



# YIPPE!

The Costume Fanzine of Record

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International Travelogue

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## Issue Five

International Travelogue

### FEATURED ARTICLES

p04 Traveling with Costumes, Props, and Other Goodies by Stacy Meyn

p11 Modern Mixers by Bea Fitz

p18 Costumes Are Big In Japan by Mette Hedin

p28 Tokyo, California by Andrew Trembley

p32 La Asuncion by Jason Schachat

p47 A Land Without Costumes by Mette Hedin

p63 The Impressionists by Gailynne Bouret

### MONTHLY COLUMNS

p03 Letter from the Editor by Jason Schachat

p61 Sheriff Don't Like It by España Sheriff

p67 Letter from the [Evil] Editor by Kevin Roche

p69 LoCs

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# The Costume Fanzine of Record



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# Letter from the Editor

For this issue, I'm turning my usual venting space over to the immortal words of a man who put it so much better than I can ever afford to:

*“When life gives you lemons, don't make lemonade. Make life take the lemons back! Get mad! I don't want your damn lemons, what the hell am I supposed to do with these? Demand to see life's manager! Make life rue the day it thought it could give Cave Johnson lemons! Do you know who I am? I'm the man who's gonna burn your house down! With the lemons! I'm gonna get my engineers to invent a combustible lemon that burns your house down!”*

-Cave Johnson, R.I.P.

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# Traveling with Costumes, Props, and Other Goodies

by Stacy Meyn

Think of it as getting your goodies through airport security without having [or causing] a meltdown. Conventions and gatherings outside of driving range means putting up with the airfare and mysterious extra charges, the lines (both ticket and security), wailing kids who are always right next to you, and the screening process itself. Whether or not you believe your jaunt through checkpoint/checked baggage is security theater, it is a hoop that must be jumped through and this article will provide you with some suggestions for melt-down avoidance.

If you want your costumes and/or props to (likely) reach your destination with you, there are two ways to do it: carry-on and checked baggage. Mailing and freighting are other options that will be discussed later. Carry-on is best when you are concerned about being parted from your goodie, but there are limitations to what can go in the overhead bin, both from the TSA and the airline. Depending on the type of item, its size, value, and fragility, the costume and/or prop might be happier with you on the flight, as long as it meets TSA carry-on security directives. To follow are some general guidelines to help determine whether the item should and can be with you or in the belly of the plane.

## Better as Carry-On

**Film** – It is less likely to get nuked by the x-ray machine and end up showing only authentic San Francisco fog. You can request hand-inspection. Digital cameras are unaffected by the machines.

**Small/fragile items** – The airlines indicate baggage number and size restrictions at the airport and online, so



check ahead and use those as guidelines.

**Softwear** – It could get crushed/damaged/spilled on in checked baggage. And you might want to do some sewing inflight. Very small scissors and needles are permitted.

**Anything that might require some explanation to a person** – Some airports use inline scanning and belt systems that whisk away your checked baggage and you won't get to talk to anyone about your stuff nor will you see it until you reach your destination. When at a checkpoint, look at it from their point of view—security has extensive rules to follow and while things are supposed to be consistent, can vary from airport to airport. Be friendly and patient, even if security and/or the other passengers are not. You don't want to be the person that security thinks is testing them. And get there in plenty of time in case you do need to haggle with the authorities or must end up transferring something from carry-on to checked baggage.

## Better as Checked Baggage

**Tools**, including pointy-stabby things, are ok in checked baggage. Just pack them carefully. The same with electronics. Keep any batteries/power supplies separate from their items—they could catch on fire or cause a stir.



**Liquids, powders, moldables** in quantity, as long as they are not HAZMAT. More on that...

**Weapons** – If it is a sword, knife, martial arts device, not to worry in checked baggage. They are not restricted as long as there is no attempt made to hide them. Additionally, certain types and ammunition sizes for firearms are allowed, when properly-packed and declared to the air carrier. Check with the airlines for specific restrictions as they vary from carrier to carrier. Prop and replica weapons would be safer and attract less attention in checked baggage. You may have put in a lot of time on that replica, but don't expect security to be impressed. Things that look like the real deal often elicit reactions you do not want. Include a note stating it is a non-working replica or prop weapon.

**Hardware that is too large/fragile for carry-on** – Pack well in a proper container to protect it. A popular shipping company uses the “six foot drop” test, as in can it survive being dropped from six feet? The belt systems and baggage handlers can be brutal and you don't want that mighty armor or weapon to get crunched.

### Overall No-No's and HAZMAT

Things that blow up, shoot, burn or otherwise generate heat, melt, are toxic, etc. or things that look like they do any of those are no-no's. The following is a hells-to-the-no—security is not allowed to share in this brand of humor.





The Department of Transportation (DOT) has huge lists of what qualifies as hazardous material. To decide if something is HAZMAT, ask yourself: would you put it on or in yourself, someone else, your pets? If so, it's nasty enough to be considered HAZMAT and can't go on your commercial flight with you. There are some options for shipping such things and those businesses will let you know what they can handle in terms of adhesives, resins, cleaners, fuels, etc. Again, be careful with liquids as far as labeling and amounts. The more info, the better. It is the same with powders, especially now. Fabreze® and air fresheners are usually ok to fly, thank the costuming gods.

If you are traveling internationally, do some homework in relation to yourself and your goodies. You may need immunizations and paperwork, and your stuff might be subject to declarations/restrictions. Check with your air carrier and if need be, the embassy/consulate of your country of destination. While sending items through checked baggage does solve many problems, be aware of what chemicals are in your tool/repair kits. Sewing kits are not an issue, but fabric glue can be. For example, Canada and SuperGlue® (cyanoacrylate) do not get along. It is a controlled substance there. It's worth getting the Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) for each item







## The Situation with Sloshie Things at Checkpoint

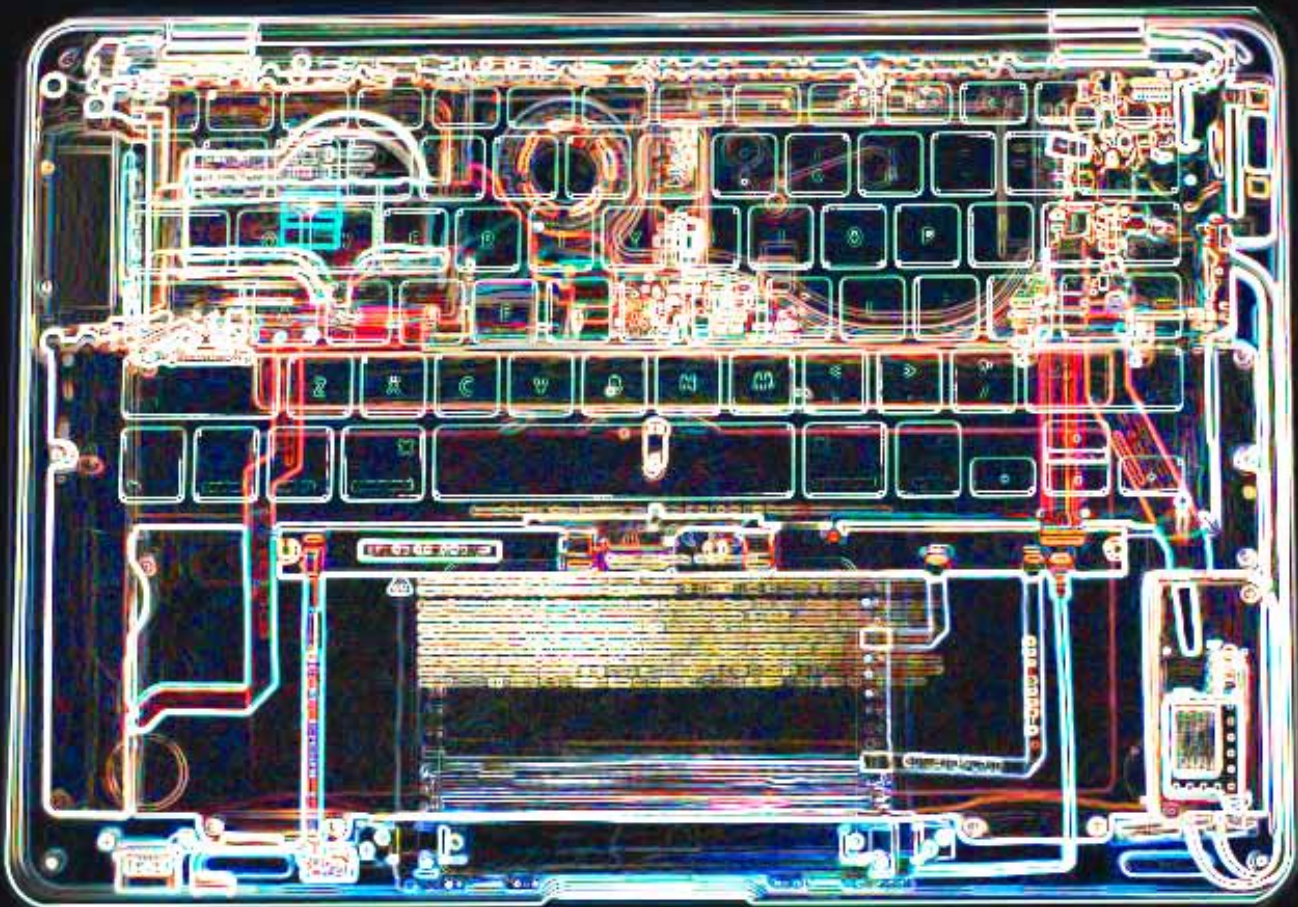
It's 3.4 oz. maximum for each liquid/gel/aerosol (LGA) item in the "freedom baggie" (100 ml for European packaging). One per passenger, please! Place them in a 1-quart-size, zip-lock-type baggie, no more than 7.5 inches in l/w. Think tiny toiletries. The ones from the hotel are perfect. Pack them so they are comfy and visible in the baggie and pull out of your carry-on and place flat in a bin. Bring extras for those who forgot/didn't know and you'll make friends and security might love you, if only for a moment.

