awards have remained in the same categories, and some years there have been very few. In the spring of 1966, Ben Jason appeared at the Disclave with some rather disquieting news. Despite what he considered an all-out saturation campaign with HUGO nomination ballots--he quoted a figure and I don't remember it, but it was over 2,000--something less than fifty ballots were returned. He rightly considered this a dreadful state of affairs. What that meant was that a very tiny number of people chose the actual ballot for the awards. We of the then NYCon Bidding Committee were not very happy about the state of the HUGOs. Rumors had been rife for years of HUGO ballot-stuffing, and of such small ballot turnouts that the awards seemed next to meaningless. They were not worthless, however. As Harlan Ellison brought out at the PacifiCon business session, the HUGOs are worth a great deal--to professional authors whose sales (to publishers, movie & TV producers, etc.) are sometimes enhanced or jeopardized by a HUGO or lack thereof. But the meaning of the HUGO has traditionally been that of an award made by a sizeable segment of fandom, and therefore representing a cross-section of opinion of the diverse interests and tastes of fandom. If news were ever common that the HUGO was being selected by a disproportionately small number of these fans, and that a block of voters as small as ten could sway the vote, the awards would not only be meaningless, but worthlessly devalued as well. We had considered this point for some time, and Ben's news brought us to a tentative decision: we would not award HUGOs in 1967. We would place the awards in abeyance for one season and see what effects this produced. We were also concerned with the possible impact upon the HUGO of the new SFWA Nebula awards. It seemed possible to us that these awards, more nearly equal in type to the Mystery Writers Edgar Awards, might replace the HUGOs in prestige with publishers and other professional interests. However, this idea was shelved when Ben told us that a phenomenal number of fans--around or over 400 (I am quoting these figures from memory; Ben can correct me if I'm too far off)--had voted on the final ballot. Obviously, interest in the HUGO Awards was not dead. Obviously, we had a mandate to continue them. We decided to do so. Now, independently of this, we had been thinking for some time about the mortality rate in fan polls, their usefulness and lack thereof. Fan polls have existed for over twenty years in fandom, since the days when Forry Ackerman regularly copped #1 Fan Face, 'on up. They seem to run in cycles, but reached a kind of evening-out period in the FANAC Poll, the results of which were traditionally published in the FANNISH, FANAC's annish. The only trouble with the FANAC Poll was its thoroughness, which required the publication of exhaustive analysis and rundowns of the winners and runners-up. Eventually this bogged down two FANAC editors in succession (Terry Carr and Walter Breen), and that was the end of it. In 1961, George Willick proposed a Fan Awards poll with lofty ambitions, including, I believe, handing out the awards at the World Conventions. Unfortunately, Willick was not one of fandom's more stable types, and some of his proposals were deservedly laughed out of existence. The result was to hurt the Fan Awards concept far more than Willick, who gafiated not long after for independent reasons.

The following year an independent panel was set up to reinstitute the idea, and in 1964 one poll was conducted and its results published, by Dick Eney, for the committee. It was a workmanlike job, not unlike the FANNISH in a basic way, and without frills. The job for conducting the next poll passed to Wally Weber, who won TAFF that year, and that was the end of that. In 1965, our bidding committee discussed the idea of Fan Awards, and Mike McInerney conducted a FOCAL POINT Poll through his fanzine as an interim replacement for the Weber poll. The response was no greater than one would expect of a fanzine-run poll during a period when fandom was in mild doldrums. In 1966, we discussed the awards idea again. There was some question of running them in place of the HUGOs, when we were concerned with continuing the HUGOs. Our thinking in this regard build down to this: Fans support and created the World SF Convention. Although professionals have always reaped the greatest of what slim rewards there were (mostly egoboo), the fans have been the workhorses for the conventions over the two and a half decades past, and, through their memberships, have given tangible support. We felt it was time the fans received a little equal billing. Although there is far less friction between the fans and The Dirty Pros than the jokes would have it, I think there has always been a feeling that fans and pros do not meet on equal footing, and that the fan is best suited for silently adoring the pro. This attitude comes as much from the fans as the pros. It is, of course, ridiculous. There are almost no program items devoted to fans and fandom, and for a solid reason: most fans come to conventions to see pros on the programs. Of the average of five to eight hundred convention attendees, probably no more than one hundred have any deeply abiding interest in fandom as a thing apart from the prozines. And one has only to plan or participate in a "fan panel" to understand the near-absurdity of one. The nadir, I think was reached in the one at the DisCon on mimeography. Most fan panels degenerate into a discussion of the current issues in sf, and most members of the audience would rather hear such a discussion from people they consider more qualified--i.e., the pros. What other feature does the convention offer for recognizing the fans? A series of awards was the obvious answer, and we think a fitting one.

