

The Obdurate Eye #2

September 2018

I admire the fact that, despite everything, you still maintain that calculated air of forced gaiety.



Contents

We Shall Make Walk Preposterous Ghosts of the Glories We Once Created	1
Letters	2
In Memoriam	8
Beelzebub On The High-Riser	9
The Aurora Awards	10
Fanzines Seen.....	20

Masthead

Welcome to *The Obdurate Eye* #2, dated September 2018, a personalzine distributed by Garth Spencer at garth.van.spencer@gmail.com. This zine is available for contributions in the form of articles, letters, illustrations, or other zines in trade.

Pictures

Steve Stiles	cover
D. Marshall.....	p. 2
William Rotsler	pp. 7, 9, 23
Ken Ames picture of Beth Toerne.....	p. 8
I don't know but I really want some more illos like this	p. 10

We Shall Make Walk Preposterous Ghosts of the Glories We Once Created

*And if you remain callous and obdurate, I
shall perish as he did, and you will know why,
though I probably shall not exclaim as I die
“Oh willow, titwillow, titwillow”.*

(Gilbert & Sullivan, “The Mikado”)

One of the things that exasperated me about older people, as I was growing up, was their tendency to dwell on the past, to launch into tangential boring stories about things that somehow came to their minds whatever was happening or whatever was said at the moment, and usually losing the point they were driving at, after several needless repetitions of the same phrases over and over. Now, I realize that someone with a longer baseline of experience has the job of relating current events to past experience, but very few people are actually taught the arts of accurate observation, accurate memory, or thinking that requires you to keep a chain of reasoning in your mind: which perhaps accounts for the forms of senility and dementia in the senior population.

Another thing that exasperated me was their tendency to expect me to know things they cared about, like the order of precedence of social ranks in Britain or to take your hat off indoors, when they obstinately refused to teach me these things. Now, I realize this wasn't just an old-people foible; lots of people of all ages forget that not everybody knows, as a matter of course, things that they know and care about. It's called theory of mind (or lack of it).

Yet another thing that exasperated me was the seniors' tendency to lump all Young People together into one mass of indistinguishable protoplasm, as if that simplified the task of dealing with anyone younger than 60. I *really* appreciated being stereotyped, oh yes I did. *Not.*

And now time has revenged itself on me; now I find myself doing the same things. I am as disgusted with myself as I was with my elders.

This is not an improvement. This is not progress.

Have you any suggestions for making some general popular advance from this fate? Smart pills or something?



D. Marshall

Letters

Taral Wayne, August 6, 2018

Well, I got it. But maybe some Polysporin will clear it up.

(Thank you for your continued support!)

Felicity Walker, August 6, 2018

Thanks! Comments:

I liked the cover art. Well-drawn and well-lettered. Technically, not walking dead, but *tricycling* dead!?

That was a good photo of you and Yvette. I need to get around to sending you all the photos and videos of you and Yvette taken at Paragon meetings.

Give us the link to Yvette's Facebook page, please!?

(www.facebook.com/garthofvancouver/?ref=br_rs)

I didn't recognise the title of Poul Anderson's *There Will Be Time*, but upon looking it up, I discovered I have read it. I only vaguely remember it, though, as I found out when we were talking about it sometime in the last year and I was trying to remember what technology the Maurai had and if it was algae-powered. What did Anderson have to say about the cheerful Charlie view?

(quote)

"Hark back, I say. Try to understand your world of 1951.

"Apart from a few extremists, America had never thought to question her own rightness, let alone her right to exist. We knew we had problems, but assumed we could solve them, given time and goodwill, and eventually everybody of every race, color, and creed would live side by side in the suburbs and sing folk songs together. *Brown vs. Board of Education* was years in the future; student riots happened in foreign countries, while ours worried about student apathy; Indochina was a place where the French were experiencing vaguely noticed difficulties.

"Television was hustling in, and we discussed its possible effects ... Overpopulation was in the news but would soon be forgotten. Penicillin and DDT were unqualified friends of man. Conservation meant preserving certain areas in their natural states and, if you were sophisticated about such matters, contour plowing on hillsides. Smog was in Los Angeles and occasionally London. The ocean, immortal mother of all, would forever receive and cleanse our wastes. Space flight was for the next century, when an eccentric millionaire might finance a project. Computers were few, large, expensive, and covered with blinking lights. If you followed the science news, you knew a little about transistors, and perhaps looked forward to seeing cheap, pocket-sized radios in the hands of Americans; they could make no difference to a peasant in India or Africa. All contraceptives were essentially mechanical. The gene was a locus on the chromosome. Unless he blasted himself back to the Stone Age, man was committed to the machine."

Poul Anderson, *There Will Be Time*,
New York: Tom Doherty & Associates, Inc., pp. 21-22

Do-Ming Lum, August 7, 2018

I had not heard from you for a while, so your personalzine, *The Obdurate Eye* #1 was a surprise distraction.

It is good that you are summarizing the history of the Aurora Awards. Hopefully you will have the chance to get interviews with the people involved, and transcripts of those interviews (or the actual digital recordings themselves) into the record.

(Actually I decided to go with a collection of fanzine and fanhistory documents I already had, edited "with charity towards all, with malice toward none". Then Clint Budd asked if he could shop it around to several sources & principals for corrections & comments. Of course I said yes.)

Reading deeper into the zine, I found the link to your site, and spent a few minutes on conspiracy theories, again a lot of fun. Has your fondness for conspiracy theories changed over time?

