

POOR EXCUSE FOR AN EDITORIAL

Apart from Delerium Time, Taral's coin article and the LoC column, I was having a hard time trying to figure what I should write about for this issue. Assorted random bits suggested themselves, but nothing major, nothing distinctive, nothing that would make this issue special. Figured I'd have to wait for inspiration to strike. Figured I could be a long time a'waiting.

Then Diane Lacey contacted me and asked if I'd like to publish her 2010 CUFF trip report. Would I? Huzzah! As a former CUFF winner I was absolutely delighted to say yes. And here it is!

WHAT? 2013 ALREADY? HOW'D THAT HAPPEN?

(aka, an actual CUFF trip report from Diane Lacey, first published as part of WOOOF at Chicon 7.)

Prologue

I was the 2010 CUFF delegate representing Eastern Canadian fandom at Keycon and it seems about time that I wrote up some kind of trip report for that, no? Three years seems a fair bit of time but not, I think, a record for this kind of thing. Not that I was actually going for the record. As I'm sure most of those reading this are aware, CUFF is the Canadian Unity Fan Fund. The fund sponsors a fan to travel from opposite sides of the country to attend Convention. Convention, as a rule, alternates from locations in Eastern and Western Canada so each year a fan is chosen from the other side. This particular year it was a fan from Eastern Canada (me!) travelling to Winnipeg. The following year a fan from Western Canada was chosen to attend the 2011 Convention. As it turned out that fan chosen was Kent Pollard of Saskatchewan, a very good choice, and the Convention was SFContario 2, a convention at which I served as head of programming. Last year it was SFContario's own Debra Yeung that had the honour.

But I should really start at the beginning. I hadn't thought of it myself, I don't think I ever would have, but Terry Fong pulled me aside at Rob Sawyer's fan party in January and asked if I would

consider running for CUFF. Me? Why no... I haven't been in fandom for several decades yet. How could I possibly run?⁽¹⁾ Then I thought about it for... oh maybe a nanosecond or two, "Run for CUFF. Sure I will. Why not?"⁽²⁾ This exchange was followed by a couple of weeks of tracking down nominators in the east and west and the next thing I knew I was in the race. I was very glad to learn that it *was* a race too. Competition is good for the fan fund, as well as for Canadian fandom in general, and, near as I could determine at the time this was the first it had been contested. Later, however, Colin Hinz told me that it had been a three-way contest in 2003 when he administered the fund and winner Lyndie Bright attended Torcon 3. I subsequently found out that the late 1980's/early 1990's had been positively rife with competition with a race in 1989, that I will talk more about later, and a race in 1990 between Paul Valcour and Keith Soltys and in 1991 between David Panchyk and Linda Ross-Mansfield. So while races were not as unusual as I had thought, it'd been a while since we had one.

So why did I, an upstart who couldn't legitimately claim to have been in fandom for more than a decade, run for CUFF? Well, the short answer is because somebody suggested I should and I thought it would be fun. The slightly longer answer is because, having attended conventions in LA, Boston, Minneapolis and Austin, amongst other US locations, it struck me as slightly ridiculous that I had not *yet* attended a Canadian convention west of Toronto. Now, to be fair, it can be *expensive* to travel within the country. It costs me much less to travel to Minneapolis than it would cost me to get to Winnipeg. But I felt I was missing something in not getting to more conventions in Canada and this was the perfect solution to that. Also, there was talk of a one-day conrunner's convention being held the day after Keycon that I really wanted to attend.⁽³⁾ To top it off, if chosen as the CUFF delegate I would get to go to Winnipeg, and Manitoba is one of the three Canadian provinces I had not yet stayed overnight in.⁽⁴⁾ So it's all good.

(1) I don't know why my mental picture of the typical fan fund delegate was that of an elder statesperson. I've met several and none of them actually fit that profile. Although come to think of it, many *had* been in fandom for decades, presumably having started in the womb.

(2) I never said I wasn't easy.

(3) Although, as it turned out, that convention never happened.

(4) For the record, the other two are PEI and Newfoundland. I have been through Manitoba in the past, returning from trips further west.

A Brief(ish) History of CUFF

Past CUFF Delegates	
Date	Delegate
1981	Mike Hall
1988	Taral Wayne
1989	Robert Runte
1990	Paul Valcour
1991	Linda Ross-Mansfield
1996	Rene Walling
1997	R. Graeme Cameron
1998	Lloyd Penney
1998	Yvonne Penney
1999	Garth Spencer
2000	Sherry Neufeld
2001	Murray Moore
2002	Colin Hinz
2003	Lyndie Bright
2005	Brian Davis
2007	Peter Jarvis
2008	Lance Sibley
2009	LeAmber Kensley
2010	Diane Lacey
2011	Kent Pollard
2012	Debra Yeung

But before we get into it all – a history of CUFF for the uninitiated. Much of what follows is with sincere thanks to R Graeme Cameron and his Canadian Fancyclopedia.

