

TAFFWORLD

 *Official Newsletter of the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund*

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This is an interesting and exciting year for the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund.

We have 2 candidates who are both non UK or Irish fans. TAFF has always been theoretically a bridge builder between North America and Europe (I know, I know, that would be a very long bridge) but until this year the Eastern part of the race has focussed upon quite a small part of Europe. This year we have two fans that have been very active in fandom but it's quite possible that they may not be overly well known amongst many of the people who usually vote in TAFF. To give you a little more information to base your vote upon we asked them a few questions and are making the answers available here in the TAFF newsletter. Please remember though - if you read this and still can't decide which candidate deserves your vote then there is always the option to vote 'No Preference' and send us your money. Happy TAFFing everyone.

Wolf von Witting

Q) How did you first discover and become a part of Fandom?

A) Early in 1975, my parents decided not to live in Germany anymore so we went to Sweden. But in Stockholm I just felt alienated and isolated. My first contacts occurred after writing to other Perry Rhodan-fans. Gradually I discovered fandom in the late 70's both in Germany and Sweden. The wonderful art of staying in touch by letters (75), founded a club (76), went to my first convention (77), publishing fanzines (78) and discovered fandom in Sweden (79).

Q) What are your favourite areas of interest in Fandom?

A) The main purpose I see to my fanac, is to bring European fans closer to each other. In understanding. The tradition and purpose of fandom has not been fully grasped in some countries which have not had much of a fannish tradition (such as France and Italy). I find it interesting, how some countries (such as Finland, Croatia and Greece) are developing healthy and growing SF-fandoms. Perhaps we can learn from each other. I also feel continuity of fandom to be important (and with it fan-history). I enjoy filking and smoffing and every SF-fan is a VIP to me.

Q) What conventions have you attended in the past?

A) Of my 50 first conventions, I attended 17 in Germany, 29 in Sweden (smoffing 14 of them), 2 in the UK and one in Latvia. The Eurocon in Fiuggi, Italy was my 50th convention. Since then I have experienced another Eurocon in Stockholm 2011, the Eurocon in Zagreb 2012, GarchingCon in Munich and Swecon in Stockholm 2013, and finally Loncon 3 and Novacon 44 in the UK, 2014.

Generally I prefer small conventions, with a few hundred attending members.

Like Novacon in the UK, HanseCon in Germany and most likely Corflu.

Q) Have you visited North America before?

A) Yes, I was in Montreal and Ottawa in a school exchange back in 1976.

Q) Why is Fandom important to you personally?

A) I love the free and original aspect of fandom. The flow of ideas, which have no price on them. Which are not for sale, nor for hire. Ideas and arguments which are no attempt into suckering

you for someone's cause or benefit. I love the diversity of fandom. You are welcome as you are. With no regard to age, gender, social standing, ethnic origin, religious persuasion or sexual preference. Nobody presumes they have authority to tell you what to think. We are free.

Q) How would you describe TAFF to a new fan



who'd never heard of it before, and what would you tell them to encourage them to become involved in TAFF themselves someday?

A) I would encourage them to read about TAFF on the website and I would try to make them understand that it concerns THEM. The only reason why TAFF has not been more international, is because European fandom outside the UK has not participated very much in voting and in presenting candidates. The latter being the lesser failure, as I see it. Sweden has presented Bo Stenfors, Per W Insulander and Anders Holmström, but neither of them got sufficient support from their own fandom. I find it worrying that I could win, simply because the Brits didn't put up a candidate this time around. I believe we are unlikely to have a similar race any time soon, if fans in concerned countries can't be bothered to vote. Well, Austria does not have much of a fandom. But Sweden and

Germany have enough to settle the issue.

Q) Besides attending SASQUAN in Portland, Oregon, what else do you want to do/see/accomplish on your TAFF trip to North America? Do you have any special personal goals for your TAFF trip?

A) I have only recently realized that TAFF is more than a mere trip to the Worldcon. But when I see a buffet loaded with food I prefer not to stuff myself to the point of vomiting, but rather enjoy a few select dishes and savour the experience. In a similar way I have to look out for where I am welcome and try to fit in as much as possible without wasting funds.