(My fondness is for creative lunacy, if it is creative and lunatic enough. I try to promote such things but not everyone is up for it.)

Jenni Merrifield, jenni.merrifield@gmail.com, Aug. 10, 2018

Thought I'd drop a quick note about your latest perzine – *The Obdurate Eye* 1.

First some corrections for you:

Most importantly, you've got the wrong dates for VCON 42. The correct dates are **OCT 5-7th, 2018**. We were originally supposed to be OCT 12-14, but we had to change hotels and that resulted in the date change. (I know, I know. Despite this change happening back in February or March, and despite doing everything Google told us we needed to do to fix it, Google's algorithms consistently report the old dates. But our own website, our event management site (registration, scheduling, etc.) and our Facebook event all clearly list the correct date!)

The other thing is about the convention's name. VCON should always be spelled as a single word with no spaces or hyphens (which you did do) and in all capitals (which you didn't do). So **VCON** is correct, but VCon, Vcon, and V-Con are all incorrect. (It's a trademark thing).

(If you say so.)

With those out of the way, some thoughts on the zine itself:

Regarding the various concepts you came up with as potential VCON programming ideas - we're currently seeing well-formed programming suggestions from anyone who has them and have an online submission form up to assist with that

(https://register.growtix.com/schedules/submission/VCON_42). I think you should take a moment to post some of your rather interesting ideas with a

clear title and clearly articulated description. I can't promise any of them will be picked but if you don't suggest them they can't be. ☺

(If anyone is interested in creative lunacy, then good. But I'm not holding my breath.)

I'm so glad you mentioned Yvette and how much she's helping you just by being something to care for that is there when you get home. Pets are such a boon, especially when you live alone. Also thanks for the reminder about her page - I'd already like it but my cats also have a page and they *insisted* on leaving her a personal note. (Check your Facebook notifications if you haven't seen it yet - if you have any trouble parsing the LOLcat let me know and I can provide a complete translation. 😊)

I also *really* enjoyed reading the "Thoughts of Chairman John" article - some really good nuggets of advice in there. I'm planning on actually using up some dead trees to print it out and mark up the bits I especially liked for reference and sharing with people in person.

Type at you later!

George Wells August 28, 2018

I love your questions, [Garth Spencer](#), you wonderful guy. I feel so much better when I stop thinking about them.

((Thank you for your continued support!))

Lloyd Penney, 1706-24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, ON M9C 2B2, September 7, 2018

Another new title, and I like this one a lot. I shall be obdurate myself, and go for it for a letter of comment. It's just shy of the weekend, so let's go for it.

If that's the Walking Dead on a tricycle, howcum it still has all its fingers, toes and limbs? If it's calling "BRAINSSSSS!", perhaps it's in dire need of brains for itself. How do I get off this thing, anyway?

I see you've got a cat to keep you company, good choice. Yvonne and I have never had a cat ourselves, but we have certainly enjoyed their company over the years. ChatChat, Tiffany, MomCat, plus two black cats that visited with us one Hallowe'en. Looks like Yvette will have her own stories to tell, as will you.

R. Graeme Cameron is getting a fresh start, which I hope will allow him to live with some dignity. He dropped all of his fanzines, but publishing a semi-pro SF magazine seems to be a better fit for him, and I get to catch up on all the fanzines I do have.

One of these years, we do plan to return to Vancouver, and perhaps take the con up on a free membership, seeing we've been past guests. I can't really

comment on the Aurora Awards...I left the award committee some time ago, feeling that I simply didn't have the time to do what they wanted from me, and that was be their historian. My attempts to find some decent employment are taking up a lot of time, as is our steampunk jewelry business. I know I pestered you for information on the CSFFAs and Caspers, and who won what in what year, and who the nominees were.

I am spending less time with local fandom, especially because there isn't much local fandom left. There's the group that runs SFContario and the First Thursday pubnight, and we help with the Third Monday pubnight...there's the anime group that runs Anime North...and many people have simply drifted away, and some got married and had kids, etc. And in many ways, fandom and SF have marched on, leaving us to find other interests. The local steampunks can be fun, and our fellow vendors can be fun, too.

We all need more gorm, and I certainly need more. Perhaps it's just age, and the fact my next birthday will be my 60th, but the one thing that helps me live these days is making a list. My memory is bad enough as it is, but the list I make also has an area to write things done, and then make an updated list. Less time and brainpower spent trying to remember everything, and more time and brainpower spent getting it all done. Everyone needs a method.

Too much of my time is spent on Facebook these days, and both Yvonne and I will admit. And, I need to cut down. Yvonne admits that much of what we do enjoy these days I found on FB, but sometimes, I am on for hours. If there any way for a grown man to waste his time, I guess it's FB. For me, for many years, it used to be BBSs.

A great bio of John, and it will be interesting to see how much of it he agrees with. I understand more of John's running of his comics shop, seeing I have taken all of my years of running dealers' room to become a dealer myself. I certainly agree with assembling all the ideas behind conrunning, and coming up this fall is the third edition of Fan Events Forum out at the airport strip, and we will definitely be there. Conrunning also changes with the current laws, the expectations of the group you are trying to attract, and what you can provide for the money, and of course, all of that changes with time. Also, advertising and marketing has changed...paper flyers are for the most part gone, replaced by interactive social media pages and postcards. Why decide which is best, when doing it all will get you in front of every audience.

