

AURORAN LIGHTS

The Official E-zine of the Canadian Science Fiction & Fantasy Association
Dedicated to Promoting the Prix Aurora Awards and the Canadian SF&F Genre
(Issue # 10 – August 2014)

TIME TO VOTE FOR THE AURORA AWARDS!



CSFFA MEMBER PERUSING ANTHOLOGY TO SELECT SHORT STORY

EDITORIAL

What is the purpose of this issue?

To remind you you still have time to vote for this year's Aurora Awards.

And to inform you where and how to vote. (See appropriate article after editorial & news items.)

What was the old purpose of this rag?

Until this issue Auroran Lights was an unofficial e-zine dedicated to promoting and celebrating the Aurora awards and Canadian SF&F fandom. Being an active fan for more than forty years I figured AL would be a useful tool to acquaint modern fans of the genre with the history and current activities of organized fandom in Canada (including and especially the production of SF&F fanzines).

What changed?

In their June meeting the CSFFA Board voted to make this amateur rag their official newsletter.

So what is the new purpose of this magnificent publication?

To promote and celebrate the Aurora awards and the activities of *both* fans and professionals in the Canadian SF&F genre.

Great! So what's the problem?

If I so much as even mention any professional and their latest work would this be perceived as violating the neutrality of CSFFA and therefore an act of favouritism?

In other words, how can this zine possibly celebrate contemporary Canadian SF&F writers, publishers, genre scholars and artists without being accused of bias?

For example, if I list upcoming book signings for twelve authors, but leave out a whole bunch of signings by other authors I was unaware of, is this not outrageously unfair to those authors not included?

What was your first idiot solution to this problem?

As an initial step I invited multiple authors to submit gossip-like information about their current activities and publications. That way the onus would be on the authors themselves, rather than my selecting particular individuals at the expense of those not selected, and any alleged bias would be in the nature of self-promotion by willing participants and nothing to do with choices by CSFFA at all.

How did that work out?

Terribly. Apart from a couple of queries by people wondering how much the magazine paid for what kind of article/story, and what the criteria was for an article/story to be accepted. The fault is undoubtedly entirely mine. Evidently I failed to get across the idea that Auroran Lights was NOT some new type of fiction magazine, indeed NOT any sort of professional publication whatsoever, but simply a crummy amateurish newsletter by a crummy amateurish editor elevated to the status of an "official" newsletter which could be of some promotional use to the Canadian SF&F genre community.

Is the editor twit indeed a crummy amateurish editor?

Absolutely. But enthusiastic. I do have certain credentials. I won the 2010 Fan Achievement (Fanzine) Aurora Award for my fanzine WCSFAzine, which was primarily devoted to VCON and other Canadian conventions, but included monthly updates on a variety of mostly B.C. authors. In short I already have experience gathering information of promotional use in a manner which some voting fans seemed to appreciate.

So what idiot concept are you attempting to float now?

Essentially, screw perception of bias. To hell with it. From now on this zine will be the most schizophrenic publication you have ever read.

On the one hand, this will be an official publication reporting on changes in CSFFA policies, the status of the Aurora awards, CSFFA events, and them there CSFFA stuff. As always, CSFFA is responsible for CSFFA stuff.

On the other hand, the bulk of the zine will be devoted to news of book deals, book publications, book signings and all the other things that authors get up to for some reason or another. Throw in interesting and appropriate items concerning artists, publishers, SF&F events and fans, and I think I can eventually produce a reasonably interesting statement of record as to what is going on and what is about to happen in the Canadian SF&F genre. I, and I alone, will be responsible for what news gets printed. Blame me! NOT CSFFA!

How will the idiot editor acquire all this nifty info?

By ransacking the internet looking for the latest news. I figure if an author or a publisher promotes their doings on their web site as news, they won't mind further dissemination of the information. If they object and want me to cease and desist, all they have to do is tell me and I'll never mention them again, ever. It will be as if they don't exist. A sort of voluntary blacklist as it were.

Can I submit information?

Yes. You will be credited with whatever you send in. Basic info is what I'm looking for. You just sold a book. A magazine will feature your art on its cover. Your book just came out. Your publisher is an alien. You'll prove it at your next signing. That sort of thing.

