

It makes no sense to spill my guts telling you all my life history or character makeup up front, first time out; best to let that unfold, if at all, gradually over time.

What do I like? Reading science fiction, fantasy, horror, mystery, historical fiction, the classics underground theatre, films, art, music, SF conventions with thoughtful, participative programming.... writing and editing, playing chess, poker, pub-hopping, dancing preferred cuisines: Mexican, East Indian, Szechuan Chinese, Italian my favourite toy: Black Beauty ('82 Toyota Supra GTS) weakness: all-night rap sessions on fanzines, writing or smoffing.

Dislikes? Romance novels, *The National Enquirer*, 90% of commercial network television programming basketball, cricket (I've got to pick something), politics, chartered banks and insurance companies, country music dishonesty, inconsiderate folk, Mulroney, Reagan prefer not: to eat at MacDonald's or to eat Japanese sushi, squid, octopus, clams.

Canadian SF Quarterly

A few of you will no doubt be wondering about the status of this SF magazine. For those of you in the dark, *Canadian SF Quarterly* (CSFQ) was to be (and still could be) the successor to Michael Skeet's three-time Casper Award-winning fanzine, *MLR*. CSFQ was to be reshaped into a semi-professional SF newszine cum critical/review journal. (The more traditional fanzine elements of *MLR* were being carried on by Con-Version's *XenoFile* edited by Ron Currie in Calgary.)

Dave O'Heare (ass't editor) and myself (managing editor) prepared a comprehensive business plan for the organization, staffing, publishing and marketing of CSFQ earlier this past summer.

Staffing was progressing adequately: 3 contributing editors were confirmed, Michael Skeet being one of them; 4 book and film reviewers had agreed to become regular contributors so far, Keith Soltys being one (his experience in reviewing for *Fantasy Review* and *Science Fiction Review* is noteworthy); 2 part-time volunteer staff assistants were lined up, one having just completed a summer job working for the Edmonton-based speculative fiction magazine *On Spec*; and I had my first foreign correspondent lined up in Germany (an ass't editor for their national SF newszine).

Canadian SF Quarterly was a dream magazine for a managing editor in one respect: there was no shortage of written material or subjects. I couldn't believe it. The first four issues had theme topics already; I had a cover for one and a very good new artist wanting to do another, and I still had not pursued my stronger contacts for art material (without even venturing outside of Canada yet); 4 interviews of writers and artists had been done; a series of profiles on specialty SF bookstores across Canada was firmly established; we had obtained permission to transcribe

and publish a CBC radio documentary by a Toronto-based SF writer interviewing well-known authors about alternate histories; and so on. All this, and I haven't even mentioned news items, convention reports, submitted or promised essays, con listings or letters yet. Whew!

So, what happened? Money!

During the spring and early summer I was marginally hopeful CSFQ would be at least viable. In the wake of my experience with *Pinekone*, it was important to do three things properly:

- (1) CSFQ must be properly organized and financially sound;
- (2) CSFQ must be adequately planned and managed; and
- (3) CSFQ must have competent, qualified staff (my interpretation of this latter point is liberal enough to include developing and promoting new talent, and good amateur/fan writers and artists).

The business plan was the first essential step. (A lot of other parallel activities, such as recruiting and advertising, were being carried out as well, as one would expect.) It was ready for my trip out West in July. I received the not unexpected constructive advice from chosen writers and fans out West. (The Easterners were scheduled to see the plan upon my return.)

Incident in Northern Ontario

But fate intervened. The audacity, and hence the folly, of my aspirations was cruelly mirrored before me.... an 18-wheeler driving a few hundred feet ahead of me lost a 1-foot cube metal load leveller and steel rod off the transport onto the gravel track of construction road we were both travelling on. Having driven a couple hundred kilometres in such dusty conditions, the item was essentially camouflaged; that and the fact the transport was kicking up a fair bit of dust. With one track to follow (we were going over a gully, and there was no shoulders or guardrail), Black Beauty had to eat the damn thing.

The transmission and bell housing were destroyed; the gas tank was severely ruptured; the stick shift and console were no more; and I had an ashtray in the ceiling of the car.

I suppose there is a good side to almost everything: the load leveller had not gone under my seat. (Now I know the feel of black humour.)

Northern Ontario is beautiful country with its rugged, natural scenery and colours. But it is no place to have your car break down. Within a couple of minutes of being stranded, it started to rain heavily. It took nigh on twenty minutes to flag down a vehicle, despite there being lots of traffic; luckily, I was on the Trans-Canada Highway. One of the large, heavy duty construction dump trucks stopped going the other way.