Canadians don't travel...I don't think it not wanting to travel, but not being able to afford it. The closest cities to me are Buffalo, Rochester, Detroit, Ottawa and Montreal. The order these cities are in shows you one thing, that major Canadian cities are fairly far apart. We can't exactly get in the car and hope to be in Winnipeg by nightfall. Also, I was on the Ad Astra committee in 1990, and we kept trying to advertise and grow larger. We did it by distributing flyers and sending packages of flyers to other cons. (Who notices that today, most

conventions no longer have flyer/freebie tables, but demand that if you want your flyers distributed, you take a table in the hallway to do so?)

Perhaps five or six years ago, I floated the idea of a national newszine, but the resulting flow of abuse for the idea that someone from Toronto might want to edit it, got me out of that ide quite quickly. Perhaps that may have been when fandom ceased to be national, and started being regional only.

((You think that was any measure of how a newszine would be received, or how much perspective you can have? I was in frickin' Victoria in the 1980s, before the Internet; you have a central location, and the World Wide Web. You think there was a change in Canadian fandom? Is there even less inter-city and inter-province communication?))

Did you get my previous loc? I guess I end up in so many spamtraps. If you'd like that previous loc, let me know.

((No, I didn't. Yes, I would.))

Fanzine reviews? Bring them on. I will see how many of them I get. Until then... Thanks for this issue, and see you when the next one comes around.

We Also Heard From: Leybl Botwinik, Martin Zornhau, Constandina Falias, Cathy Palmer-Lister



In Memoriam



(Ken Ames picture)

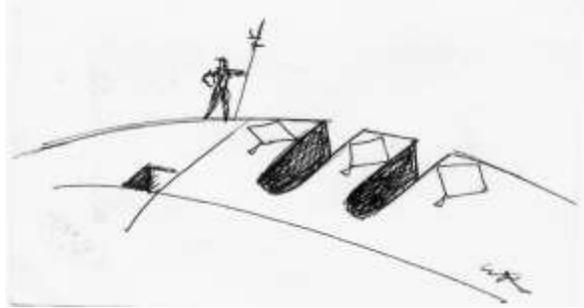
Beth Toerne (d. 2018)

Beth Finkbiner, as she then was, became a friend at my first Moscon, in October of 1985. At the time I gathered she was a supporter of Moscon in Moscow, Idaho. In our subsequent correspondence I learned that she was a warm, intelligent, vivacious woman with an appreciation for cats, hot tubs, nectarines, her family, and the more creative and decorative aspects of fandom.

Since West Coast fans, Edmonton fans and Calgary fans regularly visited Moscon, and Moscow fans regularly visited the coastal and Canadian conventions, Beth and Deloris Booker eventually dreamed up Banffcon '89, a bi-national convention that split the difference in geography between NonCon and Moscon. The convention with the international theme was a hit, and was repeated in 1995.

In later years our correspondence became sporadic, and we met less frequently at conventions. In 2017 she came down with cancer, which at first seemed to be conquered. In summer of 2018, just after I made contact with her again, she moved to a hospice. The next thing I knew she had passed on. She is survived by her son, John Finkbiner, and her husband, Fred Toerne.

Everyone misses her.



Beelzebub On The High-Riser

(from John Thiel)

“Would you believe it? I am not Satan,” said Beelzebub, as he sat drinking what passed for a beer and looking out over vistas known chiefly to himself. Having no reaction to this, he went on, “Satan’s supposed to have many names, among them mine. But I’m not comfortable with this system. Satan has demons who are subservient to him, such as Azizil, Asimodeus, and, withal, myself, and they say we are all of us only other names for the devil—but there are other devils as well, such as Lucifer—you would find him to be a stout person on his own, and occasionally competitive to Satan. Satan made the scene in Biblical times, and that is why he is mentioned where there is religion. Personally, I think he goes for religion, or he wouldn’t have been around it so much.

“I am a sinless individual. I can sense that you are asking, ‘What’s this, a demon who is not a sinner?’ Well, I’m not the only one who isn’t a sinner. Buck isn’t, either. There are many things wrong with me, speaking in those judgmental terms, but on of those things isn’t sin. I abhor it. When I tell people this, they ask me to define sin, but I won’t do so. Not for their benefit. In fact, I won’t do it at all. The only purpose in defining sin is to benefit other people. I will do some things that are beneficial, but I won’t define something, certainly not sin. My opinion is, they should look within to find what sin is, and that should take care of most of them.

“People are frightened of individuals of my sort, but their fears are assuaged by being told that we do not exist. If we don’t, neither does anything else. People should ask us before firing off with belief in what is essentially a negation. Speaking of firing off, I’d like to shoot someone. Don’t worry about that one. The reason I don’t is that none of the people in range are who I have in mind. I do have one of those, you know. A mind, I mean, not a gun. When you think a gun has been mentioned, which is implied by the word “shoot”, anything left indefinite in what a man is saying will have you leaping to the conclusion that he is referring to a gun. My wife’s a gun, or would be if I had one.

“And now we’ve talked awhile, and it would be your turn if any of you had one. It’s been a real pleasure to have this conversation with you. How about yourself. Are you as near to enjoyment stemming from it as I am? Bring me something that’s drunk from a glass having a stem, and I’ll be all right.”



The Aurora Awards

by Garth Spencer

(Note: this unedited version is for Lloyd Penney of Etobicoke, Ontario, because YOU ... asked for it!)

You might have noticed that this year’s VCON is a Canvention. You might expect this article to be a detailed chronology of the Canadian SF and Fantasy Awards from the beginning, listing a lot of Canadian SF and Fantasy stories, writers, fan activities, and screen productions, which you may or may not have heard of before.

This is not that article.

