

# The First Canadian Unity Fan Fund Trip Report

Torque 2 by Mike Hall (1)

from *New Canadian Fandom* #1:2/3, June-Sept. 1981

[Torque 2, Toronto, Muir Park Hotel, July 10-12, 1981. Guest of Honour: Thomas Disch; Fan Guest: Ross Pavlac. Relaxicon.]

Okay, I admit my trip didn't start out very well: A surly CP Air employee offering to exchange fisticuffs with me because he didn't like where I was standing, wedged in a crowd in the /d/u/n/g/e/o/n/ basement of Terminal One, vainly waiting for my baggage to appear. It finally *did* trundle down out of the catacombs, one hour later.)

It ended up two weeks later (in Terminal Two, this time) on a pretty happy note, after a good time was had by all.

In between, there was the Ontario Science Museum (crowded with a million little kids who were playing with all the knobs and switches *I* wanted to play with), the Royal Canadian Science Museum in Ottawa (not crowded, and I got to play with everything!) and many other museums, movie theatres, stores, freeways, historic buildings, traffic jams, fish smells and interesting bag people.

But on to more mundane matters. I turned out to be the first winner of the annual Canadian Unity Fan Fund, and this fun trip was being partially subsidized by the Fund and OSFiC. (2)

Torque 2 was my first Toronto convention, and will probably be the first of many. While there were the usual collection of dozmos rampaging through the halls, dart and water guns in hand, the people not engaged in these pursuits were for the most part fascinating and erudite. The trip to the con itself was worth it just for the opportunity to get to meet Moshe Feder, and to see Bob Webber (3), Taral, and Victoria Vayne.

Torque was a small con, around 100 paid attendees, and reinforced my view that this is the best type of con. Leave the circuses to others! I ran into the Pro Guest of Honour, Tom Disch, late Saturday night, while he was in the process of forming a new religion, and Ross Pavlac, the Fan GoH, earlier Saturday at a Chinese dinner. It wasn't hard to find Taral - he was flitting around from place to place, seemingly as busy as if it had been a really large convention.

Early Saturday morning, Rosanne and I discovered that we had to make a sudden trip to Hamilton. When I arrived back at the con, huffing and puffing, late for a panel I was on, as I sat beside Mike Glicksohn, he asked, "Why would *anyone* want to go to *Hamilton*?" I mumbled something about being born there, but even *I* wasn't convinced.

Later that evening I told Moshe Feder, "You know, that was the first real panel I've been on!"

Late Sunday evening I finally got a private viewing of Victoria's stereo system, Moshe's bed, Taral's famous models, Taral's bed, and Bob's waterbed. (Please don't get the wrong idea about this.) That morning I also got a chance to experience Roger Reynolds (but not his bed) and Mike Glicksohn together drinking. Here at last was my *raison d'être* for attending the con!

The one question that still nags me, though, is: was it really Ross Pavlac distributing those Christian comics?

Earlier that week (to bring up a totally unrelated topic) I participated in the most fascinating theatre experience I have ever been to in my life. Just picture in your mind a historic mansion near downtown Toronto, a dark night, January 10, 1927, a Fascist Blackshirt, several guns, a stunning blonde ... The audience follows the actors through the house as they act out scenes in different rooms simultaneously, and you have to compare notes with others in the audience at intermission to find out what's going on. I could go on and on, but it is quite impossible to describe a play like "Tamara", you had to be there! (4)

(Garth's notes)

(1) Mike Hall: one of the members of the Edmonton SF and Comic Art Society well-known in the 1970s and 1980s as fanpublishers. ESFCAS members started several APAs and personal fanzines, the clubzine *Neology*, the collective fanzine *The Monthly Monthly*, and the Alberta regional convention, NonCon. Mike published Robert Runte's Canadian newszine *New Canadian Fandom* and, for a time, Garth Spencer's *Maple Leaf Rag*. He and his wife Rosanne now reside in Fort McMurray, Alberta. -GS

(2) OSFiC: Ontario Science Fiction Club, the general-interest science fiction club in Toronto from about 1966 until 1984. Some members were well-known as fanwriters, artists, con organizers and fanpublishers from the 1960s to the 1980s, such as Taral, Victoria Vayne, Moshe Feder and Bob Webber. Members started TAPA, the Toronto APA, Ad Astra, a regular general-interest convention, and some other conventions, including Fan Faire, Torque and Ditto. -GS

(3) The Canadian Unity Fan Fund was first proposed by Bob Webber, in Toronto. -GS

(4) "Tamara" sounds very much like other audience-participation murder-mysteries, held in later years in similar venues. But Mike's report is the first description I ever received. -GS