Some pick up. No matter. But man, I'm 5-foot tall and the bottom of the passenger door was a good deal higher than that. It was very much a climbing expedition just to get into the sucker.

The driver was great: a young chap from Toronto workin' up north for good pay. About five miles back, there was a small roadside canteen which he drove me to. He knew who to phone in Dryden, the nearest town (20 miles away). When I found out he was headed back to Guelph in the fall to be with his girlfriend, the least I could do was recommend checking out Sleeman's beer when he got there (a vice of mine Keith Soltys has to take full responsibility for).

Spending the afternoon at this so-called diner was an experience in itself. The proprietor was an elderly lady. The patrons were mostly cats. An old, bearded gentleman bicycled by during my stay; briefly stopping, he bought a coke, chatted a bit and left. The lady then proceeded to relate how she had sold the chap, who lived a few kilometres up the road, the bicycle 10 years ago. Every day, summer or winter, he bicycled down to her store. That was the high point of excitement that afternoon. The few blokes who meandered in (construction workers) were not a talkative lot.

Have you ever sat in a small restaurant in a rural area or small town, and had the feeling everyone was looking at you, sizing up the city slicker? Even the proprietor settled down to complacent, sultry staring. It was a long, gloomy wait for the tow truck.

I, and what was left of Black Beauty, made it into Dryden just after everything closed down for the evening (to be expected, of course). I registered into the cheapest motel I could find. No television. No radio or clock. There was a MacDonald's across the highway. (Fate is indeed cruel.)

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Located 3½ miles west of Dryden on Hwy. 17.

Photo by R. Ettinger

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I phoned Linda Ross-Mansfield in Winnipeg and explained my situation. She and John had been expecting me earlier that day. Fortunately (?), we did not have to carry out the contingency plan of her driving out to pick me up (a four hour drive, each way).

It took a day to sort out with my insurance broker in Ottawa, and the insurance adjusters and body/wreck (cringe) shop in Dryden who was going to do what. The adjuster wanted to write the car off; but I pointed

out I had an appraised \$20,000 replacement cost insurance policy on the car; he quickly decided it was cheaper to spend \$4-5,000 fixing the car. (Humbug! Read on.)

They gave me the keys to a Tilden rental car to continue the rest of my trip; it was included in my insurance coverage, so they said. (The Tilden manager was a witness to this.) And off I went; not happy, but relieved to be on my way to see everyone in Calgary and Edmonton.

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Aaargh!... I get a phone call while in Winnipeg.

"Oh, Mr. Valcour, we regret to inform you that you are eligible for only \$450 car rental fees. New Ontario insurance regulations relating to one car accidents."

(The driver of the 18-wheeler had not noticed he had lost the load-leveller, nor noticed my predicament; hence he had not stopped. No, I didn't see any distinguishing company logos or licence plate.)

The total estimated rental bill, round-trip, was \$850.

John Mansfield and I walked down to Tilden from Linda and John's store (Pendragon Games) in downtown Winnipeg to see if I could return my rental car, or at least leave it there until I returned. No I couldn't. I would have to pay a \$150 one-way drop-off penalty, then rent another vehicle at twice Dryden's rental rate to go back to Dryden, and pay another \$150 one-way drop-off charge for leaving their car there.

With what little rationality I had left, I opted to minimize the damage by parking the rental car in Linda and John's garage for the remainder of the trip. They were kind enough to adjust their departure time from Winnipeg to accommodate my arriving in Calgary in time for Con-Version's 8:30 a.m. bus departure (for concom and guests), Friday morning for the Royal Museum of Paleontology near Drumheller, Alberta. This was no small thing for the Mansfields to do. They already had a lot of merchandise to take for their dealer's table at Con-Version; and I had a good deal of stuff with me because of the magazine. All that in one small Toyota Tercel station wagon.

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If you think driving through Saskatchewan on the Trans-Canada Highway is monotonous and boring, you should try doing it at night. Nothing twice over.

Con-Version VII/Canvention 10

I shall save the description of my activities as CUFF winner and ordinary, mortal fan at Con-Version VII/Canvention 10 for issue #2. Suffice it to say, I enjoyed the con, the hospitality and conviviality very much. I would go back anytime.