Clint Budd (another venerable character in Vancouver fandom) asked me to write up the *other* story about the Aurora Awards: the story of why the award administration was somewhat erratic in its first few years; and why we have quibbled about award categories in more recent years.

Why me? Well ... I spent three and a half years in the 1980s producing a Canadian national fan newszine. Also, I heard of the Canadian SF and

Fantasy Awards ballot *almost by accident* one year, and I wanted to get to the bottom of this story. (My life consists of repeatedly hearing cryptic offhand references about things, and then having to go three sides around the barn to find out what people are talking about. This is the sort of thing that drives some people to write encyclopedias.)

The first few years of the Canadian SF and Fantasy Awards form a slightly embarrassing story, but it is educational for conrunners and award committees. In a nutshell, people kept starting out with unexamined assumptions, forgetting to tell others things they needed to know – even, in some instances, *not even informing conventions* that they were hosting the next year's awards – and people on committees kept forgetting to ask, or even realize they had to *find out*, the basis on which the awards were available. After the first five or six years, an Ad Astra held in Toronto in 1987 put the award administration on a sounder basis. There were subsequent issues with the awards, but they were less related to the awards than to the conventions hosting them.

Please remember that all this was before the Internet, let alone the World Wide Web; the closest thing to a single, original source of reliable information that everyone could refer to easily, was a fannish journal of record. Robert Runté in Edmonton – and I, later, in Victoria – attempted to provide such hardcopy newsletters to serve the purpose, as long as there were no postal strikes.

In the Beginning

In 1979 some teachers in the Halifax area - John Bell, Sheldon Goldman and Bob Atkinson – talked about a Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Award.

... John Bell and I discussed the possibility of setting up a Canadian award for SF/fantasy, as a sort of Canadian Hugo equivalent. John and I have researched and/or taught the subject for many years, and felt it was time Canada got such an award. After much discussion with people in Halifax and across the country, we launched the Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Award ... Our intention was to have the award continue each year, shuttling between the major Canadian conventions.

(Bob Atkinson, December 1984; *Cause Célèbre*, March 1985)

In fact, a number of national SF institutions were conceived about the end of the 1970s and enacted about the beginning of the 1980s. There was *New Canadian Fandom*, developed from Robert Runté's fan news column in the regular Edmonton club publication; CANADAPA, a short-lived amateur publication association; the Canadian SF and Fantasy Awards (CSFFAs), conceived to bring publicity to Canadian science fiction and fantasy; and the

Canadian Unity Fan Fund (CUFF), conceived to help fans from one side of Canada to attend conventions on the other side of Canada.

By no coincidence, is about the time we had one of those Canadian-identity crises. Some fans felt it necessary to “spotlight” Canadian SF and fantasy; they meant we had to prove even the fact that *there were so too* actual Canadian writers, actually creating Canadian science fiction and fantasy, while actually living in Canada. (Some people would not believe this in the 1970s, people in the publishing industry, even.)

That was actually an issue back then; but as you are probably thinking, that was then and this is now.

An ironic aspect of the Aurora (and Sunburst, and Constellation) awards is that French-language SF fans had *already* been running their own awards for French-language SF (since shortly after Torcon II, a Toronto Worldcon in the early 1970s). It matters that Quebec SF fans were largely writers, editors and publishers themselves.

As it worked out, categories for French-language SF and fantasy works were belatedly tacked on to the Auroras; so were categories for SF and fantasy in screen or digital formats.

There was some discussion about setting up a National Committee for the Award, but at first a Committee didn't seem necessary. Atkinson had discussed his plans for an award committee with several contacts, including Robert Runté.

Robert Runté was, at the time, both publishing *New Canadian Fandom* – Canada's fan newszine at the time – and chairing the CSFFA subcommittee for the upcoming NonCon 5 (1982), the second Convention.

Notice: Robert Runté in Edmonton assumed Atkinson had gone ahead with his plans, and that he (Runté) was the representative on this committee for Noncon.

Also notice: Robert Runté writes that Atkinson had been quite specific in correspondence about the “professional” qualifications for nominees, but merely specified “Canadian” as to their nationality. In the one-shot fanzine *Cause Célèbre* (March 1985), Atkinson writes that the award was open to Canadian natives or to Canadian residents, and was detailed that way in the Halcon 3 program book. Vaughn Fraser (co-chair of the VCON 11 committee) phoned Robert Runté. They agreed it was important to keep the committee and the award going.

In March 1980 the first CSFFA was awarded at Halcon 3 to A.E. van Vogt for “lifetime achievements” by Spider Robinson. (Those who remember van Vogt's work – *Slan*, *The Voyage of the Space Beagle*, and so on – may not know that he came from Canada, and wrote over six hundred thousand words of his fiction in Manitoba, before emigrating.) The original award was a statuette based on an alien figure in one of van Vogt's stories, the “coeurl”. Mike

Spencer, an excellent Nova Scotia sculptor, was commissioned to do the original award, a stunning piece in black iron, based on van Vogt's "The Black Destroyer". At the awards ceremony, locations for the next three Conventions were also announced. The original plan was that the award would rotate between Halcon (in Halifax), Boreal (in Quebec), Maplecon (in Ottawa), NonCon (then held in Alberta), and VCON (in British Columbia).

A Rocky Start

Now, in reading what happened next, bear in mind that fan groups can be rather isolated, not simply because they have enough local fan activity to occupy them completely, but because groups of fans in Canada can be very widely separated by geography – especially in the Maritime provinces. It seems clear that the founders of the CSFFAs did not have complete or current addresses for fans elsewhere in the country. Bear in mind, also, that the Internet had yet to emerge as a public medium of communication. Canada was given to periodic postal strikes in the 1980s, as well.