(<http://efanzines.com/CanFan/>)

Any errors are in my interpretation and not due to his writings in any way.

The Canadian Unity Fan Fund was established in 1981, by members of the Ontario SF Club (OSFiC) in Toronto, in an effort to bring Canadian fans closer

together. Bob Webber proposed it first, and donated \$25 to the fund that was then matched by OSFiC. Robert Runte, the 1989 delegate, was originally declared the delegate, but was unable to attend the convention. The first CUFF delegate therefore, was Mike Hall, who attended Torque 2, held in Toronto in July 1981. Rumour has it that Mike was declared the CUFF winner out of the blue while attending the convention and the \$50 fund was pushed into his hand. According to Graeme, Mike Hall was “one of the members of the Edmonton SF and Comic Art Society well-known in the 1970s and 1980s as fan publishers. 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*. His trip report appeared in *New Canadian Fandom* #1:2/3, June-Sept. 1981.” It was Mike that started the rather erratic tradition of publishing a trip report detailing a CUFF delegate’s adventures that I’m trying, somewhat belatedly, to continue with this report.

As the table shows there were no further candidates until 1987 when Mike Wallis, then chair of Ad Astra, announced an initiative to revive CUFF and connect it with Convention. It was also decided that Conventions would alternate, year by year, between Eastern and Western Canadian cons, meaning that CUFF nominees would travel from the opposite side of the country, alternating in the other direction.

The next CUFF delegate, Taral Wayne, traveled from Toronto to Keycon 5/Convention 8 in 1988. Taral, in comment on File 770, said he recalls writing a trip report, but not where it was published. A copy of a speech written for the occasion by Taral appeared in Michael Skeet's MLR #13 in mid 1989.

Robert Runte from Alberta attended PineKone II/Convention 9 as the 1989 CUFF delegate. His trip report appeared as an issue of his perzine, *I'm Not Boring You Am I?* (#7, Fall 1989). This was the first time that the CUFF delegate had been elected. In what was probably the most polite race of all time, Robert’s opponent, Steve Forty, actually endorsed Robert. To quote Michael Skeet in MLR #13:

“Runte won the CUFF over Vancouver's Steve Forty in a race that was so quintessentially Canadian one wouldn't be surprised to discover that both candidates had maple leaves tattooed on

their butts. It was so polite that each spent more time campaigning for the other than himself. That being the case, the final vote count -- 18 for Runte, two for Forty, and two ballots spoiled -- could arguably be considered a victory as much for Forty's logic as for Runte. This is not to impugn Runte's win, but the score would doubtless have been closer had Forty not told everyone who'd listen that he was going to go to Convention anyway, something Runte couldn't afford without CUFF."

Next came Paul Valcour in 1990 and Linda Ross-Mansfield in 1991. Paul published a report in his perzine Long Distance Voyeur, (Dec. 1990). Linda did not publish a trip report but she did publish a very informative essay in the con-newszine ConTRACT (Jul-Aug 1995), part of which is excerpted below:

"We have used as our guide, the rules of both other existing fan funds (ie. TAFF & DUFF), but since CUFF is still in its infancy, and has a smaller financial base than its sister funds, it does not run an election until funds have reached a reasonable quantity to cover the cost of airfare and some accommodation. It usually takes a couple of years to build the fund up again to such a point."

So perhaps this explains why there was not another CUFF delegate until 1996 when Rene Walling, (co-chair of Anticipation and one of my nominators⁽¹⁾), travelled to Convention 96/Con-Version XIII in Calgary.

The next CUFF delegate, was R Graeme Cameron, another of my nominators,⁽²⁾ who traveled to Primedia/Convention 1997 in Markham Ontario and wrote about it in Issue #10 of his perzine SPACE CADET in October 1998.

For the following year, breaking the East-West tradition Convention was held in Montreal and as a result administrator R Graeme Cameron opened up nominations nationwide. Stepping up to the plate were Toronto's own Lloyd and Yvonne Penney, making the long trek to Montreal for Con*cept98/Boreal98/Convention 18. A very entertaining report entitled Penneys Up The River and other CUFF Stories' was published in December of 2000. To raise funds for CUFF numbered and signed copies were sold.