1990 Canadian Unity Fan Fund (CUFF)

What I write here and in the next *Long Distance Voyeur* will form a rough draft of my CUFF trip report. I shall begin writing it in January. Dave O'Heare has offered to help out on formatting and layout. The main trip report is going to be a fanzine. Shorter versions will appear here, and possibly in *XenoFile* if the editor, Ron Currie, wants them. (Take note Ron.) The fanzine will hopefully be ready by next spring. The delay is partly due to burn-out, partly because of finances, and partly because I'm tired from all the overtime I've put in at work.

The fanzine may contain photographs taken during my CUFF trip. It will contain copies of gathered memorabilia. Cartoon illustrations are planned as well; if anyone wishes to contribute in that department, they of course will get one or more copies of the fanzine. I'd gladly provide an outline of events and anecdotes ahead of time to assist creativity.

Those fans who played an important role in the CUFF trip, such as providing accommodation, rides, great conversation, etc. and those with whom I wish to correspond or trade fanzines with anyway shall receive the CUFF trip report fanzine.

It has been suggested by Robert Runté I consider mailing the fanzine to all those who donated money or voted in the CUFF balloting this year. Tradition may even dictate this, though I'm not sure. It is a reasonable idea. I must consider my finances first. CUFF does not pay for trip reports. The CUFF winner pays for it. But the more I review the numbers and the potential for goodwill, the more I will likely do it.

If I write a short version, I will submit it to *XenoFile*. It would be written to convey much of the goings-on during the trip to quite a broad group of fans, including those who voted. It may also serve to help promote participation by more fans, something CUFF still needs to work on if it is to remain financially viable.

For all others, they will be able to obtain it for a nominal price or trade.

Any comments?

I will publish a CUFF financial report in the next *Long Distance Voyeur*.

1991 CUFF

I couldn't help but notice questions being asked in *Galactus #45*, about which way CUFF may be going next year, and one fan's suggestion that enquiries be sent to Robert Runté. The answer to the first question is: CUFF winners travel in the same direction as Convention.

As to asking Robert, he is certainly one of the most informed fans in Canada on the subject, especially with him being the CUFF Administrator in 1989. But anyone may also direct their enquiries to me, the 1990 CUFF Administrator.

Enough with titles. The Fund is currently in my hands. The responsibility for recruiting candidates and nominators rests with me, though I by no means will

discourage active soliciting by others in that department.

Generally speaking, candidates should be recruited by the end of January, 1991, if we are going to have time for distributing and receiving voting ballots by the end of March, 1991. We need approximately two months to arrange transportation and accommodation. I will assist in any way I can.

One of the toughest decisions I have to make as Administrator this year is the request by one of the potential candidates (and some of her nominators) to run for CUFF on the platform of sending her to Westercon in Vancouver rather than Context '91/Convention 11 in Edmonton next year. I shall not divulge her name in this issue out of courtesy. She requires 6 nominators - 3 from the West and 3 from the East; I do not want to embarrass her if she failed to achieve that.

However, that is not likely to happen. She is well-known and liked, and has a strong base of support in Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver.

Interesting. It would be useful to have guidelines.

Here is how I see it: CUFF is not officially tied to, nor necessarily associated with the Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Association (CSFFA), which is, as many of you know, the parent body for Convention, the annual Canadian national SF convention. Starting with Keycon 5/Convention 8 in Winnipeg ('88), two major events happened:

- (1) the CSFFA made major revisions to its constitution, ostensibly to upgrade the quality and profile of the Casper (now Aurora) Awards and to recognize the realities of the Canadian SF environment; CUFF was appropriately not dealt with or included in the the constitution at the time - not enough input from fans involved in past CUFFs or fanzines;

and

- (2) CUFF got itself untracked, financially and administratively, adopting a similar east-west nature of subsidizing fan trips to coincide with the direction of Convention.

So, if there is a CUFF candidate or race for 1991, then it must be east to west, since Convention is out west next year. To have it otherwise would throw everything out of wrack. However, there is nothing binding in the CSFFA constitution nor are there written guidelines elsewhere for CUFF which specifically requires a CUFF nominee to go to Convention.

The objectives of CUFF (the rewarding of deserving fans; the sharing of ideas across the country; allowing fans in one part of the country to put a face to a name they've heard so much about over the years; having fun... definitely high on my list) can still be met by sending a fan to Westercon. I'm sure fans would be just as interested to read a trip report to

Westercon as ConText; both cons are bound to be excellent. The one concern I've got, other than the potential for hurt pride on ConText's concom's part, is Westercon's acceptance to honour the CUFF candidate special status. I suspect that will not be a problem.