Atkinson apparently ceased his fan activities, and could not be traced. He later wrote that in the summer of 1980, he moved away from fan activities, and John Bell took over Halcon and the CSFFAs. Then, in December 1980, John Bell sent "Notes on the Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Award to, and I quote, "many fan leaders across the country", unquote. (In October 1982, John Bell moved to a new job in Ottawa.) However, Robert Runté – the editor of *New Canadian Fandom*, remember? – did not receive these notes. Maplecon did not receive them, either.

1981: The second CSFFA was awarded posthumously at VCON 9 for "lifetime contributions" to Dr. Susan Wood. This year the award took the form of a parchment scroll. Dr. Wood was a Big Name Fan, first in Toronto as a co-editor of the fanzine *Energumen*, and later in Vancouver, as an academic who taught SF to people like William Gibson. By the time of her death at 34, she was entering a professional editing career.

1982: The third CSFFA was award at NonCon 5 (Alberta) to Phyllis Gottlieb, for "lifetime contributions", and specifically for her novel *Judgment of Dragons*. The award was a sculpture donated by local artist Frank Johnson.

Robert Runté arranged to print and distribute ballots this year for the CSFFA. He expected protests over the exclusion of fans and/or a fan category from the CSFFA, or a different fight over the inclusion of non-writers. He was also facing a good deal of ignorance and apathy from Canadian fans, and a prevailing belief that there *were* no Canadian writers, and an attitude from some American fans that CSFFA was somehow an affront to them.

Instead, Spider Robinson raised a controversy over the citizenship qualification. (It is helpful to know that Robinson had a good deal of difficulty with Canadian immigration authorities, even to get landed-immigrant status.)

In the absence of the “official” (original) CSFFA rules, to the best of Runté's knowledge he was not changing any rules, nor had he expected that defining nominees as Canadian citizens would be controversial.

(Robert Runté, *Cause Célèbre*, March 1985)

In May 1983, upon receiving the January 1983 issue of *New Canadian Fandom*, Bob Atkinson learned about the NonCon CSFFA rule “change” and the subsequent controversy. He then wrote to Runté with the rule structure he had – intended for immediate publication, although *New Canadian Fandom* did not appear again in 1983 – and emphasizing that no National Committee for the Award had ever been set up; also, that a national committee was needed. Bell and Atkinson agreed to chair it, with representatives from the conventions. Atkinson also sent copies of his rules to other people around Canada, and contacted the Maplecon committee.

A recession hit Canada in about 1983, which among other things hindered and eventually defeated Robert Runté in producing Canada's national newszine. An unemployed fan in Victoria eventually started his own newszine, *The Maple Leaf Rag*. Robert Runté was very supportive, to the extent of sharing his mailing list, and eventually his associate Michael Hall took on the printing of MLR.

I don't know who Bob Atkinson and/or John Bell first contacted (in 1980) in Ottawa, who apparently claimed to speak for the Maplecon committee; but the information was not passed on to the committee. The first we heard of the very existence of the CSFFA was an announcement in *New Canadian Fandom* that Maplecon 6 was to be Convention. Confusion was added by the fact that we had had to move our con from Oct 82 to Jul 83, missing out a year; so it turned out that it was really Maplecon 5 for which we were assigned the CSFFA; so even when we finally heard about, it we thought it was to be a year later than it was.

(Sansoucy Walker, *Cause Célèbre*, March 1985)

It seems an unnamed person had volunteered to handle on the entire CSFFA business, then fell out of communication. In April 1983 said person phoned a committee member on another matter and mentioned off-handedly that they decided not to handle the CSFFA after all. They still did not bother to resign officially.

Remember, Maplecon was scheduled for July 1983. The committee consulted Robert Runté, who made up a nomination list and distributed ballots. The CSFFA subcommittee was now Jim Real, Elizabeth Holden and Sansoucy Walker. Walker also included a number of suggestions for future procedure.

The ballots included a plebiscite on the eligibility question, at Robinson's suggestion, and the issue was resolved: anyone born in Canada or currently resident in Canada.

1984: There was no Convention at Boréal (Quebec), apparently because “no one could be found who could make such a commitment four years in advance”. In fact Bob Atkinson was even told at one point that Boréal 1984 was canceled. Bob Atkinson later wrote that when he spoke to Joel Champetier – who was supposed to be one of those involved with Boréal 84 – Joel “thought that Boréal could take the 1984 Award.” Sometimes I speculate that Champetier thought he was agreeing to an abstract, hypothetical suggestion, while Atkinson thought he had received a commitment on behalf of the committee. But this is mere speculation on my part.

1985: Convention #5 was held at Halcon 8 in 1985, bestowing the CSFFA to Eileen Kernaghan for her fantasy novel, *The Drowned Lands*.

Getting Organized

1986: Convention #6, or VCON 14, was when CSFFA changed.

VCON 14 was the first of many Conventions to bestow awards in more categories, such as a Fan Activity award. In fact, year by year, the number of Aurora Award categories has tended to go up. This is why I have not listed the awards, even those given out at Vancouver Conventions: we could fill this whole *BCSFazine* issue by doing so, and www.prixauroraawards.ca lists the chronology and the awards quite adequately.