Next up in 1999 was British Columbia fan writer Garth Spencer, who published a trip report entitled 'What I Did On My October Vacation' in

which he says he "conducted a last-minute online campaign, and obtained more than enough nominations, from both East and West, in less than two weeks." That reminds me strongly of my own late entry into the CUFF race. Garth attended inCONsequential II/Convention 19 in Fredericton, New Brunswick as the CUFF delegate.

In 2000 the delegate was Sherry Neufeld and in 2001 it was Murray Moore, also one of my nominators.⁽³⁾ Murray attended VCON 26/Convention 21 in 2001 and published his account in 'A Trip Report Found in a Plain Manila Envelope' describing both the convention, and a subsequent trip to visit fans in Seattle. The detail in the report reveals the copious notes Murray must have been taking during the trip, a fact borne out when he quotes one of his hosts saying "Hey, don't you know you're supposed to make up the writing, but talk while you're here?"⁽⁴⁾

Subsequent winners are given in the table above, but Murray's 2001 account is the last time, until now, a CUFF report has been published. When I pointed this out to him in email Murray responded, "I announced subsequent to being the CUFF delegate that I would donate \$50 to CUFF for each published trip report by a successor delegate. I haven't been obliged to make that donation. Yet."⁽⁵⁾

I won! Now what?

Nominations for the 2010 race closed on January 31st, and two people, myself and Rob Uhrig, were in the running. Because of a delay in getting the ballot online the original balloting period was extended to March 13th. On March 18th after leaving sufficient time for late arriving mail in ballots, administrator LeAmber Kensley announced that I had won. She said the race was close and that 40 people had voted, many of them donating more than the minimum. I would have expected more people than that to vote in a contested race, but we had managed to get CUFF talked about and to garner some publicity from it, including several mentions on Mike Glyér's File 770. Rob was very gracious in congratulating me and I would like to personally thank him again for running.

(1) Thanks Rene!

(2) Thanks Graeme!

(3) Thanks Murray! (Okay, I'll stop that now.)

(4) No point in asking me to what extent I took this advice to heart while writing this report. I won't tell.

(5) Pay up Murray.

So, two months until Keycon and much to do. As a further complication, and one I was of course aware of when I ran, I was committed to attending ConQuest in Kansas City the weekend following Keycon. I had been promising Jeff Orth for years that I would attend ConQuest and always coming up with a reason that I couldn't. This year, two of the guests of honour, Geri Sullivan and Michael Swanwick, were, coincidentally, going to be guests of SFContario, for which I was programming head. And I had been put on the programming team for ConQuest as well. There would obviously be no excuses this year. I would have to find my way from Winnipeg to Kansas City. And let me say, in case this is coming across as an onerous task, that it categorically wasn't. I was not just committed to going to ConQuest, but I was madly looking forward to it. So, flying to Winnipeg, attending Keycon and spending a few days hanging out with local fandom, then using air miles to fly from Winnipeg to Kansas City and back seemed like the best choice. Winnipeg was closer to Kansas City than Toronto, and therefore fewer miles were needed. No luck though, no air mile flights left from Winnipeg to that destination. I ended up booking a flight from Toronto to Kansas City departing the day of my return flight from Winnipeg. If this was to be the biggest complication that I faced then I was good with that.

Then there were the fundraising responsibilities that came along with being a CUFF delegate that needed to be dealt with. There would be a fundraising auction at Keycon and I needed items to auction. The absolutely wonderful Geri Sullivan, on hearing that I was the delegate, offered me a Baggiecon promotional costume from the Baggiecon party at Valleycon the year before Baggiecon 1 to auction off in Winnipeg. As you know Bob, Baggiecon is the SF fan gathering at the Winnipeg Folk Festival run by Dave Clement and others. From the many reports I've heard, a great time is always had by all. One year I may even attend it for myself. I could think of a few things of my own that would be worth donating, and LeAmber had a few items left over from her term as administrator, but I would need more. Unfortunately because of unforeseen circumstances Geri's Baggiecon poncho didn't arrive in time, but later she donated some fantastic items for the auction at SFContario 1.

A quick email to John Scalzi and he graciously offered a signed novel and even agreed to deliver it to me personally during his upcoming April appearance at the Merril collection in Toronto. To my absolute delight he brought a limited edition copy of his novel, the Hugo nominated *The Last Colony*. There are only 400 numbered and 15 lettered editions in print and this was one of the lettered editions. I parted with signed first editions of Ben Bova and Christopher Moore novels from my own collection and Catherine Crockett came back from Corflu that year with candies and Cadbury chocolate straight from the UK and a couple of Sue Mason illos. Taral Wayne donated a drawing along with several other items. Murray Moore contributed a couple of copies, one soft-cover and one hard-cover, of *The Night Sessions*, a Ken McLeod novel that was never released in North America. I decided to save the hard-cover for the SFContario auction, since Murray wanted the opportunity to bid on it himself, but I felt I had enough for the auction. So it was off to Winnipeg.