The [TSA website](#) (also listed at the end of this article) spells out more about what is up with liquids, et al., for checkpoint and in checked baggage. If you don't do this, say goodbye to your LGAs prior to flight.

so you know exactly what you are dealing with and what resistance you may face. Including a MSDS printout with a substance that looks like HAZMAT (but isn't) might get it though. If what you are carrying in checked baggage is small, it might be allowed, but no promises. Also, if you buy duty-free items that are liquid and expect to fly domestically with them as carry-on, think again. It's a liquids issue.

## Electronics

Electronics can be a concern because they qualify as improvised explosive device (IED) components, yet we all have them in our travel stuff. Gadgets and gizmos as part of a costume/prop can appear scary to security screeners, especially as it is a configuration with which they are often unfamiliar.





These are images of laptops, and you can see all the wacky parts and pieces stuffed in there. Is it a healthy laptop or something that can take down a plane? Hence there is the need to make your electronics look as harmless as possible.

The example I like to use is the light saber hilt, complete with 9-volt battery. First of all, hardly anything in the US requires this battery (smoke detectors, garage door openers, and light saber hilts aside), and the cylindrical-shaped, metal object with nifty electronics and the oddly-shaped battery inside likely will attract unwanted attention. Disassemble the saber parts as much as possible and keep the batteries packed in another part of the bag/box. Put a note next to the hilt indicating it is a toy and yes,

stating it what it is and from what film can help.

### How to Pack to Survive the Trip

Once you've followed all the rules and are pretty sure that security won't freak out over your stuff, pack it so it'll live to see the convention. Assume the checked baggage will get a rough ride at some point. If you have many fiddly bits, use a tackle box or screw storage container (the ones with little drawers) and tape it shut to reduce the chances of your delights ending up all over the place.

I'm a big fan of Tote boxes, and Anvil and Pelican™ cases. Totes are great for the smaller budget, but spring for the others if you've really put a lot of time,







energy, and money into your costume/prop. They are perfect for “armor” and fragile items, and will save agony on the receiving end. Do yourself a favor and don’t lock them if you don’t have to. “Non-force entry methods” can involve force and security might not take the time to chase you down for a key or combination, and even if they do, it could gum up your flight plan. Use Travel Sentry® locks if you must lock things—more on those...

For softwear, those Space Bags really do help with flattening and protecting, especially as we often pack in checked baggage the liquid toiletries that we can’t take through checkpoint. Spread jewelry and any other metal items out in the bag because wads of metal get attention. Same thing with any friendly plastics and modeling compounds—I’ve seen it all and it gets noticed—not always in a good way.

### When to Chuck it all and Freight

Sometimes the costume and prop bits are just too much to wrangle oneself, or maybe you don’t want to take the chance of a hassle with security or something precious getting damaged. Furthermore, some freight services will ship things that can’t fly commercially, such as the adhesives, resins, some casting compounds, etc. It is ironic that what is prohibited at checkpoint and in checked baggage may very well end up on the same plane as mail, cargo, or freight. That is another way the airlines make their money. At any rate, most hotels offer services so you can send things ahead and pick them up once you’ve arrived.

### A Handy Lexicon

**Airsoft:** an example of very realistic-looking guns and rifles powered by gas or electricity. They are supposed to have orange or other brightly-colored tips to differentiate them from actual weapons, but can be modified to look and feel everything like the real deal.

**Component:** an item that appears to be a component of an IED. Many of the “innocent” items we have with us every day could be deemed components, let alone what might be part of a costume or prop.

**De-mil’d = Demilitarized:** All the parts that make it dangerous have been removed, but it can still look lethal.

**Declaration:** When traveling with a firearm and/or certain parts of firearms (whether real or real-looking), make sure it is properly packed and declare it to the air carrier.

**HAZMAT = hazardous materials:** chemicals and substances that are prohibited for you to carry on board the aircraft.

**IED = Improvised Explosive Device:** what you don’t want any of your items looking like.

**LEO = Law Enforcement Officer:** a person whose attention you don’t want.

**MSDS = Material Safety Data Sheet:** a form that spells out chemical information and effects of substances on humans, required as part of workplace safety and worth a skim regarding goops and powders you may be trying to travel with.

**PAX = Passenger:** you.



**Queue Master:** This is the person at the checkpoint who directs the PAX to take off jackets and shoes, laptops out of the bag, yadda yadda, and who you can ask about having things hand-inspected or if you need to speak to a supervisor.

**Realistic Replica:** It ain't the real thing, but looks real enough to raise eyebrows and possibly heart rates and blood pressure. Put it in your checked baggage—declared if necessary.

**STSO = Supervisory Transportation Security Officer:** The person in charge of the checkpoint you are trying to get through with as little fuss as possible. Be nice and cooperative and hopefully s/he will be as well. It is ultimately the STSO's call on whether you and your stuff stay or go.

**Travel Sentry Locks:** Each checked baggage location has a set of keys that can open these locks so if insurance and/or your conscience requires bags to be locked, you can use these. They are noted for their diamond-shaped logos. They come as padlocks, combination locks, lockable straps, and as an entire hard-sided lockable bag. More info at <http://www.travelsentry.org/en/index.php>

**TSA = Transportation Security Administration:** Love 'em or hate 'em, these are the folks who have to look at your stuff and decide if it's safe to fly.

### A Big Simple Plus

*"A picture can save a thousand words."*

Top off your goodies with laminated pix of you in your costume and/or with your item to establish context.

You can bring these with you through checkpoint or pack in checked baggage. Write a note of explanation (and include repacking instructions if needed). It will help. Many screeners are also fans and you just might make their day. Happy travels!

### Connections

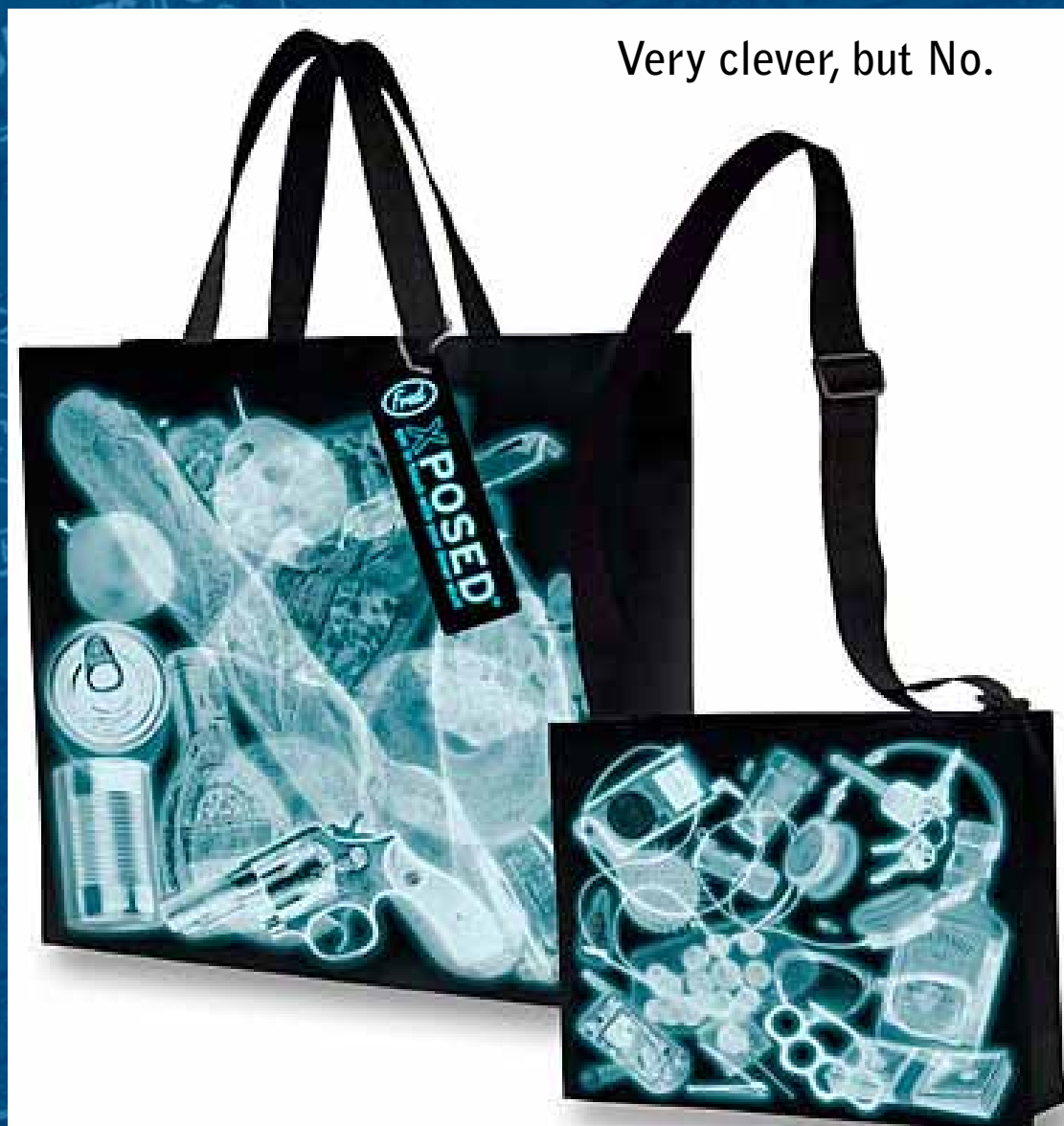
The Air Transport Association has a clearinghouse page that includes helpful links to sites (such as TSA) offering various travel tips: <http://www.airlines.org/PassengersCargo/PassengerInfo/Pages/PassengerTravelTips.aspx>