Also at VCON 14, Ad Astra 1987 (Toronto) won its bid to host the next Convention; and Mike Wallis, from the Ad Astra convention committee, then announced his plans to revive CUFF. After that, CSFFA (renamed the Aurora Awards) was put on a sound basis, with a national committee and a Convention bidding process, alternating between eastern and western Canadian bids.

Since Ad Astra

The issues since 1987 have not been about communication breakdowns on the part of award organizers. Instead, Convention issues have been about how a hosting convention in itself is held, or – more seriously – whether the majority of fans are aware of, or engaged in Canadian SF at all. Consider the following two Conventions.

1988: Convention #8 / KeyCon 5 was held over May 20th to 21st, 1988, at the Holiday Inn Downtown. The Guest of Honour was Gene Wolfe. --Charles de Lint --Frank Skene was Fan Guest of Honour, and Kevin Davies was Artist Guest.

Looking at the old *KeyCon 5* program book again, I find a number of oddities. For one thing, the con seemed to be hosted by every fan group in the city, not just the SF fandom. I had had close ties with the *Decadent Winnipeg Fandom* group from a few years

earlier. Before they drifted out of fandom and out of my ken, and they warned me that the newer generation was multi-media and very self-sufficient. They had not networked widely in what we then called mainstream fandom, nor showed much interest in it. The con's program book lists a half dozen organizations who apparently all contributed to the effort – the local SF group, the Trekkies, the SCA, the Whovians, gamers and all. The mixture of interests is shown by KeyCon 5's program schedule. On Saturday, for instance, there is:

- An SCA tourney
- An Elfquest "howl"
- A fanzine panel
- A costuming event
- A panel on story telling
- An autograph session
- A talk on the L5 Society
- A debate on whether *Star Trek: The Next Generation* is worthy to carry on from TOS
- A comparison of fashion accessories from *Dr. Who* and *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*
- A Masquerade
- A filk concert
- The business meeting for the *Convention*.

Other than the cover of the program book and progress report, there is no other mention of the *Convention*. That, in itself, is a little odd, don't you think?

(Taral Wayne, "The Key to Convention 8", June 2011)

1989: Pinekone II/Convention 9 took place Oct. 13-15, 1989 at the Skyline Hotel. This con committee compiled a very extensive list of eligible works for the CSFFA nomination ballot.

Now, Pinekone II surfaced as a bid for the 1989 Convention even before Pinekone I was held, and became the Convention winner. The way several out-of-towners heard about it, the Pinekone bid won on the strength of Paul Valcour's presentation at Keycon. Pinekone I (1988) was an alternative Ottawa convention started by Paul Valcour. Although it was reported as a "successful first try", its financial loss was later reckoned variously at \$3,500 or \$4,000+. Paul Valcour absorbed this loss personally.

Jean-Louis Trudel later wrote:

the bid papers were partly, if not entirely, the work of Joseph Casey, Andrew Farmer, and Sian Reid. As a member of the CASPER Awards subcommittee, I can state that I was first

approached by Joseph Casey. The bid papers themselves included the names of the subcommittee members: Marjorie McKenna, Madona Skaff, and myself.

(Jean-Louis Trudel, in *Xenofile* 1:6)

Paul Valcour later wrote:

The Canadian National SF Convention portion of the con was perhaps the best ever seen in its history. The con established an all time record for Casper Awards nominations (68 valid ballots received) and vote (98 valid ballots received). By comparison, the previous year's national convention in Winnipeg, Manitoba had approximately 15 nominations and 40 voting ballots received (admittedly low by Canadian standards). the Casper Awards ceremony was held during a banquet at the top of the Skyline Hotel, Saturday evening, October 14th. It was very smoothly and professionally pulled off. The Toastmaster was local fan artist, Larry 'The Doctor' Stewart and the awards were ably presented by the 1989 Casper Awards subcommittee members: Marjorie McKenna (chairman), Jean-Louis Trudel and Madona Skaff ...

I might as well admit it. I won one of the bloody awards. (You asked me for news!) last year was the first year Convention expanded the awards to nine categories. It had three prior to 1989. Convention's programming, though not spectacular, was notably more focused on Canadian SF writing, history and fanzines. It also accommodated the second meeting of the newly formed Canadian professional SF writers' group, called SWAC: the Speculative Writers' Association of Canada ...

Paul Valcour, in *Con News* (a Denver-based fan newszine)

Robert Runté wrote:

Somewhat to my surprise, Easterners actually attend the opening ceremonies at their conventions. There were easily 60 people listening to speeches by the Guests of Honour explaining how glad they were to be there. This all seemed rather redundant ... When eventually called upon to speak myself, however, I provided a brief explanation of the function of CUFF. To whit (sic): that I was the one fan Westerners were most anxious to ship east, presumably because they had not understood that it was intended as a round trip. This seemed to be well received, and I sat down again ...

... The artshow was quite good, and while there were a number of familiar prints and the usual assortment of dragons and spaceships, at least most of the artists were new to me. I think a number of eastern artists could do quite well at conventions in

the West and vice versa, simply because they would be reaching new audiences. David Cherry's work also helped to raise the tone of the artshow ...

The dealers' room, while small, had some interesting displays. There was one of the best tables of Lovecraft, *Weird Tales* and so on that I've ever seen, though I'm not into such things myself. The second dealers' room was for fan stuff, where I picked up a subscription to the *Ottawa Statement* and various back issues.

