



TAFF *est*

A NEWSLETTER OF THE TRANS-ATLANTIC FAN FUND #1 MARCH 2023

With less than a month to go before the end of the 2023 TAFF race, the administrators of TAFF reach out to you from the depths of the dark and dusty book cases to remind you to **VOTE, VOTE, VOTE**.

But how?

It's very easy to vote. Fill in the [online voting form](https://taff.org.uk/vote) (taff.org.uk/vote) and give a donation to TAFF, minimum of £3, or €3, or \$4. Checks should be made payable to "TAFF" (for cheques in GBP) or to "Michael Lowrey" (for checks in USD). PayPal donations should be made to one of the email addresses below. If you mail your printed and signed ballot, send it and your donation to:

Europe: Sofia Karlsson, Lönngatan 44 C, 214 49 Malmö, Sweden. PayPal payments to: EUTAFF@gmail.com

North America: Michael J. Lowrey, 1847 N 2nd Str., Milwaukee, WI 53212, U.S.A. PayPal payments to: n.a.taff.2020@gmail.com

If you're at this year's Eastercon, Conversation 2023, you can also vote at the con in person.

Voting closes on April 11, 2023, at 11.59 pm, Pacific US time. That is, 7.59 am in Poland, 6.59 am in UK on April 12.

If you're still unsure how to place your vote, this newsletter contains an in-depth interview with the two candidates Sandra Bond and Mikołaj Kowalewski, so you can learn all you ever wanted to know about them.

The winner of the 2023 TAFF race will travel to Pemmi-con 2023, the NASFiC (North American Science Fiction Convention) in Winnipeg, Canada, on July 20 – 23, 2023. To learn more about Pemmi-con, this newsletter also contains an interview with the chairs of the convention about what to expect when you come to Winnipeg.

And last but not least, how's the TAFF fund doing? We have all the info.



CANDIDATE *interviews*

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MIKOŁAJ KOWALEWSKI



An image depiction a cool Mikołaj looking out over a city. Picture by Michał Kasperek.

Are you more of a hero, villain, or antihero? And why?

It is absolutely boring, but out of these three I think hero. I feel very obliged to everything I promised to do and I cannot say no when someone asks "Will you help at our convention?" which is not the best combo I can imagine, but it may make me a villain in the future.

What is your origin story?

I have been reading science fiction and fantasy since I was 10 or even earlier. I started playing RPGs in 2012, and attended my first convention in 2015. I started volunteering at conventions at my second convention, and at almost all of them since. I started running conventions in 2018. In the same year I also joined organised fandom, Avangarda Society in Warsaw, Poland, and started counting nominations for the Polish literary Janusz Zajdel fandom award. My first international convention was the 2016 Discworld convention in Warwick, UK.

Name a few of your favourite writers and books.

Favourite writers are easy: Terry Pratchett, Kurt Vonnegut and Philip Roth. It is harder to name single books, but I think I will go for Bluebeard by Kurt Vonnegut, Lord of the Rings by J.R.R. Tolkien, Dumanowski by Wit Szostak and collection of short stories t zero by Italo Calvino.

If you had a motto, what would it be?

I don't have a motto, but I have a few favourite quotes from books/songs/interviews written down and if I have to choose one, I think I would go for Nick's Cave quote "Hope is optimism with a broken heart"

What kind of humour do you have?

Sarcastic and ironic, sometimes hard to understand or misunderstood by others.

What is your favourite con experience?

Volunteering in general. Feeling that you helped it happen, being a part of a bigger project.

European fandom is large and varied. How would you describe European fandom to a North American fan?

As varied, just like in the question, there are so many ways to get into the fandom story that this text had to be absurdly long. To make it as short as possible, I will choose one important thing among many, which is that despite national differences, fandom unites people from all over Europe, and it did so in the Eighties, when it allowed exchange between the Eastern and Western blocs, and it does so now; for example, the Polish fandom movement makes several charity events and support actions for Ukraine.

What are you most looking forward to at Pemmi-con?

Meeting people and seeing an event of an absolutely different scale than I'm used to.

Why do you think we should vote for you as the 2023 TAFF Delegate?

The worst question for me; my PR skills are as good as my dancing skills. I am a terrible dancer. So, let's look at this problem from the TAFF point of view. If I'm elected as a delegate, I'll be the first Polish or even Eastern European delegate. I will also probably be one of the youngest delegates. So, I have a different point of view and experience than Western European fandom, which has been widely represented before. I can show a different spectrum of fandom than Americans are used to.

Sandra's question to Mikołaj: "Of which of your achievements in fandom are you most proud?"

Probably running Konline, a fully online convention made in 2 weeks after the start of covid lockdown in March 2020, for over 1500 participants with multiple international guests. Since then, we have made three editions and the fourth one is planned for November.