The TSA offers loads of information and is getting with the program in terms of Internet presence: <http://www.tsa.gov>

Standbys TAP Plastics and MG Chemicals offer MSDSs; an example of a product-specific version is available here:

SuperGlue@/Zap Glue: [http://www.cfesa.com/MSDS/super glue.pdf](http://www.cfesa.com/MSDS/super%20glue.pdf)

VISITOR  
Totally Tourist







# Modern Mixers

by Bea Fitz





I believe it is almost entirely fair to say that Miss Fitz-Poste's Modern Mixers is an events company formed through a shared love of costume. Miss Emily and I met at a vintage and recycled fashion fair where I was selling my burlesque and vintage-inspired accessories and she was running a stall on behalf of the charity shop where she volunteered. She bought a coral velvet rose for her hair from me, I bought a giant peacock feather fan from her, and the rest, as they say, is history. Or in this case, historically-themed tea dances and events.

I had been active in the Scottish burlesque community as a designer, sponsor, and occasional impresario for some time. However I was nursing a vision for a different kind of event, something more interactive yet laidback that would support the community I loved and allow me to indulge my creativity. Emily was a self-described "party nazi", fond of hosting elaborate soirees with enforced themes. With her background in history, a love of theatre and film and bags of energy, I had only to mention my idea to her and a partnership was born.

Six months and countless business lunches later, we ran







our first event. Blitz Ballroom recreated a WWII era dance hall in, appropriately enough, a former Territorial Army drill hall. Right from the beginning, we were keen to create a friendly atmosphere and a holistic, interactive experience. Blitz Ballroom was rich in detail: tickets were in the form of ration books (complete with coupons for a hot drink and a slice of cake from the in-house cafe), smokers stepped outside with evacuee tags rather than hand stamps, the hall was lavishly decorated with red, white and blue bunting and reproduction Ministry of Information posters, our doorman was in character as an Air Raid Warden and revellers were greeted with a genuine WWII motorbike and sidecar (supplied by a local re-enactor and one of the hits of the event, scene of many a posed photograph). Whilst we did not enforce a dress code, we encouraged period dress with a specially advertised best-dressed award. We were thrilled to see how our audience rose to the challenge: we had soldiers representing at least three countries, a German frau-lein complete with baby in a vintage bassinet, several land girls, and of course a plethora of pin-up style vintage bombshells.

A dance hall needs a good DJ, and we are lucky to have Edinburgh's finest purveyor of vintage tunes, Lord Holyrude. But as well as this most obvious entertainment, there were also performances from some top swing dancers, a group act from the sassy students of the Academy of Burlesque and Cabaret and a singer with live accompaniment. Elsewhere on the premises were the Ministry of Information (selling branded merchandise,

raffle tickets, etc), the Black Market (craftspeople selling make-do-and mend inspired goods), the War Room (where our re-enactors gathered to display their collections and chat and pose with our guests), the Making Waves Salon for 1940s makeup and hair styling, and a small photographic studio for sentimental sepia portraits.

That was back in September

of 2009, and in the intervening year we have expanded our repertoire to include experiences as diverse as a decadent 1920s house party, a Weimarer cabaret, the British seaside of the halcyon 1950s, inter-war North Africa and a kitschy 1960s Christmas. Our audiences have continued to surprise and delight us. We have played host to flappers and gangsters, wartime evacuees, a snowman, a mermaid, literary characters,





a French waiter, harem girls, an Edwardian bathing beauty, beatniks, British gentlemen abroad and all manner of other eccentrics. In their quest for authenticity, our guests have been known to arrive carrying flagpoles, hula hoops, deck chairs, teddy bears, suitcases and in one case, a home-made hobby camel. The best-dressed award has become a much-coveted prize officiated by the Modern Mixers Dress Panel (a diverse selection of staff and advisors) and we encourage it with themed certificates and a free ticket to our next event. The contenders are hotly contested amongst the dress panel and I am told the signed certificates often find their way to laminators, frames and even mantelpieces.

Miss Emily and I delight in choosing our costumes for each event which range from genuine vintage to home-made to clever mixing and matching of vintage-styled contemporary pieces (a pet subject and one often discussed in our blog). A staff photo from Rock the Casbah, our North African themed event, shows the diversity of interpretation in our wardrobe choices: Miss Emily has gone for a classic colonial look just right for repressing the natives, I sport an embroidered coat purchased second-





hand from a Moroccan souk, Lord Holyrude pairs his natty Western suit with a highly unorthodox leopard-print fez, our compere Harlequin Kiss has gone for a tailored Ingrid Bergman look and our stylist Ariana does a softer version of the same European style in her spotted tea dress.

Last but not least is our door-man, aka my long-suffering partner Anthony in his posh hotel porter-style billowing trousers, satin sash and traditional fez. Here is a man who greets each new event with a resigned sigh and the question “What are you going to make me wear this time?” and has

learned to time his shaves to allow him to wear appropriate facial hair for each theme. As he is the first point of contact, we do insist on keeping him in costume. And whilst this sometimes means a smoking jacket and cravat, it can also involve a Hawaiian shirt and plaid shorts paired with socks







and sandals or, most recently and to the horror of a phobic member of our audience, an elf costume.

What is next for us? All I'm saying is that I spent most of last week sourcing a pair of saddle shoes.







Costumes Are

# BIT IN JAPAN

by Mette Hedin

My husband Bryan has been fascinated with Japanese culture since an early age, going so far as to fabricate a partial Japanese background when we first met, thinking it would make him seem more interesting. We later laughed about the folly of youth, but a few years ago I decided it was time for him to see his fictitious cultural background and booked that trip to Tokyo that he had always been dreaming of.

What we found was a city both immersed in modern culture and simultaneously steeped in centuries of tradition where new stands next to old in constant contrast; two seeming opposites that gradually starts blending into a cohesive whole the longer you are exposed to it. The same holds true for garments, as an outsider and costumer I found that the lines between clothing and costume gradually blended together into an undefinable category of “things you wear in public”.



Here is our trip seen in snapshots of costumes, clothing and the undefinable in-between. A travel journal of a costumer's impressions of Tokyo if you will; a fragmented story of two outsiders' brief glimpse into a culture heavy in adornment, and a tale of sticking out visually.



### *Day 1*

Tokyo is divided into areas, where almost every one of them seems specialized for some purpose. We have decided to stay in Asakusa, famous for its temple and many festivals. We are in fact literally a stone's throw from the temple and head over for a light opening day to the vacation. Being in unknown cultural and religious territory, I decided to play it safe and imitate everything I see so as not to offend. While trying to have my picture taken by Bryan while wafting incense smoke into my lungs, I am asked a question I don't understand, and I gradually realize from the pointing to a camera that the lady in front of me wants to have her picture taken with me. I realize my tall blond mohawk is drawing some attention and soon find both Bryan and myself posing for a holiday snap-

shot with the lady in question. But our polite smiles turns into steady amusement and finally into continuous laughter as the Japanese tourists swiftly take turns standing between us as their friends and family take pictures. The commotion and crowding and picture taking is identical to that which happens when a particularly impressive costume shows up at a larger convention, and I gradually realize that we're the costumed fools at this event.