Somewhat to my surprise, I was invited to the banquet and seated next to Michael Skeet at the head table. I thought the food rather better than typical for such functions, and enjoyed the usual upbeat, congratulatory banquet speeches. ... Realizing somewhat belatedly that I would probably be called upon to speak, I wrote a few notes on the general theme of 'Fandom Is a Family' and awaited my turn. I was somewhat dismayed to hear Michael give his speech on the theme 'Fandom Is a Family' a couple of minutes ahead of me, and so switched to a few brief comments on 'The Purpose of CUFF.' I was therefore definitely dismayed to hear the MC explaining 'The Purpose of CUFF' as he introduced me. I ended up extemporizing something on the 'Ecology of Fandom' theme.

(Robert Runté, *I'm Not Boring You Am I?* #7, fall 1989)

It developed after Pinekone II that the 1989 Convention had taken a four-figure loss, like Pinekone I. As before, the loss was absorbed by Paul Valcour (the treasurer). The initial impression, spurred by editorial pieces in Robert Runté's trip report, in *MLR* and in *Xenofile*, was that Pinekone had twice gotten into financial trouble and Paul Valcour was left holding the bag. The *Ottawa SF Statement* finally, much later, ran some statements maintaining rather stiffly that it was Valcour who insisted on running his cons into the red. Paul Valcour later wrote in *Xenofile*, taking some but not all responsibility for the Pinekone II losses, but he did not explain *why* Pinekone remained unincorporated.

##

Conclusions

So. Where do we stand now? Granted, writing-oriented "fandom" in the 1970s sense no longer exists; or rather, "fandom" now consists of *several* quite independent interest groups, not just one – which means we should make an effort to inform fans who have no reason to have heard of SF and fantasy awards. Probably this is a normal and natural sociological development. So, we deal with it.

There is a function for these awards for domestic science fiction, fantasy, and fan activities – but not quite the function that the founders envisioned.

Conventions such as VCON are places where comics, gaming, costuming, filking, and video production fandoms all meet, and the awards now offer recognition to them all.

There remained, and still remains, the question of publicizing *the awards themselves*. (It is ironic that they were intended to bring publicity and high profile to award-winning works.) I think I can say that the Aurora Awards have never been promoted as effectively as they should be.

##

Bibliography, Dramatis Personae, Links, and References

Auroran Lights (R. Graeme Cameron ed.): one of the fan-produced newsletters distributed and stored online, which were consulted in writing this article. As close to a national journal of record as Canadian fandom has, or had until recent years. (We have to ask Graeme if he still intends to produce it.)

Boréal: a small francophone writers' conference in Quebec, persistently taken for a fannish SF convention.

Canadian SF & Fantasy Association: the national association of fans who oversee the Aurora Awards, and who meet at Conventions.

Canadian SF & Fantasy Awards: the initial name for the Aurora Awards; sometimes nicknamed "Caspers". See www.prixaurorawards.ca

Canadian Unity Fan Fund: a travel fund set up for fans from one region to visit another region, and vice versa, in rotation – for example, for British fans to visit the States, Australian fans to visit Britain, American fans to visit Australia, etc. The Canadian Unity Fan Fund was intended to let eastern Canadian fans see western Canadian fans, and vice versa. This made a lot of sense back when most fans were fanzine fans, and were entertained both by reading the work of well-known fanwriters, and by reading about their misadventures.

Cause Célèbre (Garth Spencer ed.): A one-shot fanzine accompanying *The Maple Leaf Rag* #13 in 1985, drawing together facts and opinions from many of the principals involved in the early Conventions.

Champetier, Joel: A prominent figure in the SF community in Quebec.

Con News (Denver, Colorado): A tabloid newsprint publication about SF conventions, appearing at least for a few issues in the early 1990s.

Con-TRACT (John Mansfield ed.): A newsletter which ran for several years, listing upcoming conventions for the benefit of dealers/hucksters, with opinion/editorial articles by the editor and some other contributors.

Halcon: an annual Halifax convention which ceased to run after the 1980s; now succeeded by Hal-Con (with a hyphen).

I'm Not Boring You Am I? (Robert Runté ed.): a personalzine, and later an e-zine or blog, one issue of which served as his Canadian Unity Fan Fund report.

Kernaghan, Eileen: a writer in Burnaby, B.C.

Keycon: an annual convention in Winnipeg.

Maple Leaf Rag, The (Garth Spencer ed.): a news fanzine by, for and about Canadian fans, running from 1983 through 1987. Shortly to be scanned and posted at eFanzines.com.

Maplecon: an annual convention in Ottawa.

New Canadian Fandom (Robert Runté ed.): a news fanzine by, for and about Canadian fans, running from about 1980 to 1984. Now succeeded by Robert Runté's Web presence.

NonCon: an annual convention in Alberta, running approximately from 1978 until some time in the 2000s.

Robinson, Spider. A retired writer, now living quietly in the Gulf Islands.

Runté, Robert. A formerly very active Alberta fan, and a retired academic and sociologist, now living quietly in Lethbridge.

Spencer, Garth. A formerly very active Victoria and Vancouver fan.

SWAC (now SF Canada): a national association for Canadian SF and fantasy writers; see www.sfcanada.ca.

VCON: An annual convention in Vancouver.

Xeno-file: One of the few fanzines to come out of Calgary, at least from the late 1980s to the early 1990s; functioned briefly as a fan newszine for Canadian fans.

Fanzines Seen

To a great extent the fanzines I have received were sent to me by the National Fantasy Fan Federation. They have been very active in the last year or two, partly by “franking” through several fanzines at a go, not all of them N3F publications, and thus raising awareness of a number of other zines.