I'd booked an early flight, a ridiculously early flight actually, in order to get the best deal on price. My partner Cliff dropped me off at the Toronto airport at ohgodo'clock in the morning, and no doubt went directly home for a nap, assuming he didn't take a pre-nap snooze at the side of the road. I certainly wouldn't have blamed him. I checked my luggage (Free on Air Canada! That was a treat.) went through security and stood in front of Tim Horton's staring blankly, trying to determine if I should have breakfast (NO! My stomach said decidedly. It's too early for food) and settled on a coffee. (It's never too early for coffee.)

The flight was bumpy for a while, but uneventful otherwise, and I landed in Winnipeg at 9:30 AM. I was met at the luggage carousel by LeAmber Kensley, the previous CUFF delegate during Anticipation and chair of Keycon that year. I had told LeAmber in email that I knew how busy the con-chair was going to be the day before the con was to begin and that I was quite happy to make my own way to the hotel, particularly given how early I was arriving, but she wouldn't hear of it and insisted on meeting me anyway, which was very nice of her.

I should probably explain a little about Canvention. Canvention is the Canadian national science fiction convention, where the Prix Aurora

Awards are presented each year. It is usually hosted by another convention which is determined at the previous year's AGM. The host convention has two main duties. That is to hold an AGM and hold a ceremony for the Auroras, the annual Canadian Science Fiction & Fantasy Association Awards, essentially Canada's version of the Hugos. Last year it was at Anticipation in Montreal, this year it was at Keycon, and next year's location was to be determined at Sunday morning's AGM. (These things always scheduled on Sunday mornings. Why is that?)

Given that it was so early in the day I couldn't yet check into my room in the hotel so LeAmber dropped me off at her house, which was lovely. It sat on a gorgeous tree-lined street ("All the streets in Winnipeg are tree-lined." LeAmber said when I commented on it.) and had a huge picture window looking out on it all. LeAmber had a lot to do, naturally, and left to run some errands. So I sat and read my email and got caught up on a few things while I waited to be able to check in. After a couple hours LeAmber took me over to the hotel and checked me in. The room was great, with two double beds and a great view of the city that looked out over the Forks, which are located at the confluence of the Red River and the Assiniboine River, and a traditional meeting place. Keycon generously paid for the room for me, not something that's required of the Convention host, saving the fund quite a bit for which I'm very thankful. (The current Convention, *When Words Collide* in Calgary, refused to even comp the CUFF delegate's membership.) And this was the first time I'd had a room to myself at a convention. I could certainly get used to this, but probably won't have the opportunity to do so. It was late afternoon by this time, and my stomach, no longer as reticent as it had been earlier, was in fact demanding food. I ventured out to find some dinner. It didn't take much wandering to find a nearby mall with a convenient food court and, too hungry to look any further, I settled on a burger.

After that it was back to the hotel to register and rest for awhile. I finally managed to connect up with Cliff Stornel. Cliff was the programming head for Keycon. We'd emailed back and forth and planned to get together when I arrived in Winnipeg. Cliff had offered me a walking tour of downtown Winnipeg on arrival and we'd been playing phone

tag all afternoon. It was a little late for a walking tour but I met up with Cliff and his wife Alex in the hotel bar for a drink and we got acquainted. While there we ran into Julie Czerneda and Steve Stirling and chatted for awhile but the early start to my day caught up with me hard and I begged off to get some much needed sleep. Cliff and I arranged to have my walking tour the next afternoon.

The next afternoon I met Cliff in the lobby and off we went to see some of the sights. Winnipeg is a really beautiful city with a particularly lovely downtown. They have maintained an impressive amount of their heritage buildings in the core. Now, you'll see some preserved buildings and store fronts wandering around downtown Toronto, including some very striking ones, but nothing even approaching this. Where Toronto has maybe kept no more than 10% of it's early architecture intact in some way, Winnipeg seems to have saved something approaching 90% of theirs. It's really something to see and has served as the backdrop for many movies, including the *The Assassination of Jessie James* by the Coward Robert Ford.