After 15 solid minutes of this, my eyes are tearing from the laughing and constant incense smoke that is wafting over us and we desperately try to wave off the crowd. To our great surprise, the crowd disperses instantly with incredible politeness as if nothing had ever happened. I regret not having my own picture proof of the

craziness, but a little later, as we head back down the adjoining shopping street, 4 Japanese school boys in their uniforms also approach me for a picture and we make Bryan take a picture for both them and me.

Later in the day we encounter another crowd commotion, this one not of our making, and inch closer to see what is going on. The guide book says that Asakusa also is a historical theatre district and we have happened on the cast of one of the plays posing for pictures on the small street. I am not familiar enough with Japanese theatre to know why there seems to be such a gender swap in the roles, but I gather that in the 1800's many Kabuki troupes moved to Asakusa, which was outside the city walls, as they were considered too subversive by the authorities.



## Day 2

We take a trip to Akihabara, the electronics and Manga district, and make sure to visit one of the attractions that has most amused me in the guide book. Akihabara is the home of numerous “Maid Cafes” (Meido kafe), which wikipedia describes as “cosplay restaurants”. Maid characters are almost an archetype in Manga comics, and these types of establishments are intended as a way for customers to role-play as the master or mistress of the house with their own maid. We don’t quite know what to expect, as we line up in the staircase outside the cafe, and are almost shell-shocked as we are greeted by incredibly loud and enthusiastic “cutesy squealing” that I have previously only heard in the more annoying anime

shows that Bryan sometimes watches. A number of maids, all in elaborately decorated and customized brown and white maid outfits, greet us and bring us to our table. It’s cutesy and bizarre and pretty much entirely innocent, but it’s certainly not cheap. \$20 to get in, about \$6 for a pot of tea and around ~\$15 for an ice cream sundae.

I am delighted by the almost hysterically surreal atmosphere in here, and I am sad to see that there are rules against taking pictures. But of course, money is the rule changer there. For another \$20 you can get a picture, says the menu. I assume that means we have our picture taken with the maid with our camera at our table, but unfortunately I am wrong! When we order the picture

option, we are brought with much fanfare to a small stage in the center of the room, as one maid takes a picture of us and our maid with a polaroid camera. The desired maid pose is selected (kitty cat seemed least scary), and the pictures are whisked away as





soon as they are taken, only to appear as we are paying our bill, complete with drawn on cats and hearts.

I am torn by the gender roles here and I am mortified when “our” maid insists on kneeling on the floor in all interactions with us. I suppose I should have gone to one of the spin-off “butler cafe’s”, where ironically the butlers are apparently all crossplaying girls. I am quite relaxed however, compared to the

group of Norwegian guys in front of us. They have been brought here by their Japanese host who watches their terrified skittishness with much amusement. They are so frightened by this for them incomprehensible situation that they try to sneak out early, but are stopped in their tracks in stunned fascination by the sudden start of the very confusing and ear shattering rock-paper-scissors competition.



### Day 3

The next day takes us to Ginza, which is very slick and glossy compared to what we have seen so far. There is none of the cutesy buildings of Asakusa or the high tech clutter of Akihabara, here everything is clearly upscale and classy. There is not much in the way of costumes, here it is almost all business suits

and modern western fashion. Most of the fashion we see in the display windows is clearly imported from the west, but there are glimpses of incredibly beautiful and clearly Japanese style modern fashion outfits that delights us. We also see some of the typical old to new contrasts as a lady in traditional garb admires the western fashion in one of the windows.



## Day 4

Being amusement park addicts, we next head to Tokyo Disneyland. Some things are exactly like the California park, the Pirates of the Caribbean ride is only amazing in how it is an exact clone of the original, but other parts take on a more Japanese flavor and I am delighted to hear Buzz Lightyear speak Japanese. What makes us really happy however, is how awesome the cast member uniforms are. I sadly only take a few pictures of them, but many of the uniforms could be worn with great suc-

cess at American conventions.

We spend the whole day at the park, and when we drag our tired bodies home, I finally feel immersed enough in Japanese culture to brave fashioning the clothes that the hotel provides us with. We have opted for a traditional hotel, with tatami mats and sleeping and seating on the floor, and with it comes a small clothing set of wooden sandals, a kimono and an outer kimono jacket to wear when it gets cold. I fashion a pseudo-Samurai hairstyle and the look is complete!





### *Day 5*

Inspired by the experiments with the hotel clothing, Bryan takes the plunge and finally goes shopping for some traditional Japanese clothing for his in-progress Samurai outfit. The shop is a bit of a tourist trap, and the clothing are hit and miss (my Kimono purchased turns out to be a disaster and later goes to goodwill), but the shop keeper is helpful and happy and speaks enough English that we can communicate what Bryan needs. Language has throughout the trip proved to be more of a challenge than anticipated, as the typical Tokyo resident really doesn't speak much English at all, or at least pretends not to, so I have proven to be the mime talent in the family. Modeled in the hotel room, the outfit looks a bit plain and awkward, but months later it provides the solid base for a really nice looking complete costume.





### Day 6

Another great love of Bryan's is Ninjas. He loves them to bits, so we have to go to "Ninja", a restaurant in Akasaka which also seems to be a bit of a higher end business district. In contrast to nearly every other restaurant we have seen, which have had loudly advertising facades with flags and plastic food displays, Ninja is outwardly very austere with the tiniest sign that is hard to read, and an otherwise completely black facade. The first room we enter is likewise confusingly bare of any decorations with all black walls and seemingly no doors or windows. But with a clap of the hand of the maitre de, a secret trap door opens and

a ninja waitress arrives, in complete ninja garb. She opens another trap door and we are led through a veritable obstacle course to a large room that looks exactly like a small Japanese village 200 years ago. We sadly get the "gaijin room" with normal chairs and a table, which mostly looks like a small prison cell. It is all very themed, but in a really classy way, and this is as far from chuck-ee cheese you can get, which is reflected in the gourmet food as well as the prices, which are not for the faint of heart. All the waiters we see are dressed as Ninjas and play the role to a tee, popping up when you least



expect them. We are having a great time, but when the "ninja magician" appears, we have almost reached our ninja limit.

When we get back to the hotel room we turn on the small television and are instantly mesmerized by some sort of entertainment show with a panel of men that are all dressed in "costumes" which have as a common theme that they are all quite scant and impractical, and numerous wardrobe malfunctions happens to the audience's great delight. The highlight is a



man who sings a song while simultaneously showing the lyrics on his 30 or so pairs of underwear that he wears one on top of the other, pulling down pair after pair to reveal the lyrics. I have no idea what is going on most of the time, but it is all very entertaining, especially after all those ninja-cocktails.



### *Day 7*

As I step outside the hotel, I spot a road worker fixing a patch on the sidewalk. His worker clothing is an exciting mix of utilitarian and traditional. Despite the area he is working on being fairly minimal, he is meticulously cordoned off by cones and bars and seemingly needlessly being guarded by some sort of policeman. Their uniforms are so distinct and different from each other that it is instantly clear for anyone, even a stupid westerner like me, exactly what role each has, but it also highlights the very distinct differences in cultural influences in Japanese work uniforms.

In the afternoon we finally get to Harajuku which is the youth fashion district, with store after store full of extreme versions of western subculture clothing. I buy a jacket which is almost a parody of a punk jacket complete with safety pins, patches and hilarious printed sayings in mangled english. Bryan opts for a comparatively classier variety with a fake leopard fur collar and a Union Jack hat, so we have suddenly transformed into caricatures of London punks in the middle of Tokyo.



## Day 8

We head over to the Meiji shrine in Shibuya, which is the largest shrine we have encountered, and is surrounded by a big forest. While here we experience our only time in Tokyo, outdoors, where we see no other people as we walk down one of the forest paths to a small museum. It says something for how busy and crowded Tokyo can be. As we emerge out of the forest again we see a large amount of very delicate and colorful outfits. It appears that there are a few weddings going on, and many of the guests have dressed in very elegant traditional clothing. I am particularly struck by two children, a girl standing in a full kimono outfit and traditional shoes that seems almost impossible to walk in, and a very small boy running across the temple grounds in the biggest pairs of pants I have ever seen. Sadly the pictures I take are not very good, as I am snapping them on the sly, trying to not be the disrespectful foreigner.

We next head over to a large tourist shop, something I would normally avoid, but we have been informed that along with all the souvenirs, they also offer a large selection of second hand traditional clothing of decent quality. There is indeed a large selection of outfits and garments, stuff you would pay an arm and a leg for if new, but by

its second hand condition is now within reach of Bryan's budget. He picks up a lovely Hakama, a traditional pleated pant with a large amount of fabric, making them very large and loose fitting, the same type of massive pants we saw on the little boy at the shrine. It is the perfect last minute shopping addition to his samurai outfit.