Askance 44, June 2018, Edited & published by John Purcell, 3744 Marielene Circle, College Station, TX 77845-3926 USA. Great David Thayer/Teddy Harvia cover. This is a classic fannish fanzine with everything: travel journalism (“I See France”, by John Purcell); a downbeat review of the Canadian National Exposition (“The Last Ex”, by Taral Wayne); revealing stories about setting up

the fanzine lounge at the Winnipeg Worldcon (“Tales from the Convention”, by Lloyd Penney); the lettercolumn (“From the Hinterlands”), and a regional convention calendar. Plus, of course, an obituary for Harlan Ellison. Also, GREAT illos by the likes of Brad Foster and Teddy Harvia. This is the sort of thing I had hoped to do when I edited *BCSFazine*.

Askew 25, “Junely” 2018, Written & Edited by - John A. Purcell, 3744 Marielene Circle, College Station, TX 77845 USA. In this issue, remembrance of fans no longer with us (Shelby Vick, Steve Sneyd, Harlan Ellison); books and stories recently read (now I know where the TV series “The Expanse” came from); some fanfiction! (“From the Case Files of Dick Trickle. P.I.”); letters, and a bit of news.

BCSFazine 531, August “2017”. Please send comments, suggestions, and/or submissions to Felicity Walker (the editor), at felicity4711@ gmail .com or Apartment 601, Manhattan Tower, 6611 Cooney Road, Richmond, BC, Canada, V6Y 4C5 (*new address*). This monthly clubzine cries out for new input. It also cries out for two monthly issues per month, in order to catch up the dating of issues to the content covered, insofar as the calendar and club doings (and, just incidentally, some news) are concerned. But I have talked about this with the editor and The Woman Has a Plan.

Christian New Age Quarterly, PO Box 276 Clifton NJ 07015-0276, USA; info@christiannewage.com. Catherine Groves ed. Statement of Purpose: “Our intent is to foster communication between Christians and New Agers”. I have been receiving this for three years, until spring 2018, and I haven’t figured out how to comment in return. I think, but am not certain that any New Age text is like poetry: an exposition of feelings, or religious experience, rather than observation of separate objects outside of oneself and the interactions between them.

CyberCozen August 2018, Leybl Botwinik ed., **E-mail:** leybl_botwinik@yahoo.com. Newsletter of The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy. So this is where Leybl’s in-depth analyses of vampire and zombie and other tropes come from! (He has been reprinting them in his eAPA contributions.)

Fadeaway 56 (the “senseless violence” issue), produced by Robert Jennings, 29 Whiting Rd., Oxford, MA 01540-2035, email fabfcbks@aol.com. Graced with a Dan Carroll cover showing “Judge Blue”, the ultra-violent armed smurf holding a dead Raggedy Ann doll. (I have a low taste for this kind of humour.) Moving right along, we find Tom Feller’s review of Hugo finalists, with comparisons of how he ranked the novels versus other members of his book club; Bob Jennings’ “Books & Things”; and letters from The Usual Suspects. (Example: every periodical above, except *Christian New Age Quarterly*, is a fanzine; and every periodical above has a letter from Lloyd Penney. I have Theories about that.)

FANAC Newsletter (July 13, 2018): Update 6 on the FANAC Fan History Project; many links, generally on Fanac.org: <http://www.fanac.org>.

Perhaps this takes a little explaining, if this is the first fanzine you have clapped eyes on, or if you're new to science fiction fandom. After just a few years, SF fans were self-aware of themselves to start trying to chronicle what they were doing. After several decades, FANAC.org has quite a number of doings to chronicle – fan history, fan funds, FAPA, the Retro Hugos (awards for the best fiction in the past), fanzines, newzines, a by-Ghosh Youtube channel, an online “Fancylopedia” ... all of which can be pursued online.

Ionisphere 12, April 2018, N3F Fan-Pro Coordinating Bureau, Edited by John Thiel, 30 N. 19th Street, Lafayette, Indiana 47904. kinethiel@mymetronet.net, “official publication of the National Fantasy Fan Federation’s Fan-Pro Coordinating Bureau”. A pro interview, a fan interview, and a few letters.

The Kommandeur 53:2, April 2018, publication of AHIKS gaming society. I have nothing to say about gaming, except that I’m not against it.

MT Void 2029 (08/24/18), Mt. Holz Science Fiction Society, Co-Editor: Mark Leeper, mleeper@optonline.net, Co-Editor: Evelyn Leeper, eleeper@optonline.net. This issue is mainly reviews of films, including B-movies, and announcements of Hugo Award winners.

N’APA 235 (Final editing), official collator is George Phillies phillies@4liberty.net. Bimonthly APA of the National Fantasy Fan Federation. One of the several Amateur Press Associations still in operation.

Origin 6, August 2018, Monthly bulletin of the N3F History and Research Bureau, distributed along with the *National Fantasy Fan*. EDITOR: John Thiel, 30 N. 19th Street, Lafayette, Indiana 47904 kinethiel@mymetronet.net
ASSOCIATE: Jon Swartz, 12115 Missel Thrush Court, Austin, Texas 78750 jon_swartz@hotmail.com. This *Origin* reprints some of the links also published in the *FANAC Newsletter*, framed between two fanfictions.

Tightbeam 288, September 2018, edited by Bob Jennings at fabficbks@aol.com or thru regular mail at 29 Whiting Rd. Oxford, MA 01540-2035 “You may learn more about the N3F by going to our website at **n3f.org**”.

The National Fantasy Fan, August 2018, Editor, TNFF: George Phillies phillies@4liberty.net. Are you beginning to see a trend here?

