

PANEL NOTES

2018 SMOFCON 36 in Santa Rosa, CA

2-3 pm Sunday 2-2-18

Notes by Bruce Farr

Panel with Bobbi Armbruster, Local Liaison and Bid Member (subbing for Patty Wells, Programme Director) and Bruce Farr, Chairperson; about 35 audience members

Comments made are:

- Audience liked the large number of tracks of Programme (up to 5 tracks)
 - Members were more easily able to find interesting topics and things to learn each hour
- Convention had fewer workshops on Friday than usual
 - Generally thought of as okay
 - 2 hour workshops worked well, didn't need 3 hour long events always
- Dublin having events and meetings on Thursday brought more people to the convention on Thursday, so Friday attendance was larger than normal
 - Future SMOFCons should also see about early events bringing in attendees early and so plan to start Programme earlier on Friday
- Some missed the greater number of Friday workshops
 - Suggested mix of 2 and 3-4 hour workshops on Friday
- When asked about ideal number of tracks, some like 4/5 tracks, some preferred 2/3 tracks
- Suggestion having 2 main tracks, 2 secondary tracks
 - Secondary including non-panel hosting such as "birds of a feather" or roundtable
- Suggestion to have some individual development versus group development as focus
- Could have label on event such as beginner versus deep dive
- Could us a Presentation Workshops
 - Moderator skills
 - Effective use of online sessions being streamed
 - Noted our online attracted 12 or more to our Zoom account
- Note to ask panelists and room setup works best
 - Rounds, theatre stye, schoolies
- Suggest to have one general session a day where all are asked to attend for news, announcements, general socializing
- Fannish Inquisition, suggested (as has been done before) looking at 2 sessions, one Friday and one Saturday
 - One day NASFiC's and SMOFCon
 - One day Worldcon (seated and bids)
- Might add to Fannish Inquisition regional focus events, such as Westercon (seated and bids)
- Fannish Inquisition issue was cards weren't always read or used

- Moderator comment that sometimes the card comment is incendiary and even paraphrasing doesn't work to avoid issues, so moderator uses discretion
- Need to think of how to edit a question and give transparency that issues are covered without personal attacks being potentially made
- Need to tell event hosts about fliptime to next event so that there are smooth transitions to next event
- Overall, several comments that Programme was very good and several also said that they learned a lot more than at other SMOFCons –
 - Bruce Farr gave kudos to Patty Wells with able assistance in planning, editing, etc. to Bobbi Armbruster and Lea Farr

Post convention feedback on streaming was that it worked well. Especially appreciated repeating questions from the audience (or having audience use mics) so that those online can hear. Also like being able to ask questions or comment via text. Note that we didn't charge for streaming attendance as this was an experiment. Also, at least 4 of those attending online were Attending members who couldn't get to the convention. Future SMOFCons might want to see if they can repeat streaming, and even add more tracks. SMOFCon 36 was helped by having great tech assistance from Cathy and Dean Johnson, Rick Kovalcik, and others who helped at con. The SCIFI equipment borrowed included computers for each rooms as needed and projectors for each room along with sound systems and mics for each panelist.