As we exit the shop and head down the street all of a sudden there is a commotion in front of us. A sweet shop has just sent a mascot for a particular type of candy out on the sidewalk and the middle aged women around us are going absolutely nuts. They are screaming and trying to touch the commercial mascot. There are employees with samples of the soft marshmallows it is advertising, but those don't seem to be nearly as popular as the big impossibly pink and white puffy thing before us. Perhaps this is an incredibly popular mascot, but it doesn't seem any different to me than any of the other millions of anthropomorphized cartoony characters, often embodying a product, that we have seen throughout our trip, nor does it seem particularly inventive. But we're not on my cultural turf, so who am I to argue with the giant marshmallow.





## Day 9

We are on our last day, and wander aimlessly around Ueno park while we wait to catch our flight home. It is a weekend, and many people are hanging out, and we are surprised to find, of all things, a bagpiper. He is entertaining the crowds and selling cd's while wearing a full Scottish outfit, including of course the kilt. To top it all off he has even dyed his hair red and curled it, which I suppose is intended to give an even more convincing Scottish appearance, but given the rather extreme red color and paired with his Japanese features it ends up looking bizarrely over the top.

But that is the way this whole trip has been. If we have learned anything it is

that when the Japanese do something, they do it with enthusiasm. More is more, and there is no fear of going to the extreme, whether it is extravagance or austerity. There is also something about this that really appeals to me about the culture, where attention-getting and flamboyant outfits are normal in everyday life, and standing out is often a positive. One of the last things we see as we head over to the train to get to the airport is a small girl out with her grandmother in her weekend finest. Her bright green kimono and elaborate hair arrangement would seem out of place on a normal street on a normal day in almost any other country, but here it is just another day to wear something fabulous.







# TOKYO, CALIFORNIA



by Andrew Trembley

I have been to the cradle of cosplay.

It's probably not where you think.

It's Anaheim.

Costuming in Japan is a very weird thing. Japan has a tradition of ritual dress. Matsuri (festivals) often have associated wafuku (traditional Japanese clothing). Important milestones are celebrated wearing traditional formal-wear, the older the style the more formal.

But this is very different from wearing costumes.

There is no tradition of fancy dress in Japan.

Look at western holidays adopted in Japan. Christmas is huge. Dressing in Santa-inspired clothing for the holiday is huge. But it's the ritual dress of Christmas in Japan.

Halloween is 3-dozen or so western expats, riding around Tokyo in a subway car on the night of October 31st, alone. It's a private subway party that no respectable Japanese will go near.

It's just not done.



So how did this “cosplay” thing even happen, then?

Video game journalist and magazine editor Nobuyuki “Nov” Takahashi came to Anaheim for the 1984 World Science Fiction Convention. He saw all the people running around in costumes in the halls, having a great time. He saw the masquerade. He went back to Japan and wrote an article about it.

Takahashi thought costuming would help drum up interest and sales of video games and manga, but he knew it was going to be a hard sell. He realized that if he just used the Japanese word for “masquerade” people would associate it with aristocratic masked balls, not something a normal person would even think of doing.

So he did a very Japanese thing. He grabbed two English words, “costume play,” and slammed them together into a new Japanese word, cosplay (コスプレ). It didn’t have any of the negative associations “masquerade” had, it was new and fun.

But it was still a hard sell.

Unlike American anime conventions, where herds of cosplayers roam the halls of hotels and convention centers, cosplay is a very private thing





in Japan. It's something kids do, and it's something adults are expected to have grown out of. Cosplayers come to the event facility with their luggage, go to the convention's cosplay room, change into their costumes in designated changing areas, interact with other cosplayers in the cosplay room, and then change back to street clothes before leaving. It's only the largest conventions (such as Tokyo's Comiket) that cosplayers can go out in "public" without being shunned, and then it's still only at the convention center.

In 2007 the World Science Fiction Convention went to Yokohama. People still ask us why we didn't go.

It was mostly financial. Worldcon is not cheap to attend when it's in the states, and a trip to Asia just adds to the expense.

It was partially time. We were running Costume-Con in 2008, and we could promote our event more successfully at home in California. We had to plan our time around local costume events.

It was partially personal. Making our first trip to Japan for a convention where we weren't going to see much of Japan outside the convention didn't seem like a sensible choice.

A bit of it was knowing how costume is received in Japan, as passed on by friends who have experienced Japanese conventions and events.

To their credit, the Nippon2007 organizers went in with a strong knowledge of what regular Worldcon at-



tendees expect, and worked to do what every great Worldcon committee does: bring together local fan culture and Worldcon traditions.

Much to our surprise, they were able to negotiate agreements so costumes could be worn everywhere at the convention center and in the Intercontinental Hotel, but attendees staying in other hotels were still advised to carry

their costumes to the main facilities and use designated changing areas upon arrival. People attempting to go off-site for dinner in costume could expect to be refused service at pretty much any restaurant.

In spite of clear communication from the organizers, people continued to be surprised by all of this in the months leading up to the convention.

I'm sure some were surprised at the con, but we weren't there to see it.

They failed to take something important into account.

This was the first Asian Worldcon. And in spite of how much Americans think they know about cosplay, Japan is different.







# Lo

# Aswinicéon

Photographs by  
Yashila Sanchez

Words by  
Jason Schachat

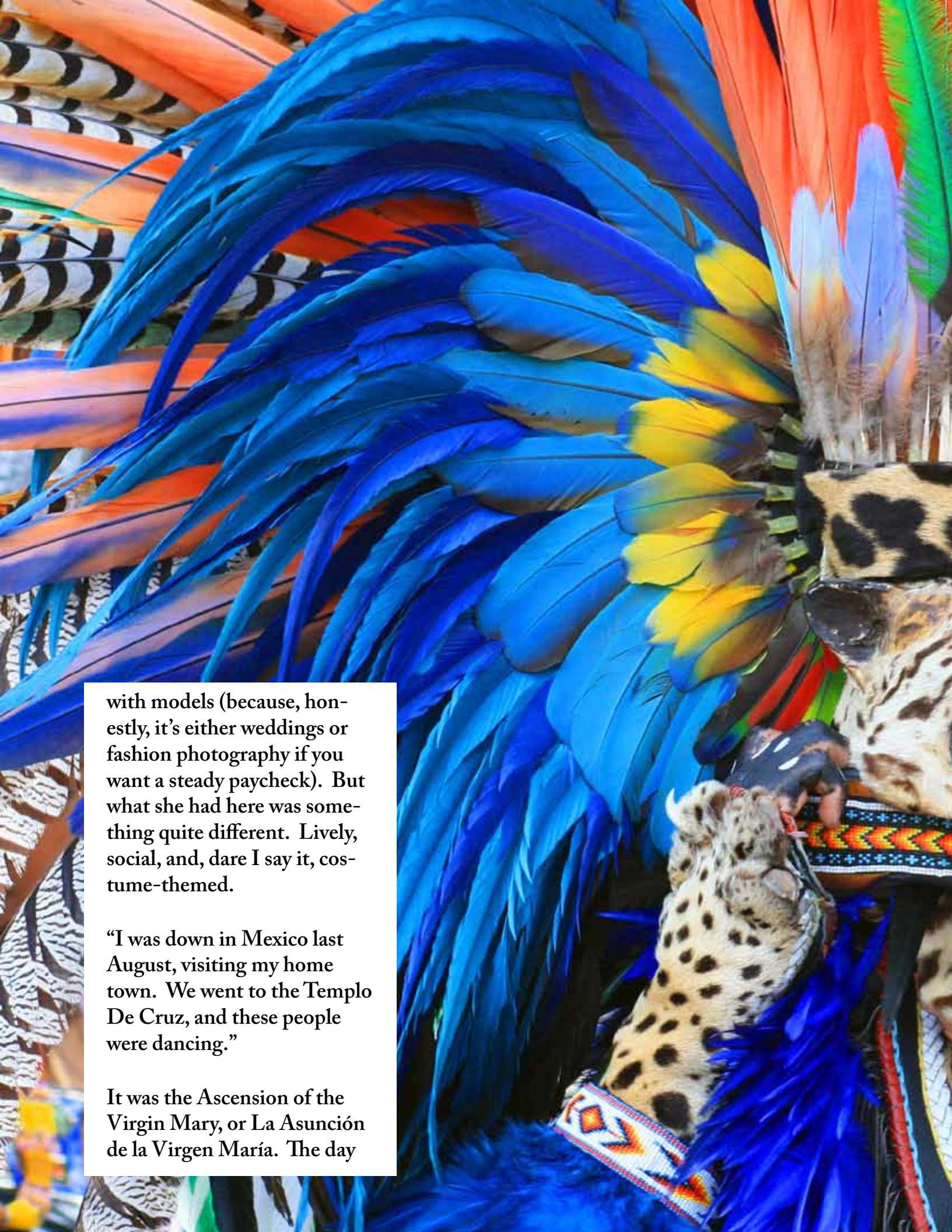
I saw Yashila sorting some 8x10s into a folder at work. The pictures were a lot more colorful than what she usually processed: giant feather head-dresses, church spires, roiling clouds in the background. She noticed me looking at them.