Q) How long will your TAFF trip last?

A) A realistic view, as I see it, would be slightly over two weeks with the weekend before and the weekend after the convention included. Again, it depends on who will have me. Every offer is an honor and a privilege and every encounter goes into the trip report. It will be a report, which I hope will show a completely different side of America, than the one we are used to from media. And no one can censor me.

Q) The 2015 TAFF race is the first East to West race in which all of the candidates are from continental Europe. Are there any aspects of the Fandom that you represent that may be unique and unfamiliar to most North American fans? If so, how will you help them learn something about Fandom in your part of the world?

A) Fandom in Scandinavia has been very similar to UK and US fandom. Also Germany started off in a similar fashion, but has persistently developed its own character. New and young SF-fandoms emerge all over the continent and know little of fandom history and traditions. Some have completely misunderstood the purpose and function of a fandom. In moving to Italy I can claim to represent five different fandoms or none of them (Gerfany, Sverifandom, Finland, Italy and European Filkfandom).

I can be entertaining. I am used to be on stage. I won't be nervous speaking in front of audiences.

But having entered this race I feel responsible towards every voter, to make something good and worthwhile of my participation. I hope it can become a step towards opening up TAFF for all of European fandom. I never expected to fail. Oh, the glory! Yes, the glory of it had me blinded. No one ever mentioned the responsibility. But what I didn't understand before the race I will try to make certain that everyone who comes after me understands.

John Henri-Holmberg says: I'm happy to nominate Wolf von Witting – the most international of Swedish fans, being active in Swedish, German, Italian, and Anglosaxon fandom – for TAFF.

All best,
John-Henri

Nina Horvath

Q) How did you first discover and become a part of Fandom?

A) Oh, that is quite difficult to say as it was not easy for me. I did not have this special “Wow”-effect like going as company of a friend to a con and then being “infected”. Austria did not have a well-organized fandom when I was a child and still has not – in my point of view. Of course we could argue over very small clubs or role-playing communities. And that is then point: What exactly is this fandom? How many people do you need for it? A small club with 10 to 50 people? One or two friends at school who like to discuss SF-matters with you? Or anything on a much larger scale? Can you be into fandom even if you are just a fan, but all alone, if you know, that there must be other fans around anywhere you just don't got to know?

As for me, I started with being a fan of classic Star Trek what I watched with my elder brother at an age where I haven't even been at primary school. Later I started to be interested in fantasy and SF-books which I like much more than the typical literature offered for teenage girls. (Such as stories on horses.) I made friendship with boys at school (at this time, such sort of things

not popular among girls.)

The time I went to university I still liked TV-shows and books on SF and meanwhile the internet that had been long invented long before, finally became a matter of every day life. I experienced discussion boards, started writing book reviews and short stories. I have also been into manga fandom for some years and worked as a gopher at conventions. Unlike SF-fandom, it is pretty well organized these days in my country.

About SF-fandom: Probably the first time I got to know that I have been in fact been part of the fandom was when attending BuchmesseCon 2005. It was so amazing, I just walked around and suddenly a man grabbed me sleeve and told me that they have already calling for me, but I did not notice. (In fact I did, but I thought that the people at the fair stand must be referring to someone else.) So you see, I was in a foreign country, far away from home, never have been there and people recognized me??? – Yes, sure, I made a lot of fandom related activities, and yes, fans notice and remember that. But I did not really expect that.

Fandom may be like a straying cat. It sneaks into your garden every now and then and ten years later you suddenly realize that you have plenty of cat's toys, feed it three times a day, let it sleep in your bed and when anybody asks you when you got your cat, you have absolutely no idea what to answer! That is my situation now: I have no idea when fandom started to become that important to me!

Q) What are your favorite areas of interest in Fandom?

A) That's simple: Books. And zines. And people who contribute to books (as authors, editors, publishers, cover artists and such) whom I can meet at conventions.

Q) What conventions have you attended in the past?