Burton Cummings Theatre, Winnipeg, Manitoba

One of the more memorable buildings was the Burton Cummings theatre, obviously named after the original singer and keyboardist for the Guess Who and a Winnipeg native. In the past it's been known as the Odeon theatre, the name still emblazoned across the side of the building, and the Walker theatre. On this site in January 1914 suffragette Nellie McClung and the political equality league organized a mock "Women's Parliament" in an attempt to get the people of the

province laughing at the absurdity of denying women the right to vote. It's a familiar story to most Canadians due to its being featured in a series of Canadian historical vignettes shown repeatedly (and I do mean *repeatedly*) on Canadian television.

After returning to the hotel I headed up to the hotel restaurant for food. I'd been planning on going out for Dim Sum earlier with LeAmber but she was unable to make it, due to chair duties, and had been without her phone for a few hours so she was unable to let me know, or to pick up the message I had asked Cliff Stornel to leave for her. Another missed breakfast resulted but the hotel restaurant served a pretty good burger, much better than my food court burger of the previous evening, even if they wouldn't cook it medium rare for me. It's a point of contention with me that most restaurants in Canada will not cook a hamburger anything less than medium well. In Ontario it's a health code violation and it may be in other places, I don't know. But guess what? I'm a grown up, and I know how I like my burgers cooked. I'm willing to assume the risk to life and limb inherent in eating a medium rare burger dammit! But I digress. Anyway, at less than \$10 for burger and fries before tip it was reasonable price, particularly for a hotel restaurant. After eating I went back to my room to prepare for opening ceremonies and panels.



Following opening ceremonies, Nalo Hopkinson serves up ice cream to the members of Keycon. S.M. Stirling is at the end of the row checking out the vanilla, and that's Cliff Stornel on the right.

Opening ceremonies was enjoyable but long, lasting over an hour and a half. Liana K was the

Mistress of Ceremonies and she's always pretty entertaining and very good in front of a crowd. Reading the list of guests from the program book did lead to one faux pas though, as one of the author guests, Steve Stirling, was passed over until pointed out by the audience. Nobody's perfect. There was an ice cream social to follow in which all of the guests served ice cream to the members. A brilliant idea but with so many guests there was no room behind the ice cream counter for me, so I hung back and snapped pictures instead, and may have eaten some ice cream.

At some point here I should probably break off and talk about programming at the con and this seems as good a time as any. Cliff and Alex were wonderful people and they were so very welcoming and hospitable to me during my visit that I feel a bit ungrateful writing this. They were almost certainly on a bit of a learning curve with this, never having done programming before, and they worked very hard. When I learned that I was going to be the CUFF delegate I contacted programming at Keycon, (which would be Cliff and Alex), and sent them several ideas for panels, expecting they might like to use a few of them. My ideas were hardly dripping with brilliance or anything, but I know, having done programming myself, that ideas from participants are always welcome. To my surprise they used all but one, which was gratifying and not without a certain amount of egoboo. The week before Keycon I went to the website to determine my schedule and to my surprise, and slight horror, I discovered that with one exception I had been put on all of these panels by myself. They were specifically sent as panel ideas, not as presentations, and while I can go on at length, (as you're no doubt currently discovering), I wasn't comfortable with the idea of speaking for an entire hour by myself on each of these topics. Looking over the schedule in the programming book it appeared that I wasn't the only person this had happened to. The vast majority of the items had a single panellist. Near as I could tell they seemed to have used almost every program idea sent to them, while programming only the person who had sent it to be on the panel. So a week before con I'm scrambling, writing people I know will be there, and trying to find more people for my panels. (Actually I believe begging might be a more accurate description.)

My first panel was scheduled for Friday night, in the main room. It was a panel dealing with

conrunning and was to follow a concert by Devo Spice, which followed the opening ceremonies. The opening ceremonies had run a half an hour late and another concert by Worm Quartet was to follow this panel. Scheduling what can be expected to be a fairly low interest panel in the main room between two concerts was somewhat baffling, to say the least. Fannish panels attract less attendees in my experience and even most people inclined to attend fannish panels probably care little about conrunning. I'd recruited Kirsten Morrell, a good friend from Calgary and a former chair of Con-Version to sit on the panel with me. As we sat in the room watching the first concert go a half hour overtime because of the late start it was very apparent that nobody in that room had any interest in conrunning. I went up to Worm Quartet (who, despite the misleading name, is actually one person) and told him he might as well just play through. Then Kirsten and I took off to join the parties. Seemed like a good idea at the time, and it still does actually.