“Oh, that’s just from my vacation.”

I knew Yashi was a photographer. We’d talked for years about how she wanted to get better equipment and work







with models (because, honestly, it's either weddings or fashion photography if you want a steady paycheck). But what she had here was something quite different. Lively, social, and, dare I say it, costume-themed.

“I was down in Mexico last August, visiting my home town. We went to the Templo De Cruz, and these people were dancing.”

It was the Ascension of the Virgin Mary, or La Asunción de la Virgen María. The day





wasn't one Yashi associated with any sort of celebration. Mexico sees hundreds of saints venerated in the course of a year, so the Virgin Mary's assumption into heaven tends to blend in with the rest.

But these people dancing in front of the monastery weren't dressed for a Catholic mass. Myriad feathers, animal skins, copious beads, and jangling bells adorned every man, woman, and child parading through the square.

"What's this guy?" I asked, pointing to one dancer with a cat head merged into his plumage. "Jaguar god?"

"Tepeyollotl." She said. The Aztec god of earthquakes, echoes, and jaguars.

"He's the leader?" Looking at all the plumes radiating



from his outfit, that seemed to make sense.

“No, the guy in charge had the big headdress.” She flipped through a few more of the photos and showed me just how far off I was.

History tells us the Aztecs were one of the few civiliza-

tions that truly treasured feathers, so only the nobility would've worn headdresses like these in ancient times. Even then, the chances of gathering enough feathers like these without driving local parrot populations to extinction must have been slim.

So, here were a bunch of

locals dressing up like Aztec gods and kings on a Catholic holiday.

“Every day celebrates one saint or another in Mexico.” Yashi told me. “The dancing is just part of the culture. They don't come out and celebrate every saint's holiday, but we're used to seeing them





dance. Small groups will dance in the touristy areas. This group was much bigger.”

They gathered together from the villages surrounding Queretaro, capital city of the state of Queretaro. Many of them walked the whole way, freeing up extra space in their cars for costumes, instruments, and incense.

“There was a whole ceremony burning the incense before we got there. The smell was everywhere. Vendors set up tents to sell food. The bells were ringing the whole time they danced. It was like they were trying to bring the old traditions to all your senses.”

She told me there were different dances for different events. Even though the many dancers came from different villages and didn't pool their resources to make the costumes, they all knew the dances perfectly. There were older people dressed in simpler garb, young children who'd clearly been dressed by parents handing the culture down to them, and even a number of teenagers who seemed to be trying something new.

“They were dressed in black and red with black lipstick.







They looked almost goth. I'd never seen that before, but it was only the teenagers."

It made sense, the more I looked at the photos. It took a much larger market than what was available in the past to get all these materials together. If you look at recreations of Moctezuma II's feathered headdress, you might balk at how simple it was compared to what these 'villagers' had on display for one day. While this was all steeped in cultural tradition,





there was a natural evolution as new generations made slight interpretations where they could, be it fairy wings or a Thundercats logo.

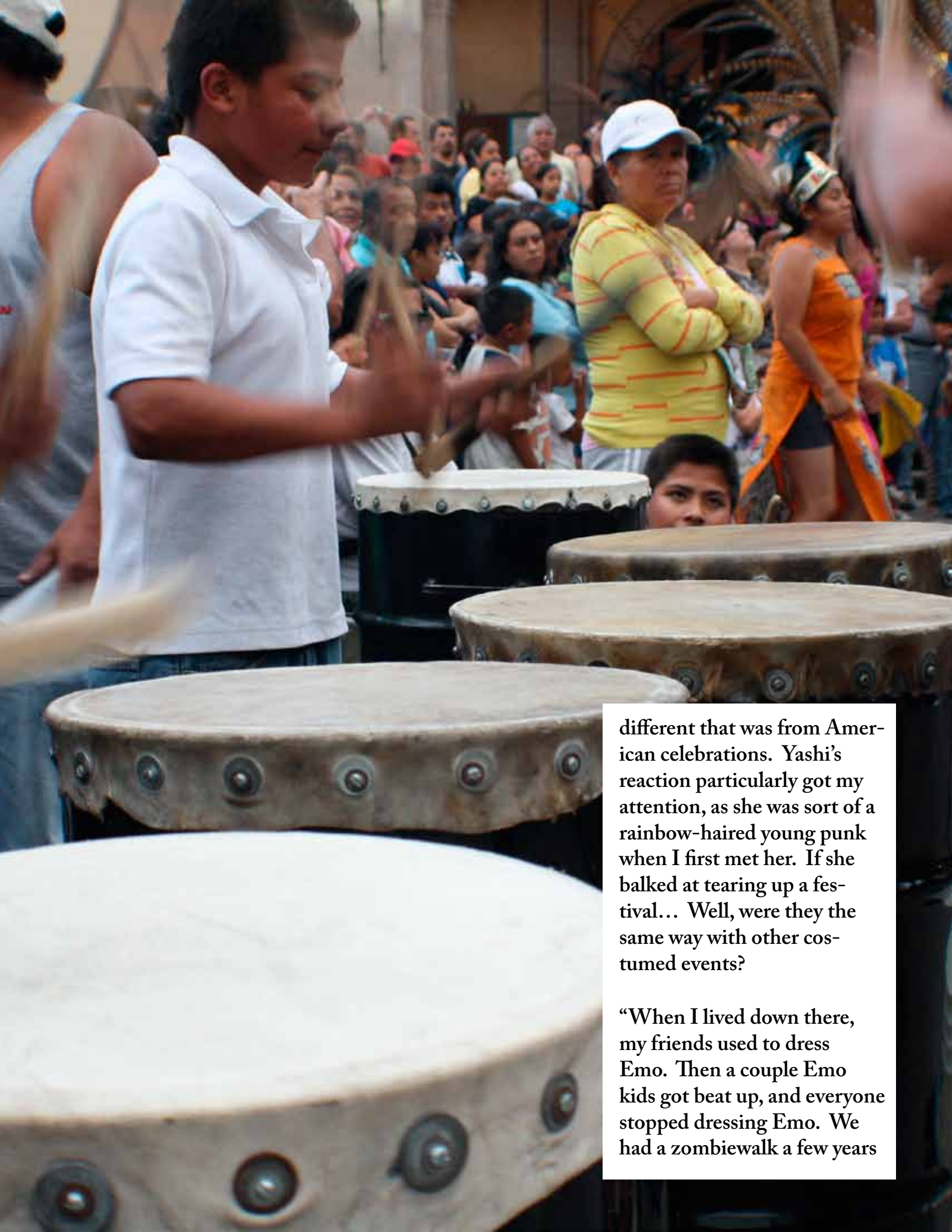
“Do people ever fight at these festivals?” I asked, remembering the riots I’d seen during Mardi Gras and Cinco De Mayo celebrations. This surprised Yashila.

“No, that wouldn’t happen. It’s not like this is something new. This is part of the culture. You grew up with it. So did your parents and grandparents. Everyone here is Mexican, so it would be like suddenly saying the flag looks weird. Why’s it weird? It’s always been there.”

I couldn’t help thinking how







different that was from American celebrations. Yashi's reaction particularly got my attention, as she was sort of a rainbow-haired young punk when I first met her. If she balked at tearing up a festival... Well, were they the same way with other costumed events?

"When I lived down there, my friends used to dress Emo. Then a couple Emo kids got beat up, and everyone stopped dressing Emo. We had a zombiewalk a few years



ago, and everyone stared at them like they were weird. They trailed a lot of blood around. Things are better now. They've been doing it for years, but people still look at them weird."

That surprised me. I know life can be rough in Mexico and not everything's a seaside tourist trap, but Americans always get the impression Mexicans love having a holiday to celebrate and a good excuse to don a crazy outfit. But here were the practitioners of Dia De Los Muertos beating up Emo kids and











treating a zombiewalk like a traveling leper colony. Yet, at the same time, none of the young punks would bust up an Aztec dance.

“It’s about tradition.” Yashi told me. “They’ve been doing this since ancient times, I guess. A lot of Catholic things, pilgrimages, are more recent. Not everyone does that. This is the villagers’ identity. It’s how they’re keeping the culture alive.”

Whereas the zombiewalk made a mess with all their



fake blood and entrails, the Aztecs always neatly pack everything into their cars and kick back with some food to watch the fireworks before heading back home. What probably started as a concession from the church—allowing Indian culture to be celebrated in the hopes of tying it to Catholic beliefs—turned into a sort of protection of the native culture, since the church has allowed these festivities for so long and no one would dream of making trouble on church property.

In modern times, where the world's become so interconnected and the church has faded into the background, it only makes sense they'd continue the tradition, hoping it draws the less pious into the history and culture of the church.