A) I will just mention my highlights: I attended BuCon und MucCon in Germany several times, SlavCon and Istrocon in Slovakia, also several times, Fénixcon in the Czech Republic and the Eurocons in Croatia, Ireland and the Ukraine.

Q) Have you visited North America before?

A) Yes, but it was a quite different kind of journey. I have been there by university and what I saw where national parks, museums and excavation sites for fossils. I landed in Denver and we made a road trip around some states. I loved it a lot and was especially impressed by the wonders of America's nature, but I'd expect a TAFF-trip to be quite different.

Q) Why is Fandom important to you personally?

A) Fandom is some sort of "you are not alone" to me. I am not the only one who worries about the future – or believes in a better one.

Q) How would you describe TAFF to a new fan who'd never heard of it before, and what would you tell them to encourage them to become involved in TAFF themselves someday?

A) The TAFF – what is short for TransAtlantic Fan Fund – is a kind of cultural exchange program among science-fiction fans. A North American fan visits a European convention by the means of the fanfund – or the other way round. The perfect candidate for the honourable task to represent his or her fandom on the other continent will be chosen by a public vote. May I explain it to you how YOU can vote? (...)

Q) Besides attending SASQUAN in Portland, Oregon, what else do you want to do/see/accomplish on your TAFF trip to North America? Do you have any special personal goals for your TAFF trip?

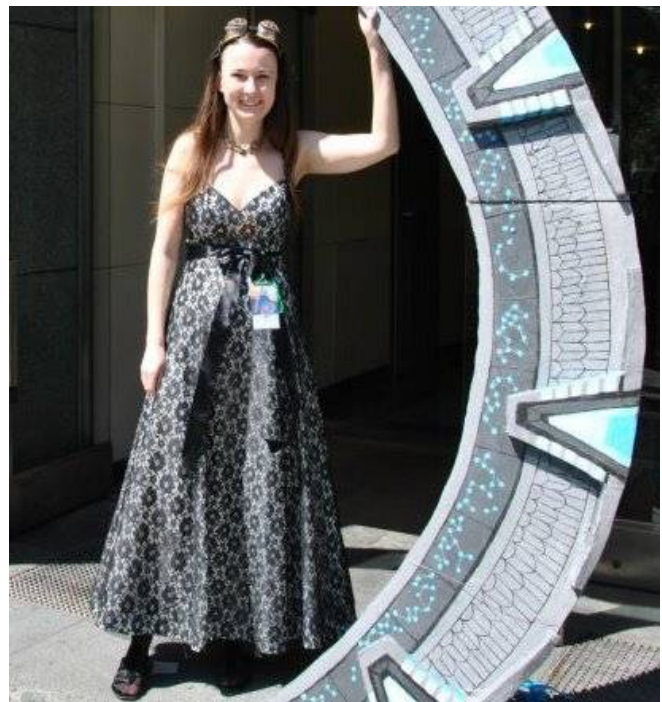
A) Well, what do I want to see? – You see, I am usually the bookish type who seeks a most answers of life in books and on the internet. I see the TAFF as a possibility to break this circle and simply trust other people– this time the US-fans to recommend me something – of course especially the ones of the TAFF-team.

Q) How long will your TAFF trip last?

A) It is a long flight, so I was thinking about at least a fortnight. We will see.

Q) The 2015 TAFF race is the first East to West race in which all of the candidates are from continental Europe. Are there any aspects of the Fandom that you represent that maybe unique and unfamiliar to most North American fans? If so, how will you help them learn something about Fandom in your part of the world?

I think it is quite new and uncommon to North Americans that Europe's fandom deals with many different cultures. Just go a few kilometers and everything is different than you know it from home! Science-fiction deals a lot with even extraterrestrial cultures, but even just foreign countries are some sort of terra incognita for most fans. I think both candidates can tell about a new, exotic world of fandom.



Gloria McMillan says:

In my correspondence with her, I find that she is very personable, friendly, and will be a good spokesperson for the TAFF. So I offer my enthusiastic nomination and know that she will serve you well if you choose Nina for TAFF.

Sincerely and faanishly, Gloria

Title designed by John D. Berry