Can I submit articles?

Short ones. 500 words maximum. Anything to do with the genre. Even a single paragraph describing your latest SF&F quest or obsession could find a home here. And letters of comment. I hope for lots of letters of comment.

Will I get paid for what I send in?

No. Think of AL as a self-promotion opportunity which reaches out to your peers.

What about self-published authors?

Very much part of the evolving genre. If you are charging money for your work, you count as a pro and will be accepted accordingly. If you're doing whatever you do for free, then you're a fan, and will be accepted as such.

Isn't Auroran Lights going to wind up being a pathetic imitation of LOCUS?

I should be so lucky. No, this is simply going to be a newsletter covering the SF&F "beat," semipro in character if at all possible.

How often will Auroran Lights come out?

Once a month. I managed it with WCSFAzine. I can do it with this zine.

How can I get a subscription?

Ask. It's free. Emailed directly to your ebox.

Can I place ads?

You can place information. At some point I may consider ads, say a quarter page in size or smaller. Probably I would begin with convention ads. Eventually publishers and individual authors. Inquire.

Will ads cost money?

Not at first. But if AL catches on, builds its subscription list, attracts a lot of interest, the Board may someday authorize reasonable fees as part of their fund-raising to maintain CSFFA.

Nothing but text in your cruddy zine?

If I announce publication of a book I'd like to include a colour thumbnail of the cover.

I'd like to go the old "Science Fiction Chronicle" route of featuring cover art formerly used for book and magazine covers sans titles and other info originally added. Just the art itself. This is an opportunity for Canadian artists to present their favourite pieces of yore to their peers and the public.

I'd also like plenty of fan art to grace the interior pages, even fillos by professionals if they care to share their doodles or concept drawings and such.

No pay, but plenty of egoboo as fans are wont to say.

How sophisticated will the layout be?

Not very. Not at all, in fact. I'm just going to bang in the info as I find it in this very simple single column format. That way I don't have to fool around fine tuning everything. What you see is what you get. A quick, simple read. Nothing visually confusing. Basic. All the easier for me to churn it out.

What if the CSFFA Board doesn't like your policy?

Then I'm screwed. It would be a shame if concern over potential perceived bias results in no mention of pros at all as the safest policy to pursue.

Frankly, given that I am willing to take personal responsibility for content lets CSFFA off the hook, or so I believe. I also believe Auroran Lights has the potential to become a one-stop-reveals-all monthly reading habit

for people who don't have the time to cruise the internet because they're too busy creating to spend more than a minimum of time trying to find out what their peers are up to.

What if everyone in the Canadian SF&F genre HATES your policy?

Then I'm REALLY screwed. But no worries. I can always step down as editor and let some other poor sucker attempt something more acceptable.

Do we really have to put up with your juvenile style and alleged humour?

Definitely. I will do this as long as I have fun doing it. In that sense AL will remain forever amateur. I'm not out to impress people. I'm out to inform people. Last thing I want is this newsletter becoming dull and stodgy or taking itself too seriously. The SF&F genre is exciting and stimulating. Reporting on it should reflect this. I will do my best to live up to that concept.

I'd like to know what you think about this. Please send your letters of comment to the e-address immediately below.

Cheers! R. Graeme Cameron

Please send me feedback! You can reach me at: < [rgraeme\(at\)shaw.ca](mailto:rgraeme(at)shaw.ca) >

Don't forget to explore your fannish heritage! Check out < <http://cdnsfzinearchive.org> > to browse numerous Canadian fanzines from 1937 to the present, peruse the Canadian Fancyclopedia for fannish legends & lore, and find out the history of SF clubs and organizations in Canada.

Many thanks to Bill Burns at < <http://www.efanzines.com> > for hosting.

SAMPLE NEWS ITEMS

(Bearing in mind this is a rush issue merely hinting at the future.)

Spider Robinson to be Stealth Guest of Honour at VCON 39 – Spider will be attending, not as a pro, but simply as himself in order to relax with old friends and meet new ones. He will not be taking part in any panels or other scheduled activities. He will, as whim and mood take him, interact with fans and friends in a spirit of camaraderie and common interests.