“The Catholic pilgrimages I've seen...” Yashi shakes her head. “Some of them crawl on their knees to the big cathedral. There was one... this drive is like three hours without traffic. And they were crawling on their knees the whole way, so you can imagine how long that would take.”

Not to say people don't enjoy watching others suffer, but the image was nowhere near as appealing as the Aztec







dancers. There's a great irony there: the Aztecs were a culture based on human sacrifice and enslavement, but it's the Catholic pilgrims who come across as bloody and guilt-ridden.

“The Indians seem more spiritual to me. The Catholics are doing what they're told. The dancers are embracing their identity. They're not





asking for money or anything. They're just dancing."

But, like Yashi said, the dancers were Mexicans. These were not the distant peoples living in far flung rural areas who sold bracelets and spoke their own language. These were people carrying on the ever-evolving traditions of a Mexico borne from a clash of native and European cultures.

It made me wonder about the gradual changes that made this tradition so acceptable-- whereas Emo fashion earned some kids a beating. Really, this is the way the world works. People tend to have bad reactions to sudden change. Especially something done for one person's selfish reasons rather than the good of the community as a whole.

How many missionaries got beat up back in the day when they first introduced baptism to the natives? How many dancers got clobbered when they first tried to bring these dances to the Latino population? Again, the image of a happy, festive Mexico immediately springs to mind, but we can't forget all the turmoil said festivities have largely been in reaction to.

What's the place of costum-





ing in this sort of culture? There's certainly a degree of self-expression to it, as the 'goth' teenagers and Thundercat enthusiast demonstrate, but the message is one of the culture moving forward. Emo may have been too isolating and unfriendly to last long in Queretaro, but the Zombiewalks sound like they're doing a lot better than expected. And why? Everyone knows about zombies. What's so weird about them?

How long is it before the town accepts Pokemon cosplayers LARPing through the town square?

Yashila wrinkles her nose at the idea. "That would be weird."

Yet it's completely acceptable in an anime community. And why? Well, it took about 20 years, but everyone there knows Pokemon. Hell, a lot of attendees' parents probably taught them how to LARP in the first place. The internet taught the rest. It gradually becomes part of the cultural tradition after earning its fair share of stares from those not in the know.

Will it still be around 500 years from now? Will it have evolved past the point of recognition? Will the Pokemon LARPers of 2511 be the ones beating up the dancing Quadgender Spiderteens of the future? What will ascend from the merging of our own modern cultures?

If La Asunción tells us anything, it's that costumed festivities rely just as much on tradition and the need to retain one's cultural identity as individual expression and the unending march of progress.





# A Land Without Costumes

by Mette Hedin



I think I have always had a love of costuming and dressing up from an early age, so you would think that Halloween would have been my favorite time of the year, but I grew up in Sweden and we had never heard of this candy-fueled mayhem nor did my mom ever make me any costumes. There were other dress-up occasions in Swedish cultural traditions, but all with a very uniform to the point of being monolithic ap-

proach to costumes (see side note).

By my teenage years even the occasional costume party was considered childish and my dressing-up days were as good as over, until I moved to the U.S. in my early 20's and went to my first sci-fi convention. Adults were dressing up in amazing recreations and walking down crowded streets in broad daylight without a hint of shame, but with a

bounce in their step! Other adults were complimenting them on how awesome they looked and took their picture! This was brilliant! You can laugh at me now, but little did I know that this was only a minor commercial Star Trek convention, and I really hadn't seen anything yet when it came to costumes. 16 years down the road and I have been known to wear the odd costume or two to make the understatement of the year.



Only much later did I find out that there had in fact been conventions in Sweden all along with the first one being held in 1956. When I expressed surprise and excitement over this, a Swedish friend tried to explain why this wouldn't be of any interest to me: "Oh, but there are no costumes at Swedish conventions". It seemed odd, but several people seemed to corroborate this fact over the years when asked, so I became curious. Another friend had sent me pictures of what clearly looked like costumes, at a convention, in Sweden. Perhaps things had changed in later years, or the supposed no-costume conventions were one of those dry-witted exaggerations the Swedes are so skilled at. I decided I needed to dig deeper and find the real story, so I started by making a phone call to an old friend, Mats Henricson.

Mats is straight to the point, cheerful, funny and has an opinion on anything and everything. As it turns out, he is also a Swedish fandom veteran. He started his fandom career back in the early 80's by going to his first conventions and actively participating in the rampant fanzine culture that was springing up at that time. He tells amazing stories

of intense fanzine writing where one fanzine he worked on published one issue a week for 20 weeks but that still pales in comparison to a competing fanzine that came out once a day for 200 straight days. This is all in the days before easy access to modern copy machines, so it was all done on Mimeographs! He also recalls the conflict between the Sercon (Serious and

Constructive) and Fannish movements in Swedish fandom and tells hilarious stories of various more or less bizarre traditions supposedly imported from abroad into early Swedish convention culture.

Clearly there has been long-time interest in fandom in Sweden, so how about those costumes? Mats claims ignorance as he is no longer an







active convention attendee, but I am interested in the historical aspect, so he obliges me by accessing the memory banks. “I don’t remember any costumes at the conventions at all. Perhaps my memory is failing me, I was what I would like to call ‘aggressively disinterested’ in those things back then. I didn’t see anyone walk around in a costume. It may have existed, but it was certainly not anything we talked about”.

Mats passes me on to some seriously heavyweight Swedish SMOFs (Secret Masters of Fandom, term for people who actively work in fandom and organize events), and I next talk to Johan Anglemark, a legend in Swedish fandom who also got his start in the early 80’s and remains active to this day. In contrast to Mats, he does have recollections of costuming at Swedish conventions: “There was the odd cape or tinfoil construction in the 70’s, and you can occasionally see the odd single costume piece here and there, but it is not the same thing as in American or British fandom. In the early 2000’s there were attempts at holding a masquerade at Swedish conventions, but they got 3-5 entries, where one entry was a joke and one was a purchased Star Trek uniform, so it never





went anywhere”. I mention the costume pictures I have seen from a Swedish convention called Uppcon where people are clearly wearing costumes. Johan immediately responds that Uppcon has nothing to do with Swedish fandom. He says that it started as an anime convention and has broadened into a convention around Japanese culture in general with for example martial arts demonstrations. He also adds that there is virtually no attendee overlap between Uppcon and the various sci-fi conventions across Sweden. If you look at the average age of the at-

tendees, the sci-fi convention attendees are about a generation older than the Uppcon attendees.

It is clear that Swedish fandom has happily imported a lot of ideas, activities and concepts from both American and British conventions, but why is costuming practically the only thing that hasn't made an impact at all? From my own experience growing up there, I have always been under the impression that it is considered childish, and Johan confirms my suspicion. “Many Swedish fans don't mind being childish, but

they don't want to be childish in that way. Dressing up is something you did when you were little, and it becomes too childish. Many of them wouldn't even consider dressing up for a LARP” (Live Action Role Playing).

One of the people that have tried to bring masquerades to Swedish conventions is organizational powerhouse Carolina Gómez-Lagerlöf who is the chair of the upcoming European convention Eurocon 2011 that is being held in Sweden for the first time this year. The Eurocon website has a paragraph on masquerades





on their introductory page “What is a science fiction convention?” that familiarizes the novice visitor with various common convention concepts. The paragraph, buried under the section “Special Events”, gives some basic overview information about what the term means, but there is no masquerade on the program, and no further costuming information on the site.

I ask Carolina if they intend to hold a masquerade, since it is a European convention after all and some of the other countries have a different attitude to costumes, and she says that no, there will not be a masquerade this year. She has tried to arrange them in the past, and one year even went so far as to invite a local LARP group that had their own costumes, to ensure there would be entries in the masquerade. “They did a great job” she says, “people showed up and enjoyed watching the show, but no one wanted to dress up themselves. So in the end it just ends up taking a lot of time and resources”. She adds, “Star Trek fans like to dress up in uniforms, but the ‘lit-fans’ are difficult when it comes to dressing up, and if the fans don’t want to, then it becomes a lot of effort with not much to show for it. There



has to be an interest in order for things to happen, and right now there just isn't".

Clearly the attempts at masquerades have met with little success. Perhaps it isn't so strange; with no hall costuming or costume panels and little interest to make or for that matter even wear costumes, a masquerade is doomed to failure. It is like a society trying to build a rocket ship right after inventing the wheel, skipping a lot of crucial steps on the way makes it

very hard to succeed. I look at our local costuming culture at conventions, and there is a constant exchange of ideas & techniques and for that matter even a measure of competitiveness that fuels the movement as a whole. Walking around the convention you will see a very broad selection of genres, time periods, materials and skill levels. They have none of those things, and so it is like trying to start the car with an empty tank.

