

[First Event 2018](#) - Through the Eyes of Sarah Moore

First Event is a conference held in the Greater Boston Area and this year it was in Marlborough for the second time. I almost didn't make it this year due to other commitments but somehow everything came together and I am happy that it did. Due to a work commitment in that area, I actually got into town a day earlier than planned, which gave me all day Thursday to be me and also the opportunity to work as a volunteer room monitor for the workshops. This was also the first time that I utilized the online service [Rent the Runway](#) for some of my outfits and have to say it was so great to be able to wear some fabulous designer dresses without having to pay the high price tag for something that I'd only wear a couple of times.

Thursday Day

On Thursday morning, I woke up early and got ready for my day. After cleaning up and getting my makeup just right I headed down for a complimentary breakfast in the hotel restaurant. Next, it was off to check-in with the volunteer coordinator and nail down the logistics of my assignment. I've had a great deal of experience as a conference/workshop presenter in the past and the room monitors are always so terrific, so I felt I had to do them justice. I had several rooms to tend to but got to sit through the majority of two great seminars, one on make-up and the other on flying en femme. Both presenters were excellent but the flying seminar was particularly well done and despite having already done this I learned quite a bit.

Two tips that I have personally verified are spend the money to enroll in [TSA Pre✓®](#) and wear your breast forms or pack them in your checked bags but don't put them in your carryon.



Lunch was provided as part of my duties but I had to get it to go so that I could get changed and get a quick workout in. I put on my running skirt, sports bra and pink short sleeve workout top and off to the hotel gym to run on the treadmill. I was $\frac{3}{4}$ through my planned two miles when the breaker on the treadmill tripped and stopped me abruptly but no harm was done so I just jumped over to the other treadmill and finished up.

I got back to my room to eat and get ready to go see Amy from [Just You Las Vegas](#) for a makeover when a calendar alert appeared on my watch. In my mind, my appointment with Amy was at 2:30 but I had actually scheduled with her for 2:00. I inhaled my sandwich, jumped into the shower and made it to Amy's room only a couple of minutes late and apologized profusely for my error. Amy did a fantastic job as always and I was ready to head to the bar to meet up with some friends and have a few drinks before getting ready for the [Vanity Club](#) (VC) dinner at the Bolton Tavern. It was at the bar that I met Veronica, who is one of the VC sisters who hadn't yet had the pleasure of meeting. She looked fabulous and we seemed to hit it off pretty well but didn't get a chance to talk all that much. I also reconnected with Arjay who I had met briefly at Keystone last year and he was so kind and complimentary. I am glad that we got the chance to get to know each other a little better on this trip.

Thursday Night

Then it was off to dinner where we had a good number of VC sisters together along with some guests of the girls. Dinner and the wait staff were terrific and I got to meet and get to know some great people that night. We went back to hotel and then it made our way back to the bar/dance floor for some dancing with DJ Greg, which I just can't get enough of at these events. It seems that every time I sat down the music just forced me back to my feet! We closed the bar that night and then I headed to bed.



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Friday Day

Friday morning came and I actually slept in a little bit then headed down the street to Planet Fitness to work out and do a little tanning for the Friday night fashion show. I had a good run, got some artificial sun then grabbed some quick fast food breakfast at Chick-fil-A, which is a novelty since we don't have them anywhere near me. I am always so impressed with their customer service and for fast food it tastes pretty good. I also had to stop off at a store to get some moleskin as the heels and dancing beat my feet up pretty well.



I got back to the hotel, cleaned up and got ready for my makeover with [Amy](#) who again did a fabulous job. Then I headed down to the bar and hung out for a little while talking with various people before gathering up all of my gear for the fashion show. I use the word gear because it was more than just dresses due to the "Fantasy" category.