Speaking of parties, hospitality is something Keycon does very well. A lot better than most Canadian regional conventions in my opinion. The highlight for me on Friday was the Aurora nominees party. Good food, good drink and so much wonderful company. I spent time talking with too many people to mention, chief amongst them was Kirsten herself, who I actually didn't really know that well at all before the convention, having only come across her on a few mutual mailing lists. I came away from the convention thinking of her as a good friend and that, after all, is exactly what CUFF is all about. (At one point. I believe it was on Saturday sometime, Rob Sawyer, who is a good friend of Kirsten's came across us talking animatedly in the dealer's room. He took one look at the two of us and said, happily, "You two are bonding aren't you? I *knew* it would happen.") I was also able to catch up with Liz Westbrook-Trenholm, (who is fantastic), and her husband Hayden Trenholm, (ditto). I got to know Barb Galler-Smith, who's really lovely, better as well. All so very gratifying, and it made me very happy that I had decided to run for CUFF.

While we're on the subject of hospitality, the Keycon consuite was completely awesome, the best I've ever seen at a Canadian regional and I hoped we'd do as well at SFCOntario 1 the following November. (And with Catherine Crockett running it, I absolutely believe SFCOntario met this goal.)

Unfortunately, in my experience, a lot of Canadian regional cons see a consuite not as the social center of the convention that it should be, but as a place where all those freeloading members are scarfing free food. I kid you not, I'm barely paraphrasing things that other conrunners have said. This year the Keycon consuite had an Egyptian theme. Past themes apparently have included space suits made out of duct tape. (I honestly can't think of a single thing that *screams* Canadian fandom quite like a spacesuit made out of duct tape.) On Friday night the consuite was host to a book launch for The Aurora Awards: Thirty Years of Canadian Science Fiction. This collection was the second collection from the Montreal small press Nanopress. It was a good party and I spent some time chatting and catching up with people, including Linda Ross-Mansfield who was behind the bar, and whom I probably hadn't seen since Torcon 3 in 2003. At some point I was introduced to Lyndie Bright, the CUFF delegate who had travelled to Torcon 3. All in all, it was a great evening. Eventually I decided that since it was probably about midnight I would be responsible and get a good night's sleep so I didn't burn myself out too early in the con and could put in a good showing at the next day's panels. I said my good nights and headed up to my room only to find to my astonishment that it was after 2 AM. Time does fly when you're having fun, doesn't it?



Unidentified fellow (entire audience of Canadian Fandom Panel) trying to escape an empty room. Note the deer-in-the-headlights expression. Remember this kids, be very careful which panel rooms you enter.

Somehow I still managed to get up the next morning in time for my 10 AM panel, which because of a mix up in the program grid actually turned out to be an 11 AM panel. I really could've used that extra hour sleep. I'd recruited Rene Walling to join me on this one and the topic was Canadian fandom, apparently not a hugely popular topic as not one single person showed up to hear it. I would like to point out that the unofficial rules state that we could've in fact continued the panel in the bar, but we didn't. In fact we stayed and talked about Canadian Fandom, CUFF, fanzines, conventions etc. We actually had a rather good, completely on-topic panel for an invisible audience. About half way through the hour one person did show up, looking for a different panel, poor lost soul. We trapped him there, still talking about Canadian fandom, he tried to escape, really he did. But there was just no getting away.

The next hour was the "Why re-read?" panel that I had suggested. Thankfully Julie Czerneda volunteered to join this panel because she liked the topic. This time we were actually out-numbered by the four people in the audience for this panel so the bar option was off the table. In fact it really was a very enjoyable panel, a great discussion of the topic with lots of audience participation, the kind of panel that makes me love participating in programming.

After this I had a free hour, which was spent wandering through the dealer's room and the art show. Art show is another thing that Keycon did very well. The art shown was well displayed with a lot of variety and the show itself was huge compared to others I'd seen in Eastern Canada. Great job all around. The artist GOH was Kari-Ann Anderson, a local artist, and her work was stunning. The Egyptian themed cover of the program book looked marvellous.

Next up was my panel on the 2010 Hugo Awards, a discussion of this year's nominees. Again, I had roped Rene Walling into doing the panel with me and, likely due to a combination of the topic and the later hour, we actually had an audience, as much as 6 people at one point which, let's face it, was practically a *horde* compared to the rest of my panels. It was a good panel and between the two of us we were able to cover the topic pretty well. He knew the categories, graphic novel for example, that I was unfamiliar with, and with the always welcome audience participation, we were able to touch on