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SANDRA BOND



An image depiction a scene at a casino with a bad ass Sandra Bond. Picture by Oliver Facey.

Are you more of a hero, villain, or antihero? And why?

I strive to be a hero, but rarely succeed. I try not to be a villain – that’s easier. In truth, I suspect I am more of a background character – the one who gets a phone call for help from the hero in chapter 15, but misses the call and it goes to voicemail and the second half of the book is full of drama and cliff-hangers as a result.

What is your origin story?

I read about fandom in various encyclopaedias and coffee-table books about SF, which made me want to take part – especially the books which made it seem as though a few years in fandom would lead inexorably to fame and success as an SF writer. Hah! I very soon learned better; but by then I was hooked on fandom.

Name a few of your favourite writers and books.

I used to be fond – and still am – of soft-science satire in SF: Robert Sheckley, Frederik Pohl, Cyril Kornbluth. Philip K. Dick is of course sui generis and appears to have been absorbed into the Establishment after his death. Among more contemporary writers I go for Geoff Ryman, Stewart Hotston, Miles Nelson and Roz Kaveney.

If you had a motto, what would it be?

“Don't get drug down by life. It ain't nohow permanent.” (Pogo)

What kind of humour do you have?

Gallows humour has kept me alive more than once. Also, I will transgress all boundaries of good taste and common sense in order to wring a pun from the least promising sentence.

What is your favourite con experience?

Trying to pull one memory out of 35 years of convention-going is well-nigh impossible, especially when you have a memory like mine where events won't stay in a neat timeline but instead turn into chunks floating in a kind of soup, with no date or convention name attached. (If I win TAFF, I'll be taking notes, to ensure some kind of coherence in my report afterwards.)

European fandom is large and varied. How would you describe European fandom to a North American fan?

To quote Tolkien, “Like and yet unlike”. In truth, EU and NA fandoms are similar to EU and NA society in general: 90% of the time things run along almost identical lines, and then the other 10% something weird trips you up and leaves you floundering. (But at least in fandom, someone will generally stand you back upright and explain things.)

What are you most looking forward to at Pemmi-con?

Discovering what the 10% from question 7 is going to be in Canada.

Why do you think we should vote for you as the 2023 TAFF delegate?

Because, if elected, I shall try to give good value and entertainment as a delegate to as many of fandom's pies as I can put my finger in. (“Ten pies then, Sandra?” “Stop testing my metaphors to destruction!”)

Mikołaj's question to Sandra: What was your first memory of Fandom?

Early 1987, a teenage me attended the London pub meets for the first time. The first person I approached upon arriving, entirely at random (or possibly because he was taller than those around him), was the late Rob Holdstock. On discovering his identity, I must have responded with such enthusiasm that it worried him, because he managed to persuade me that all his novels were actually written by the woman standing next to him, Linda Krawecka... I suspect Rob was fibbing, but you'd have to ask Linda, I suppose. Try asking her to sign your copy of Mythago Wood, and see how she responds.



Pemmi-con 2023

THE PEMMI-CON INTERVIEW

Pemmi-con 2023 is the 2023 North American Science Fiction Convention (NASFiC), taking place in Winnipeg, Canada on July 20-23, 2023. It's also the "destination convention" for the 2023 TAFF race.

To learn more about this year's destination, a Zoom meeting was held on March 5th representing fan interests from Australia to Poland, to discuss. TAFF, DUFF and CUFF were all represented.

From the beginning, the con com made it clear that fund delegates will be treated as VIPs.

There are plans for a special welcome meal at a highly regarded local venue, for those delegates in attendance. Any delegate who is interested in costuming and cosplay would be welcomed as one of the masquerade judges. The con plans to have as many as possible of the customary events one would expect from a Worldcon, such as masquerade, art show, dealers' room, etc. – just not the Hugo-related and site-selection-related events. They are grateful that so much interest is being shown and hope to show the fan fund delegates a good time.

They will give the fan fund delegates comped memberships, as well as room at one of the hotels for the convention. At the moment, they can't guarantee a single room (might be shared room), as the primary hotel have few singles and they are prioritizing them for fans with accessibility issues. They have an overflow hotel (which is still under construction/renovation). If the overflow hotel is ready in time, they believe they can provide a single for each fund delegate, as well as the already-promised comped membership.

The con committee warned that Winnipeg can get pretty hot that time of year, and one should come prepared for that.

SUMMARY OF EUROPEAN TAFF ACCOUNTS, 2019–2022

Johan Anglemark won the 2018 TAFF race to North America and took over the European administration of the fund on his return in August 2018. After a pause for the Covid-19 pandemic, Fia Karlsson won the 2022 TAFF race to North America and became the European administrator on her return in September 2022.

European TAFF funds are raised in several currencies. A UK TAFF bank account was set up in 2004 to handle sterling funds when the European administrator lived in Ireland. In 2018 Claire Brialey resumed day-to-day management of this account on Johan's behalf. In 2021 she also took responsibility for managing the European PayPal account, which now requires a UK phone number for verification. She is continuing this support for Fia.