John Warrener Memorial Fashion Show

I made the decision to do the fashion show several months ago. My friend Stephanie was in it last year and encouraged me to do it, which I have thought a lot about since last year. The spotlight has never really scared me so I figured why not. The bigger reason I chose to do this was that it is dedicated to the late John Warrener who helped so many transwomen over the years and encouraged me to come to First Event. Ironically, I never did attend until the year after he died. Models could choose to be in up to three categories and I decided that if I was going to do it then I might as well go for broke and participate in three.

All of the models had to submit photos and descriptions of their planned outfits and the organizers created cards to be read by the mistresses of ceremony during our runway walks. My



first outfit was in the hobby category and here is a photo of me walking down the runway compliments of Nora Simone.

“Sarah is a Celtic drummer, playing frequently in traditional Irish Music Seisiúns. While you’ll often find her playing her Bodhrán at a classic Irish Pub, she reserves shimmering cocktail dresses for formal performances on holidays like New Year’s Eve or St. Patrick’s Day. Sarah sparkles on the runway in her Irish-green sequined Badgley Mischka cocktail dress with high neckline and dramatic split-draped back. Sarah picked up this designer dress for a steal by renting it from Rent the Runway. Sláinte!”

The second category for me was Global Influence and I chose to bring awareness to violence against women and intimate

partner violence.



Photo credit to Wilson Chao.

“Sarah has dedicated much of her professional and personal life to end intimate partner violence and has worked with people from all over the world. Sarah wears purple, the color of domestic violence awareness, to honor survivors of domestic abuse and remember those who were not able to escape before losing their lives. Tonight, Sarah’s purple is provided by a Nicole Miller lace gown with unique lace cap sleeves and cutout detail back.”

The final category of the night was Fantasy and when I walked out on stage the crowd’s reaction was awesome!!!!

As a long time Star Wars fan/geek I’ve wanted to do something like this for a long time and my friend Nora Simone captured a great shot of my hair moving as I turned my head, thank you Nora!

“Sarah turned to the dark side years ago and never looked back. She is a member of the Femtroopers - the little-known elite wing of female Stormtroopers. After narrowly escaping the Death Star following an unprovoked rebel attack, she now has the much safer role of recruiting officer. Sarah made this uniform to wear for public appearances and media campaigns. It might not be safe for battle but I’m sure she brings in the most recruits in this femtastic uniform!”



At the end, all of the models got up on the stage at once for the closing of the show then it was back to the dressing room to change and get out on the dance floor. I wore the green dress from my first appearance on the fashion show runway and we again closed the bar except this time a small group of us hung out in the hotel lobby and chatted. Of course, my awesome new friend



Veronica was there as was Tiffani from Chicago who came to the VC dinner as a guest of one of the sisters. It was a great pleasure talking with and getting to know Tiffani at First Event. It is amazing how our shared experiences result in such close bonds despite very different social, socioeconomic and professional backgrounds. I've met some of the most amazing people and made some extremely close friends since I started embracing my true self and getting out as me. Around 2:30 it was time to head to bed for a few hours as I had a busy morning ahead of me.

Saturday Boston Excursion

Nora invited me to come into Boston with her for a day of shopping and being a tourist. So, I met [Amy](#) for a makeover at 10am and by 11am we were headed into Boston for the day with a great tour guide named Bill. Since Nora does some travel writing amongst many other things she had Photographer [Cassandra \(Cass\) Storm](#) meet us in Boston to memorialize our adventures. It was a chilly day in the City and our tour started with a visit to the famous [Mike's Pastry](#) in the North End, where we picked up some cannolis to bring back. Next, Cass told us that she wanted to take us to a hat shop just a couple of blocks away. I have to say that I really didn't know what to expect as I've never really thought of myself as a hat girl. Well, we had the best time at Salmagundi Hat Shop! The two ladies that were working there were so awesome and accommodating giving us suggestion after suggestion and had no problem with Cass shooting lots of photos. There were even some other customers who joined in on the fun. I could've spent so much money there but sadly didn't end up buying anything, I think due to sensory overload. I think once I see all of the photos from that visit that I will purchase one of the hats that looked the best on me (photos by [Cassandra Storm](#)). At a minimum, I will definitely be back again!