pretty much every nominee over the course of the hour. At the end of the panel Robbie Bourget joined us for the "Looking back at Anticipation" panel. This was the one panel I hadn't originally been scheduled to do alone. It was mainly memories and reminiscing. I had done double duty at Anticipation. I was a member of the Hugo committee and co-ran the consuite. Both areas seemed to go well and I really had a very good time. It was by far my best Worldcon experience at the time, so spending an hour talking about it, along with the con-chairs was really enjoyable. Alas, there were only two people in the audience, the kidnap victim from our earlier panel and one other, but they stayed throughout the hour. (Although for our kidnap victim that may just have been a case of Stockholm Syndrome.) In some ways it seemed very much like a Smofcon panel, which is neither good nor bad, just different. So here it was, 4 PM on a Saturday and my panels were finished, and in case you hadn't noticed, except for a very quick nosh in the consuite, I still hadn't eaten. So I hit the hotel restaurant again for their burger and fries (breakfast of champions, clearly this was not a foodie vacation) and went up to my room for some quiet time.

Saturday night was the Masquerade. Liana K and Julie Czerneda shared hosting duties and they were great together and seemed to really enjoy it. Afterwards was the dance, something I don't normally go to at cons, but this time I wanted to check it out. The DJ, Mark Dagopher Dobres (AKA DJ Gopher), was very good. I stuck around a while and enjoyed it but the dance really isn't my thing. I decided I'd rather spend the time socializing at the parties and in the consuite. While in the consuite I was approached by Rob Sawyer and Cliff Samuels. There are a lot of Cliffs in this report. I can see it might be hard to keep them all straight. This particular Cliff was (and still is) a member of the Aurora committee. It had been expected that Polaris, a Toronto area con with a media focus (you may know it as the former Toronto Trek) would be bidding to host Convention 2011. Indeed, some of their concom had expressed an interest. However now they had apparently changed their mind, and right before the AGM. There were no other bidders. Rob and Cliff asked me to bid for SFCOntario to become the Convention host. Now generally this is the kind of thing that couldn't be done unless first discussed by the committee but, as it happens, we had discussed what we thought was the remote

possibility of this happening at a previous committee meeting. The general consensus was that it would be rather hubristic of us to bid for a Convention when as yet we hadn't even had our inaugural convention, and the preference was to wait until next time, (in 2013), but, should it come about that nobody else was bidding we felt capable to hold the Convention in 2011 and would be willing to step up to the plate. I had even confirmed this position with our con-chair, Alex Von Thorn, a couple of days earlier. I really hadn't expected it to happen but that was the scenario that seemed to be playing out, so I agreed that SFCOntario would be willing to put in a bid to hold the next Convention at the following day's AGM. Sunday was going to be an early day with the Convention AGM schedule for 9 AM, and now all of a sudden it seemed I'd be bidding for Convention, so I headed off to get some rest.

9 AM comes rather early on the Sunday morning of a con,⁽¹⁾ and I got up even earlier in order to be there ahead of time. I wanted to talk to the chair, Clint Budd, about volunteering help with the Aurora Award committee. I felt that my experience with Hugo administration could be of use. So it was another day, another skipped breakfast, but Clint seemed amenable to my being on the committee and asked that I put my name forward during the meeting. Somehow, I honestly don't know how, I ended up sitting up front at the meeting and taking minutes, which was not something I'd really considered to be part of my skill set then or now. It seemed well attended. I didn't know what the usual numbers for these meetings might be but there were probably about 15 or so people in attendance, which struck me as pretty good for early Sunday morning. (Although the following year, at SFCOntario 2, the numbers were much larger even though scheduled at the same time) The Board of Directors was elected by acclamation, and included representation from several regions of Canada. (Consisting of myself, Cliff Samuels, Clint Budd, Jane Garthson, Jean-Louis Trudel, Kent Pollard, LeAmber Kensley, and Randy McCharles.) I presented a bid for SFCOntario which, there being no other bids, carried. Some wholly understandable concern regarding the fact that SFCOntario 1 had not yet happened was raised but those in attendance were reassured by the depth of experience on the committee, (which I have to admit was pretty good.)

In one odd occurrence John Mansfield expressed his disappointment at SFCOntario's choice of Fan guest of honour. I happen to think we had a wonderful Fan guest of honour in Geri Sullivan, (and the rest of the committee enthusiastically agreed, and, really, I don't fully understand why John even cared). I'm not even sure how it came about as I was busily catching up with taking down the minutes, but I looked up and John seemed rather perturbed over our choice. Odd. I was taken aback for half a second and then, in little more than a knee-jerk reaction, I said "But John, Geri was fan guest at Keycon." Keycon being John's home con and one he's chaired multiple times.

John replied "No she wasn't"

LeAmber, who was sitting in the chair in front of him looked back and said "Yes, she was. Keycon 7."

"Oh okay, never mind." was all he could say. Very odd exchange.