For most of its history, the HUGO, or Science Fiction Achievement Award, to use its proper name, has included the Best Fanzine category. This has always been a lame-duck award, and has often been issued simply to the fanzine with the largest circulation of the moment. It is a lame!duck award for the simple reason that it has no comparative standing with Best Novel, Best Dramatic Presentation, Best Artist, or even Best Professional Magazine. A fanzine HUGO has always stood as straight as any other, but it has had to mean less. It is the little brother, usually kicked to the end of the line. Jimmy Taurasi, for example, won two HUGOs for his SCIENCE FICTION TIMES. I cannot imagine that he thinks it puts him on a par with Campbell as an editor, or Heinlein as a writer, to name a couple of others who have won more than one HUGO. The Fanzine HUGO was always the sole non-professional award. It was a sore thumb. It annoyed some pros, a fact which does not concern me greatly, and it annoyed many fans, a point which does. Year after year, fanzines editors watched the HUGO go to fanzines which were rarely best qualified to be considered for Best Fanzine. One year it went to a publication, WHO KILLED SCIENCE FICTION, which was not a fanzine at all, and was circulated only to its contributors and members of SAPS. Let us not delude ourselves; the HUGO rarely went to those fanzines which topped independent polls. It never went to some of the most deserving fanzines of the last decade.

That a basic inequity exists in polling five or eight hundred people, only two or three hundred of whom have read any fanzines for a Fanzine HUGO is obvious. And I see no obvious answer to it, short of eliminating the fan awards entirely. Instead, we chose the opposite course: we added Fan Awards. We added two, to be exact; Best Fan Artist, and Best Fan Writer. These, I think, serve to frame the Fanzine Award far better. And for the first time, they have given it a setting in which it is not a lame-duck.

There are two ways in which this change can be regarded. The positive way is the one which motivated us: we have set up parallel Fan Awards in which fans will receive equal recognition with the pros, but without the confusion of fields. We kept the number of categories simple, because we felt recent fan polls were over-complicated. We didn't believe in setting up the confusion inherent in such categories as "best fan artist," and "best fan cartoonist," for example. Instead, we've chosen the middle course: best editor, best artist, best writer, thus hitting the three major levels of fanzine activity, the only area we felt should be awarded. (If following conventions feel there are other areas of fanac deserving recognition, fine.)

It seemed obvious to us that Fan Achievement Awards could achieve equal footing with the Science Fiction Achievement Awards only if they clearly represented their own separate area of activity and achievement. Therefore, we did not try to tack them on as additional HUGOs. The sole bone of contention that has been picked with us to date is that we removed the fanzine award from the HUGO lineup.

This is the the negative approach. And it is assinine. We've been asked, "Why not leave the fanzine award a HUGO, and make the other two 'Pongs,' or whatever you want to call 'em?" I cannot think of a more lopsided arrangement. Instead of one lame-duck, it creates three. The fanzine award would thus still suffer from comparison to its fellow HUGOs. But the other two would be a breed apart, suffering by comparison with the fanzine award. They would be add-ons. Instead of two parallel and non-competitive sets of awards, honoring achievement in each area, we would have a set-up more bastardly than before, and satisfying no one. Well, perhaps not "no one." Perhaps half a dozen individuals--those directly competing for the fanzine award--might prefer the dubious privilege of comparing themselves with Campbell, Heinlein and whomever you will.

I have been told that this change will be intensely disappointing to the faneds in question. But I have not been told this by any of those faneds who might logically be in the running. Instead, it comes to me from fans who have won HUGOs. And these fans seem to be overly concerned with names. Gentlemen, it will be the same award. It will still be presented by the toastmaster of the Awards Banquet. It will still honor the best (supposedly) fanzine of 1966. It may even still be a rocket, and if not it will be equally handsome. It simply won't be a HUGO. It won't have the HUGO name. If the prestige of either the actual presentation of the award or of the voting of the award have any meaning, they will not be tarnished. And if they will be so devalued by a change of name, then there was little there to begin with.

The name: We picked "Pong" for several reasons. First, it is euphonious and short. It has the same number of letters as "HUGO." And it has similar nick-namish connotations. It can be compared favorably with "Oscar," "Emmy," "Grammy" or "Edgar," without any knowledge of the name's antecedents.