Next, we went in search of good spots for photos for Nora’s article that capture Boston in the background. This led us to the [Boston Tea Party Museum](#) where we had some great photos taken on the bridge with the City and the Tea Party boat in the background. We then headed to



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waterfront as suggested by our tour guide and got some great shots with fishing boats, sail boats and the harbor. Cass had us remove our jackets for some of these shots and it was really cold! A fitting next stop was the No Name Restaurant, which is known for its chowder. A nice hot cup of chowder and the super friendly staff warmed us right up.



The next stop was Chinatown, which was another recommendation by tour guide Bill. Cass is such skilled photographer and had us posing all over Chinatown getting what I’m sure will be amazing. Our last stop on the trip was the [Taj Hotel](#) (formerly the Ritz Carlton) and of course Tiffany’s. We got some great shots in there and Nora and I looked at some cute charms. We both really liked a four-leaf clover charm and Nora ended up buying it.

Next on the agenda was to get a quick makeup touch up by [Amy](#) before getting ready for the cocktail hour and Gala dinner. I headed down to the bar and chatted with some ladies and ended up meeting Mike from Atlanta who I’ve seen at some of these events before but never chatted with.

He was sweet and complimentary and the next thing I knew I had to run upstairs to see Amy.

After the touch up, I returned to my room and donned my amazing purple [Nicole Miller gown](#) from Rent the Runway. I can’t believe that I had the privilege of wearing a nearly \$1000 gown to this formal banquet. It was fantastic hanging out with some amazing girls at the cocktail hour

then at the banquet. It was also nice to see the long-time organizers and staff who are passing the torch honored for their commitment to the event and the community.



After the dinner, it was back to the room to change into my gold [Badgley Mischka dress](#) then to the lounge with DJ Greg for some dancing and socializing with the girls. I just can't get enough dancing at these events, which takes a toll on my feet especially on the final night.



Around 1am the bar closed and then it was upstairs to the famous Dr. Z's after party. I had gone for the first time last year and it was amazing! I told several girls about it and was consistently asked what room it was in. My response was simple, go to the 6th floor and follow the music, which was certainly the case this time. The "bar" was free and the drinks were strong. In fact, I only had one in the two or so hours that I was



there. That's when I had to leave as I landed on the floor. I remember Veronica helping me up but made me take off my heels first. I remember feeling pretty certain that I could've gotten up with them still on but that was cocktail induced logic and I learned later that prior to landing on

the floor I had crushed one of Veronica's toes, which I don't remember and feel so bad about doing it. She was definitely my wing girl and I'm not sure that I would've made it back to my room without her help. Vee you're the best!

After she helped me to my room, Veronica and I hung out for a couple of more hours and got to know each other better then around 5am it was time to get a few hours rest before the long drive home. Around 9 or 10, several of us met for breakfast and chatted a little more then said our goodbyes and went our separate ways.

Reflections

This long weekend was a whirlwind of fun, meaningful conversations, making friends and new exciting experiences. The shared struggles and feelings of transwomen create a very unique bond that is often very strong. I have had the honor of getting to know some amazing people that I would've never met otherwise. Venturing out of my home and expressing the true me has led to some of the best experiences and closest friendships that I have ever had, which was certainly the case with this trip.

I truly relish these trips and experiences but what is next? Can I be truly happy expressing this side of me on a part-time basis or do I continue to advance forward toward full transition? These questions are not easy, nor should such decisions be entered into lightly and without professional therapeutic consultations. I continue to contemplate the origins of these feelings and how to best seek help in navigating them. I will ultimately seek a therapist to assist with this but not without proper vetting as I do not want someone to steer me based on their personal beliefs but someone who will help me navigate the intricacies of my situation and history. The support of my Vanity Club sisters and others within this community has been undeniably amazing and I am so privileged to be a part of such an amazing community. For others who struggle with these issues, I encourage you to learn from the experiences of others and seek out help with your feelings as support is out there and you are not alone.

