

WHIRLWIND WORLDCON; or SHAMELESS NAME DROPPING

It was not my intention to attend LonCon 3, the 2014 Worldcon, which was held in London this past summer. Although I usually arrange family vacations around Worldcon, we couldn't do that in 2014 because we were already planning to visit the UK in April. Our elder daughter was spending her junior semester abroad at University College London and then returning to the States for a paid summer internship. We couldn't swing two trips to England and we didn't want to take a trip without her. When I drew up the magazine's 2014 budget, I decided my big professional outing would be the World Fantasy Convention in Washington, D.C. WFC is an excellent convention that, like Worldcon, is always jam-packed with authors. Yet, while I wasn't planning on attending LonCon 3, the Universe was conspiring to get me there.

My husband, younger daughter, and I set out for JFK and London on April 11. We checked our luggage and proceeded to security. While on that line, I received a super-secret email informing me that I'd been nominated for a Hugo. The rest of our journey through security proceeded without incident. Eventually, we headed for our gate, only to make the startling discovery that our check-in had been accidentally voided and our seats given away to standby passengers! This plane was the last flight out to London of the night, so while our luggage was happily on its way to Heathrow, we weren't going anywhere fast. Fortunately, the airline admitted its mistake, put us up in a hotel for about four hours, and sent us off on another flight nine hours later. I was traveling with a sick child and a miffed husband, but since we were completely reimbursed for our round trip tickets, he wasn't as miffed as he could have been.

We had a lovely visit with our older daughter as well as with friends from my own junior year abroad at the London School of Economics. My college roommate, Andrea Duffy, insisted that I should return to the UK over the summer, stay with her in the Oxford area, and then pop off to London for the Hugo ceremony. Andrea had never attended an SF event, but she thought it would be fun to find out what my "HugoNebulas" were all about. Her proposal seemed like a delightful lark that would never happen. But then in late June the airlines engaged in a mini price war and my husband said, "What the heck?" and "Bon Voyage!" So that's how I came to spend roughly thirty hours at the 2014 Worldcon.

From following the fabulous Pat Cadigan's humorous posts on Facebook, I knew that some people were gathering in a bar at the Aloft Hotel. Andrea and I made it to the bar around eight P.M. on Saturday, August 16, just in time to crash the end of a Gollancz party. This did, indeed, turn out to be the place to be. In addition to Pat, we caught up with Robert Reed, Ian McDonald, Alvaro Zinos-Amaro, and many others. A couple of hours later, Andrea and I went looking for something to eat in the ExCel Convention Centre. We ended up dining on take-away Indian food with Aliette de Boddard, Christopher Kastensmidt, and Tracy Canfield.

The next morning we hied our way over to the Dealers' Room, where I introduced Andrea to Tachyon Publications' Jacob Weisman. Andrea quickly purchased a copy of *Asimov's Science Fiction: 30th Anniversary Anthology* from Jacob and then allowed me to escort her on a quick trek around the enormous emporium looking at jewelry, loads of books, and all sorts of SF and fantasy related items. We also managed to pull off a fast-paced fifteen-minute tour of the art show before it was closed for the annual auction. Somewhere in our journey, we met up with Michael Swanwick, who let us know that Kansas City had been successful in its 2016 Worldcon bid and that he would be the Guest of Honor. I told Andrea that this was sort of like a huge "lifetime

achievement award” and we were both exceptionally impressed.

We joined Rick Wilber and James Patrick Kelly while they ate lunch. After that, it was off to the ballroom to rehearse for the Hugo Awards. I was presenting the John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer and had lugged the plaque with me from New York. All my anxieties about the evening were channeled into trying to pronounce the nominees names correctly. This was especially hard because four absolutely trustworthy sources had given me four different ways to say one writer's name.

After visiting with last year's Campbell winner, Mur Lafferty, and the evening's emcees—Geoff Ryman and Justina Robson—we tore off to a wine bar to meet Kathleen Ann Goonan for a late lunch. This was a relaxing interlude before charging back to the hotel to dress for the evening's festivities.

At the pre-Hugo cocktail party, I managed to catch up with Connie Willis and her family, meet Aliette's adorable one-year-old son, congratulate *Strange Horizons'* editor Julia Rios on her and Moss Collum's impending nuptials in Gretna Green, and spend a few moments chatting with British editor Malcolm Edwards. Then it was off to the ceremony where I lost the Hugo award to my friend Ellen Datlow.

The Hugo Losers party included short visits with Robert and Karen Silverberg, Joe and Gay Haldeman, Charlie Jane Anders, and Charles Stross. Andrea and I then made our way back to the Aloft bar where we hung out with Kim Stanley Robinson, Michael Blumlein, and Andy Duncan. We staggered back to our hotel room around two A.M. The next morning we said a quick goodbye to John Chu and Fran Wilde who we encountered in the hotel lobby, then set off on a new escapade. Although we missed out on much, Andrea and I had a wonderful time at our whirlwind Worldcon. I am grateful to her and to the machinations of the Universe for the opportunity to attend LonCon 3.



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Sheila Williams and Mur Lafferty