Pro lineup for upcoming VCON 39 writers workshops set in stone – Friday novel workshop = David Weber, Eileen Kernaghan and Donna Farley. Saturday short story workshop = Marcie Tentchoff and Russ & Rita Crossley. Sunday short story workshop = Rhea Rose, Linda Demeulemeester and Casey J. Wolf. Evil moderator R. Graeme Cameron will dominate with a stop watch.

VCON 39 looming – October 3rd to Oct 5th in Surrey, B.C. (Just outside Vancouver.) David Weber is Author guest of Honour, David Mattingly Artist GoH, Bruce Heard Gaming GoH, and Melissa Mary Duncan and Tarol Hunt are Convention GoHs. The Aurora Awards will be announced Saturday afternoon just after a formal High Tea fraught with nominee tension. For details go to < <http://www.vcon.ca/> >

Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame to be unveiled at the Aurora Awards – Along with past Aurora Lifetime Achievement award winners a special jury selected three additional names to be inducted. Names were submitted by CSFFA members. This year’s inductees are: William Gibson, Phyllis Gotlieb, Judith Merrill, Dennis Mullin, Spider and Jeanne Robinson, Robert J. Sawyer, A.E. van Vogt, and Susan Wood.

2014 last year current Aurora Award design to be handed out – Frank Johnson’s design has been used for the past 23 years. CSFFA appreciates Frank’s dedication and hard work. Frank will be present at the awards.

2014 Canadian Unity Fan Fund delegate to attend Convention 34 at VCON 39 – is Halifax fan Travers Milo. His Western nominators were Elizabeth Keeling, Shannon Barritt and Paul Carreau (all from Alberta). Eastern nominators were Joseph Hatfield (New Brunswick), and Jason Hemsworth & Cynthia MacAloney (both from Nova Scotia). Travers has promised to maintain the CUFF tradition of writing a trip report. CUFF relies on donations to cover trip costs. Contact < [debra.yeung\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:debra.yeung@gmail.com) > (2012 winner and current administrator) to help out.

Idiot AL editor writing fiction again – Be warned. For the first time in thirty years the Graeme has once again taken up novel writing. His last novel was rejected on the grounds “We don’t like your main character and we don’t think anyone else will either.” Expect more of the same. Expect to hear nothing more about this project. Expect nothing.

What about the new rules concerning Societies and Charities? – To the best of my knowledge I cannot mass-email Auroran Lights without falling foul of the law. However—I am told—I can individually email copies to recipients without problem. This I will do till informed otherwise.

Canada Council funding for On Spec Magazine eliminated – Terrible news. Very much a trend I’m afraid. Governments have never been fond of supporting culture. However, On Spec CAN survive if enough subscriptions are taken out, and if writers and readers pledge monthly donations. For details go to <http://onspecmag.wordpress.com/> Support a major market for your writing!

DEADLINE FOR AURORA AWARD VOTING

Is midnight the Saturday of September 6th, 2014. (That would 9:00 PM on the West Coast.) Needless to say, you gotta vote before then if you want your opinion to count.

First, go to < <http://prixaurorawards.ca> >

If you are not already a member, move your cursor to the Join/Nominate/Vote section at the upper right of the page and click on “Join CSFFA” and follow instructions. Membership costs \$10.00.

If you are already a member, login. Place your cursor on “Aurora Awards” in the middle at the top of the page and click on “Voters Package.” You will then be able to download files pertaining to each award category, files containing nominated full or partial novels, short stories, art, MP3s, and appropriate links. The purpose of these files is to enable you to make an informed decision regarding your votes.

By accepting this package you agree not to share the works therein with anyone other than the CSFFA members in your household. Contributors to the package trust you to use it according to its sole purpose, to help you make the best choice for the Aurora Awards.

When you are ready to vote, put your cursor back on “Join/Nominate/Vote” and click on “2014 Aurora Ballot” at the bottom of the menu. Follow instructions.

Vote for what you know. You don't have to vote in every category and you don't have to vote for all the items in a category. Please remember, if you are unfamiliar with a category or its nominated works leave all boxes blank. The "No award" option is only to be used if you don't approve of one or more of the nominated items.

Help reward your favourite Canadian SF&F creators! Show your appreciation! Vote now!