Anyway, the meeting adjourned at 11:15, a little over two hours later, which isn't really that bad for an AGM, and SFCOntario had itself a Convention.

After that I went up to the consuite for some lunch and retrieved the CUFF auction items from my room. Next up was the art auction, which would precede the CUFF auction. The art auction actually took quite awhile. There were a lot of items that went to auction from the art show. Which was really not surprising, given the quality of the art at Keycon. Eventually they got to my items. I described some of them, where necessary, but didn't actually conduct the auction myself. The Keycon people, including LeAmber, took care of that and did it very well. In the end more than \$200 was raised for CUFF and that, combined with the \$250 donation from Anticipation, meant that I had already raised more than I had spent. (And this was again fully due to Keycon's generosity in providing me with a room for the convention.) With the auction over I met with the rest of the newly elected Aurora board of directors to assemble the awards before returning to my room to get ready for the Aurora Award ceremony.

As I said earlier one of the requirements of hosting Convention is to hold the Aurora ceremony.

⁽¹⁾ Yeah, I know. 9 o'clock comes at 9 o'clock but it feels a lot earlier when it's 9 o'clock on a Sunday.

An Aurora Award dinner is not required under the rules but it is customary and generally expected. Keycon scheduled theirs for Sunday evening. I thought this was a pretty good idea as it doesn't take function space away from Saturday night events, and the Monday was a Canadian holiday. Dinner was really good, I had the bison and it was cooked perfectly. I sat at a table with Jane Garthson and Dave & Elizabeth Clement, amongst others, so the company was certainly top rate. To the annoyance of many the award ceremony started about an hour late but once started it was a good ceremony with Liana K serving as host. (Favourite quote of the evening, from Liana: "At other award ceremonies the winners always thank God. Here all the winners thank Rob Sawyer. I'm not sure what that means.")



Presenting at the Auroras, looking nowhere near as nervous as I feel, while Liana K stands by with the award. Photo credit: Kirsten Morrell

The ceremony, once it got started, really went very well. I was really pleased when Graeme Cameron, one of my CUFF nominators, won for Fan Accomplishment (Fanzine). And again when Rob Sawyer won for best novel. Rob practically needs a second apartment to keep all of his awards in by now, but it had been over 10 years since he last won the Aurora for best novel, and he was genuinely pleased by the win. So it was good to see. My role was to present the award for Fan Accomplishment (Other). I'm in most cases a *very* nervous public speaker but I'd spoken onstage before, notably at the Hugos the previous summer, and at other times. Generally I don't show nervousness too much. So leading up to the

category I wasn't feeling the nerves too bad but when my name was called I suddenly came over *very* nervous. (Liana said afterwards that it was due to adrenalin, she's probably right about that.) Up on stage I found that my poor overtired and middle aged eyes could barely read the nominees names, which didn't help. (I really should have foreseen that and written the names in large print for myself ahead of time. Lesson definitely learned for next time.) But I got through it and sat down. Kirsten Morrell used my camera to take pictures and surprisingly I don't look at all like I'm about to toss my cookies in any of them.

So nerve-wracking ceremony over with, I headed off to the dead dog which was as lively and enjoyable as all of the parties had been all weekend long. I've said it before but it bears repeating, Keycon really excels at hospitality and the dead dog was no exception. I stayed up way too late talking to more people than I can remember, LeAmber, Liana, Kirsten, so many others...no idea how we all still had enough energy at the end of the weekend but we did. I finally crashed at some late hour. I'd had a great time at Keycon and still had several days to spend amongst the fans in Winnipeg before travelling to ConQuesT the following Thursday. That week was a total blur really. A fabulous, enjoyable blur. LeAmber was a wonderful host. I spent a lot of time exploring Winnipeg. I had lunch with Tim Hogue at a great Vegan place at which I'd unwittingly worn my "Meat is murder. Tasty, tasty murder." t-shirt, much to my amusement. Although no doubt the proprietors were less amused. Cliff Stornel hosted a backyard barbeque which was really good but made me resent my Southern Ontario "but it's past Victoria day weekend, why on Earth would I possibly need a jacket?" attitude. Also Cliff has the cutest cats on the planet, bar none. (Mine are a close second.) And I finally managed to get Dim Sum on the Monday following the con with John Mansfield, Linda Ross-Mansfield, and Robbie Bourget, and I was really amused to find that Winnipeg had what they called "Chinese perogies" at Dim Sum. I still haven't found their equivalent in Toronto.

Good times, good times. If you're thinking of running for a fan fund, by all means go for it. It's an awesome experience!