Claire has prepared this summary of TAFF fundraising and spending in the European treasury from the beginning of 2019 to the end of 2022 (including the start of the 2023 westbound race), to provide information about the state of the fund in Europe.

Starting balances (1 January 2019): £5,679.08 and €55.38

Fundraising

| | 2019 | | 2020 | | 2021 | | 2022 | | Total | |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | £ | € | £ | € | £ | € | £ | € | £ | € |
| Voting fees, bonds and race donations | 360.82 | 29 | 229.56 | 166.64 | 148.25 | 126.95 | 729.19 | 475.16 | 1,467.82 | 797.75 |
| Direct fundraising | 965.70 | | | | | | | | 965.70 | |
| UK Eastercons | 773.90 | | | | 677 | | 266.95 | | 1,717.85 | |
| Con donations | 500 | | | | | | | | 500 | |
| Auctions etc. at other conventions | 173.99 | 1,019.75 | 28.63 | | 39.50 | | | | 242.12 | 1,019.75 |
| Trip report sales | | | 135.11 | | 177.84 | | | | 312.95 | |
| TAFF free ebooks | | | 195.84 | 9.36 | 51.59 | 23.92 | 34.32 | 9.23 | 281.75 | 42.51 |
| ebooks, trip reports etc. (mixed sales) | 85.85 | 14.21 | | | | | | | 85.85 | 14.21 |
| Paper book editions | | | | | | | 370.77 | | 370.77 | |
| Other donations | | | 50 | | 48.25 | | 19.12 | | 117.37 | |
| Total after fees | 2,860.26 | 1,062.96 | 639.14 | 176 | 1,142.43 | 150.87 | 1,420.35 | 484.39 | 6,062.18 | 1,874.22 |
| <i>(Fees deducted by PayPal)</i> | <i>19.48</i> | <i>13.55</i> | <i>21.95</i> | <i>2.69</i> | <i>13.91</i> | <i>13.47</i> | <i>34.59</i> | <i>42.54</i> | 89.38 | 72.25 |

Some of this was reported at the time. Among all the generosity supporting this fundraising it's particularly worth noting the contributions from Ytterbium (the 2019 Eastercon), the work of Dave Langford and other editors on the TAFF free ebooks and their paper editions, and Johan's own efforts in selling books in aid of the fund.

Spending

| | Travel | Accommodation | Trips | Other | Total |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|-------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Geri Sullivan (2019 trip) | | £160.79 (extra Worldcon night) | | £142.48 (wait for the trip report!) | £303.27 |
| Michael Lowrey (2022 trip) | £23 | £405 (hotel room for Eastercon) | | | £428 |
| Fia Karlsson (2022 trip) | 16,962.74kr | | 550kr | 15,084.20kr | 32,596.94kr |

(The majority of spending on both eastbound trips, including travel, came from the North American treasury.)

£1,289.61 and €1,134.73 (26,751 kronor) were transferred to Fia to cover the expenses for her trip, plus the equivalent of 5,846kr in US dollars.

European TAFF balances on 30 September 2022: £10,976.96 and €24.83.

And at 31 December 2022: £11,275.22 and €71.52



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TAFF thanks...

...Chicon 8 – 6 nights hotel room(!), souvenir book bio, membership, programme participation, Hugo presenter, and many happy moments

...Dave Langford – TAFF website, online ballot and voting, ebooks, and all the fans downloading ebooks who are kindly sending contributions to the TAFF coffers

...Claire Brialey – for managing the administrators, the funds itself and donations. Nobody does it better.

...Fia wants to thank her 2022 TAFF Trip hosts – Colette Fozard (with special thanks to Josh for that super delicious ramen night), Meg and Will Frank (Yakiniku, castles and sugar gliders, what more can you want?), Geri Sullivan (hosting, whale safari and for driving Fia across states), Dave Hogg and Angie Rush (did you say board game picnic?), Michael Lee and Alicia LaMunion (Minnesota State Fair was wonderful!), and to Joel Phillips for driving Fia across even more states.

...Mike wants to thank the many folks who hosted him on his West-East TAFF voyage: The Luxcon/Eurocon con committee, who were more than accommodating; Marcin “Alqua” Kłak and Mikołaj Kowalewski, who met him in Luxembourg and served as cicerones there and in Poland; Johan and Linnéa Anglemark, who hosted him in Sweden and kept him coordinated; Anders Bellis, tour guide extraordinary; the club fans of Poland, Sweden and Denmark who made him feel welcome (if a little old); the Eastercon crowd; Rob Hansen, master of fan history; Ken Macleod, who made me feel like a VIP in Glasgow; and so many others whom his COVID-fogged brain may have spaced away.