COLOPHON

Auroran Lights Issue # 10, Aug 2014, Volume 3 #2, Whole number 10, is the official E-zine of the Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Association, a federally registered non-profit society with the general mandate of promoting Canadian Science Fiction & Fantasy and the specific focus of sponsoring the annual Convention and Prix Aurora Awards.

CURRENT EXECUTIVE OF CSFFA

The Board of Directors (Officers)

President: **Clifford Samuels** (Alberta) Aurora awards administrator
Vice-President: **Jean-Louis Trudel** (Québec) Boréal Liaison.
Secretary: **Cathy Palmer-Lister** (Québec)
Treasurer: **Wes Almas** (British Columbia)

The Board of Directors (Directors)

Clint Budd (British Columbia) CSFFA Past president, Chair Convention 34 & Hall of Fame Jury.
Graeme Cameron (British Columbia) Chair Archive Committee & Editor of Auroran Lights Newsletter.
Ron Friedman (Alberta) Chair Voter's package.
Alan Pollard (Manitoba) Chair Website Committee.
Lynda Williams (Alberta) Chair Publicity Committee & Eligibility Lists Committee.

Archive Committee

R. Graeme Cameron (Chair), Murray Moore, Lloyd Penney, Garth Spencer, & Taral Wayne.

INFORMATION:

For most complete and latest info go to: < <http://prixaurorawards.ca> >

What is CSFFA?

CSFFA is a federally incorporated non-profit society which exists to promote quality Canadian speculative fiction and the fan activity that surrounds it.

Who can join CSFFA?

Membership in CSFFA costs \$10 per calendar year and entitles members to both nominate and vote. Membership is open to all Canadians, whether citizens or Permanent Residents, and whether living in Canada or abroad.

Note: Easiest way to join is to attend Convention and/or register at: < <http://prixaurorawards.ca> >

You can download past issues (and future issues when they're posted) of 'AURORAN LIGHTS' from < <http://efanzines.com> > or < <http://cdnsfzinearchive.org> >

or contact the Editor at: < [rgraeme\[at\]shaw.ca](mailto:rgraeme[at]shaw.ca) > and ask me to email you a PDF version.

Anyone (even non-members) may submit short articles, mini-essays, letters of comment, art fillos (small pieces of art) and/or cover art to the Editor at the above e-address.

TO SUM UP

I rushed this issue out as a last minute but timely reminder to as many people as possible that voting for the Auroras is still open and that they better hurry to vote if they want their choice of the best in the Canadian SF&F genre to be reflected in this year's awards.

At the same time I figured I should add a little "meat" to the issue to give fans and Pros, not to mention the CSFFA Board, some idea of what I think the "new" Auroran Lights should be like.

Assuming the Board (and readers) approve, however tentatively, the next issue will feature a very short editorial and plenty of news items, hopefully combined with an amount of SF&F art, be it book covers, fillo illustrations, or whatever.

Above all, I hope the next issue will contain numerous letters of comment, or at least pertinent quotes therefrom, indicating what the consensus of opinion may be among fans and pros of the genre. Suggestions certainly welcome.

And of course, having seen this issue the CSFFA Board will better be able to decide if this is the path to take. If not, I do not possess any alternative in mind and will probably loose enthusiasm for the project.

My love and passion for the SF&F genre is sincere. I genuinely believe I can promote all aspects of the genre to the best of my ability without being guilty of bias. I want to be as inclusionary as possible. I state that intention for the record.

If professionals feel they have been overlooked, it is probably because they have indeed been overlooked. I can only know what I discover. That which is unknown to me remains unknown.

Whereupon it is the cue for professionals to contact me and correct the sin of omission. Send me info about yourself, your work in progress, your most recently published work, and so on.

Let "AL Contribution" be your subject topic so I'll know right away to copy your email into a "next issue file" from which I can draw appropriate info.

Because there are so many professionals these days I will probably mention a particular book or project but once just to ensure I have room in AL to cover as many contributors as I can in a given issue.

However I'd be pleased to mention something else about you and your work in the following issue, keeping readers up to date on your evolving career so to speak.

Perhaps I'm naïve. Perhaps I really am an idiot. But I persist in believing that Auroran Lights has real potential to benefit the SF&F community. I guess we'll soon find out.