Comments?

A Midsummer's Night in Edmonton

Robert and I had a very interesting conversation on the subject of CUFF while I was in Edmonton. Such aspects as guidelines, eligibility, voting procedures, required distribution, accountability and obligations of the winners are all important. However, nowhere is anything explained or laid out.

My general opinion is that CUFF is for active or noteworthy SF fans, regardless of their field of expertise (eg.- fanzines, convention organizing, writing, art, costuming...). Candidates should qualify on their merits, and the desire of other fans (peers) to meet them. By definition, this would exclude fans only involved in non-SF areas (eg.- comics, SCA, mystery...). I would also exclude professionals.

As in anything, one has to judge each case on its own. For instance, Janet Hetherington and Elizabeth Holden more than qualify for eligibility because of their long-standing and important organizational work for Maplecon, despite the fact they are predominantly known for their work and expertise in comics. Also, if a professional contributes a significant amount of time towards fan activities, then they would be eligible. They just aren't eligible simply because of their professional work.

On the other hand, Robert takes the interesting position that CUFF could be for fanzine writers, artists and editors alone. It doesn't matter what the fanzine is about: SF, media, mystery, sociology, computer science, comics, Star Trek, etc. This was quite an eye-opener for me. I am used to the traditional fanzine editors' lament for the good ol' days when fans were fanzine fans. But it always centered around SF (in this context, this includes fantasy and/or horror).

His position also leads to exclusions: club and convention organizers, costumers, writers and editors of small press/semi-professional magazines, comic book artists and publishers, etc. who are not involved in fanzines. (*Please correct me, Robert, if I have misstated your opinion.*)

Now I know this will generate feedback.

So Robert's argument was refreshingly new, and led to the toughest debate I've had the pleasure of participating in all year. (This, more than any other reason, is why I go to conventions or visit fans in other cities. Late night discussions and correspondence/fanzines still represents the *heart* of trufandom. Alas, I digress.)

By mutual agreement, we reckoned our debate to be an even draw.

I was lucky. Robert can fix those steely eyes of his on you, under the subterfuge of kindly, professorial interest, all the while wringing every last ounce of reasoned logic you can muster. One's collar becomes too tight; your palms become sweaty; caffeine no

longer seems sufficient to drive your brain (already in overdrive); you begin looking for an escape route. Of course, he could have just opened up the living room window, but no. Robert is an accomplished tactician. He had me on his turf, and I was going to pay for it. If my arguments had any merit, they would survive such minor, materialistic hurdles.

Only after six or seven hours of gruelling interrogation, at around 4 o'clock in the morning, did I discover the true depths of marshalled ingenuity of my opponent. He finally opened the windows to allow fresh air in - for indeed I was bunking in his livingroom that night. Within twenty minutes, undressed, lights out and winding down from exhaustion a noticeable buzzing of several hundred mosquitos assailed my ears. It wasn't long before they found the body attached to those ears. I swear I could hear a fiendish cackle upstairs (behind closed door).

Beware, oh upstart debaters, the rewards of winning the respect of your betters.

Last Comments About the 1991 CUFF

As mentioned before, CUFF is administered, in body, by the current CUFF winner and, in spirit, by a loose set of ideas held by a few active fans (such as previous CUFF winners). Such concepts as 'precedence', 'objectives' and 'eligibility criteria' do play a role, but only informally.

I hope to some day work with other fans towards preparing guidelines, without the weight of bureaucratic rules, for CUFF. But until then, I will have to do the best I can without them. I will consult others and I shall try to be fair, even when I may have other preferences.

For instance, regardless of the arguments and positions taken in my previous anecdote, there is no definition of 'fan'. The wording I agreed to let ConText '91 use in their upcoming progress report for 'eligibility' was as follows:

"The person must be Canadian, and must be an active fan in clubs, convention-running or fanzines."

For the present, that will have to suffice. The above 'eligibility' criteria applies to nominators, CUFF candidates and voters. If I do not know the person or their qualifications, I will make every effort to follow up.

The Fringe

Edmonton's Fringe Festival took place a few weeks after I visited the gang in that city. I was most disappointed given my fondness for underground theatre.

I did manage to catch the tail end of Winnipeg's Fringe Festival on my way out to Calgary, thanks to artist, Robert Pasternak. I had scheduled an interview with him at his studio. A most amazing place; and quite an interesting dude to spend time with. Well, his