Second, it honors a legendary figure who was perhaps the first well-rounded and modern (I will not say "fannish") fan. Third, and most important, Pong is not the name of a living individual. I believe that it is a mistake to use a living man's name on an award. If the award becomes cheapened, it reflects badly upon him. If the award becomes too popular, it eclipses him. However, we are not committed to the nickname "Pong" for the Fan Achievement Awards. We are committed to the awards themselves. But The Map Is Not The Territory, as someone used to remark quite often. And the Name is not the Award.

One other criticism has come to my attention. This criticism is that we did not go through the proper "channels" in making our changes in the award structure. We did not bring it to a vote at the TriCon business meeting. No, we didn't. And for the same reason that the NYCon 3 will have no business session other than that for consite selection. Business sessions are an absolute farce and a total waste of time. As example, at the tempestuous and lengthy PacifiCon II business session, several concrete proposals were offered for changing the voting procedure of the HUGO Awards. The proposals were bandied about for several hours, then referred to a committee. One proposal was to be "studied," the other to be put into effect by the committee. My critic, the one who feels we ignored the proper channels, was head of that committee. To date he has ignored the mandate of the PacifiCon business meeting, and has stated privately that he has every intention of continuing to do so. High-handed? Un huh. And something we have been quite content to do without. The simple fact is this: convention committees are totally autonomous and have always been so. Nothing decided at one convention has any binding effect upon the next. This is a matter of cold historical fact. We have not innovated in this regard. We chose to present our changes fait accompli. We chose to give them an actual test. We do not intend to force our ideas on our successors, who will be free to act as they in turn think best. I believe that any idea which shows itself to be workable and meritorious will be strongly considered by our successors, and I hope that the Fan Awards will prove to be such. But that's a matter for the coming months. And if the plan fails, we will junk it ourselves.

In the meantime, if you who read this are fans, and have any pride in the fact, I urge you to support these awards fully. They are nothing more, in the end, than a voice for your opinions. They represent your chance to honor the fans most deserving among you. And they deserve more than petty acrimony from a few embittered with sour grapes.

--Ted White.

EDITORIALIZING: The HUGO Study Committee isn't about to take any stand on the idea of the Fan Achievement Awards Ted is seeking to establish. That is a matter for open discussion in these or other pages. But, of necessity, we must oppose the viewpoint that business meetings are a total waste of time, and decide nothing. If such is the case, this committee loses any reason for existence, and this fanzine is a waste of time, paper and postage. True, some World-Con business sessions have been lengthly, confused, tempestuous, and have created bigger messes than they were supposed to settle. This, I tend to believe, is more a fault of control, than being the nature of the beast. A well-chaired business meeting can carry out its business with a minimum of futzing around, and provide valuable tools &/or guidelines for the future.

Further, a business session which has a pre-business meeting "hash-out" session, such as was held at TriCon, can accomplish much with very little arglebargle. To say that there's no reason for having by-laws and business sessions because past conventions haven't abided by them is somewhat like saying that because a couple of horses have escaped there's no reason to lock the barn...aren't the other horses worth the attempt at keeping? I hope that the NYCon III Committee will reconsider this decision, and will decide to hold something more than the minimal business session they're talking about now. And will give fandom a chance to ratify their actions on the Fan Awards, if these are a success. They'll be doing future convention committees a favor if they will.

--john trimble.

MY POSITION: I have been asked to contribute a few words explaining how I view my position on the Committee. The one explanation that is needed is to affirm that my position is--my position. There is no official "pro" position on the HUGO Awards, nor should there be one, and I presume to speak for no one but myself. The HUGO Awards are a fan project and as such are the business of fans and their organization. This is not to say that the Awards are not important to professional writers, for they are extremely important; but as long as the integrity of the Awards is properly safeguarded and their standards maintained, I see no reason for any pro to be telling the fans how to conduct their business.

Unless, of course, he speaks as a fan. There are pros who have been outstanding fans much longer than they have been professional writers. By this time the all-arms concerning HUGO versus NEBULA should be completely dissipated. Rather than distracting from the HUGO Awards, the NEBULA Awards have focused more attention on them. Where in the past the HUGOs were dismissed with a list of the winners, now we have critical articles comparing the two Awards. Each Award serves an important purpose, and if there is a competition between them both benefit from it. Long may they both endure.

--Lloyd Giggie, Jr.

and your opinion, readers?

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