Carolina and Johan them-

selves have somewhat different personal views on the idea of costumes at conventions. While talking to Johan, despite his extremely polite nature and utmost patience with my questions, I do detect what I interpret as a slight aloof disinterest in this particular topic, as if he'd rather not see any change in the current tradition. I am therefore completely stunned when he tells me he occasionally wears costumes. It turns out that he is a member of one of a number of Swedish Tolkien







Societies, and they arrange a variety of events which all have the common thread that members have created characters and show up to the events in costume and in character. They try to recreate a living realistic middle-earth where they interact as their characters at all times and therefore everyone is expected to wear a costume to make the experience more realistic. Essentially he dresses for the occasion. If he is in middle-earth he dresses as a resident of that world, but when he

is at a convention in Stockholm, he dresses as Johan. He says, "Costumes are fun to look at, but they have nothing to do with conventions. When I am at a convention I want to meet people and talk literature; when I dress up I want play a role and I can't do that at conventions. It is the wrong context and not the same sub-culture. I don't go to conventions to get away from the mundane, I go to hang out with friends".

Carolina on the other hand

seems a lot more excited about the idea of costumes at conventions. She too is a member of a Tolkien Society and also has her own persona and the costumes to go with it. In addition she wears a deer stalker for the annual meetings of the Swedish Sherlock Holmes society of which she is currently the president and she has even had a Star Trek uniform made for the meetings of the Star Trek association she is a member of. She thinks the costuming groups outside of conventions are a lot of fun



but laments her inability to sew and make her own outfits. In the end though it may not be there that the problem lies, but rather conforming to existing traditions. “I have gone so far as to have a Star Trek uniform made for me but I don’t know about wearing it at a convention. Wearing a costume at a convention means you’re not a real fan, that you’re an outsider”.

This seeming cognitive dissonance, where costumes are shunned at one event and required at another keeps confusing me until Johan tries to explain it. “It’s watertight compartments” he says, “these are completely separate movements that have started in isolation from each other because they imported things from the outside. In the 60’s the U.S. convention cultures started splitting into separate interests and over here they have looked at single parts of the culture and not known anything about fandom as a whole”. Carolina verifies this, “The various groups are relatively isolated from each other, and can be very different. Live action roleplaying for example go to great lengths to make costumes and in the Tolkien societies everyone dresses up, but it just doesn’t exist in the science fiction world.”





If you make a direct translation of the Swedish word for sci-fi convention, you get the ominous sounding term “SF-Congress”. My thoughts go directly to a group of middle-ages ideologists squabbling about definitions, and from the relatively dismissive attitude to costuming I have encountered you would think

that Swedish conventions are deadly serious, full of anally retentive über-fans nitpicking obscure sci-fi concepts as if their lives depended on it, but you couldn't be more wrong. From the descriptions I get, the Swedish conventions seem identical to the American ones, a loose group of friends and acquaintances

with mutual interests gather for a weekend to talk sci-fi, hang out and drink. Mats recalls a convention in Nottingham where they were complimented by the hotel for “drinking like rugby players and behaving like chess players”. Carolina also notes that the attendees have a uniform of sorts, where most people





dress similarly with jeans, convention t-shirts and various pins. Everything sounds exactly like my regular local conventions, just minus the costumes.

While I understand if most people don't want to dress up themselves, I wonder at the ongoing resistance to other people wearing costumes that I sense from both from Johan and some Swedish online forums. Johan says "If someone shows up in a costume, then the newspapers only take pictures of that and writes nothing about the literary programming. I think the attitude to this is just as negative today, fandom is about literature, and if you want to dress up you can do that on your own time". It strikes me how accurate the description "watertight compartments" really is, and how my definition of a sci-fi convention may be too broad to apply to the Swedish conventions. Here we have the extremes of both the purely literary conventions all the way to the purely media conventions, with a lot of hybrid varieties in between. Most conventions tend to cover all the bases to some degree which results in a breadth in the types of attendees that show up to one convention. In Sweden it is as if they have the literary conventions and then

there is a great big void all the way over to the Anime conventions. The attendees of the two are of completely different ages and have very different interests and motivations. The space that I and most of my friends would normally occupy just doesn't exist. I feel myself floating in a conceptual convention vacuum.

Despite the internal group resistance, Carolina does see some costuming potential for the upcoming convention. "The Finnish convention culture is completely different, they have a lot of costuming at their conventions, and some of the Finnish attendees have contacted us ahead of time and asked if it is OK for them to wear







costumes. We told them that is definitely OK, but that they can't wear weapons". This rule isn't in effect at most American conventions of course, but given the costume-free convention culture I am not at all surprised that no one has heard of peace-bonding. Also, although there are no costuming panels in the Eurocon convention program, there are some plans for a Steampunk event in the programming track that she hopes will attract some costumes. It seems steampunk is a tour de force not only in the U.S. but also internationally at this point. Johan agrees that the one thing that may change the attitude to costumes at conventions may be steampunk. "The steampunk movement is just starting up in Sweden, but the question is whether they will end up at the conventions or start their own events instead".

Another recent development in Swedish sci-fi conventions that would be unheard of over here is the introduction of free memberships to any attendees under the age of 26. Some convention organizers recognize that their population is gradually aging, Carolina estimates the average age currently to be 35-40, and she is implementing the no-charge concept for the un-



der 26 crowd at Eurocon this year, as long as the attendees pre-register. "I am very excited, we have a very large list of pre-registered attendees already, about twice the normal attendance of the total attendance of a larger Swedish convention, and there is still 2 months to go. We rarely ever have anyone from the under 26 age group at the conventions, but this time they make up 30% of the pre-registered attendees".

So it is hard to assess the future of costuming at Swedish conventions. There are many unknown factors such as the

a maturing anime crowd that already costumes that may broaden it's interests to science fiction, a push to bring in younger attendees into the culture in general and the exploding steampunk movement. Add to that the very experienced and vibrant LARP culture in Sweden that has helped accustom the Swedes in general to people running around in strange outfits in public. A look at a Swedish online forum also gives me the impression that while people generally consider dressing up as being childish, they do think that the idea of someone spending the time to

make the costume themselves is actually quite cool. I can envision any of these things may factor into the costuming culture finally making its entrance at the science fiction conventions. But that requires that those new fans feel welcome there. I personally think the Eurocon free membership for the under 26 crowd may be the most significant push to broaden the culture, and it seems stunningly visionary when you think about it, but what the end result of this and the other potential game changers is for convention culture in Sweden, only time will tell.





## What do Swedish Children do instead of Halloween?

On Holy Thursday, the Thursday before easter, younger Swedish children dress up as easter witches (even the boys). The standard outfit is an old woman's outfit consisting of a dress, head scarf and maybe

an apron. Everyone wears identical make-up consisting of red circles on the cheeks and fake freckles. Even the props are standardized, consisting of a broom for flying, ideally a coffee pot and maybe even a black cat, generally made of paper. Once the witch "uniforms" are on, the children go door to door with home made easter cards hop-

ing to be rewarded by having candy or cash deposited in the coffee pot. Little do the children participating in this event know, that it is actually based on old pagan belief that on this day the witches flew to "Blåkulla" (the blue hill) on their brooms where they supposedly participated in some seriously elaborate orgies with Satan and the devils.



2008

1958



The other sanctioned dress-up opportunity is Lucia, named after the patron saint of the blind, which is held on the 13th of December. In superstitious beliefs this was considered a dangerous night when for example the animals could talk. The 13th of December also used to be the longest night of the year occurring on the winter solstice, tying in to the tradition's themes of blindness and light, but it was shifted with the introduction of the gregorian calendar making the date seem a little more arbitrary. In the morning before the sun has risen, children in daycares

and schools across the country slowly walk in a procession while singing, many of them carrying candles, into an unlit room where the audience is waiting. For the participants there is a choice between 5 different possible roles and accompanying outfits in the procession. For the girls you can either be Lucia (of which there is only one, leading the procession, unless you attend a fairly progressive school) or one of Lucia's attendants. They all wear long white gowns although Lucia has more elaborate decorations, including a crown with a number of candles (either live, adding a unmotivated but refreshing element of danger,

or more commonly, especially with the smaller children, the boring battery operated variety). The boys have a choice between the roles of a "Star Boy", likewise in a long white gown with adding a pointy white hat with gold stars on (any and all similarities with the KKK are purely coincidental, but amusing nonetheless), or the more absurd parts of the gingerbread men or the Santas (yes, a plural of Santa). This tradition, while named for a christian saint who had her eyes removed with a fork, actually incorporates a number of older pagan traditions, hence the somewhat eclectic and arbitrary cast of characters.





**Sheriff**

**Don't**

**Like**

**It**

I have to confess that I had quite a bit of trouble rustling up any sort of thoughts for the topic of this particular issue of Yipe! I have only even visited three countries, Spain of course, then here to the US and one trip down to Mexico back in 2000. I'm vaguely aware costuming exists in Spain, having seen some recent photos, and I once saw a listing for some anime convention in Mexico, so I can only assume that involves some cosplay, else what is the point really? But despite my not inconsiderable bullshit spinning skills I can't quite work that into any sort of useful thesis about the costuming world beyond our borders.

What I do know is that the United States is huge, and in many ways almost as varied as any other equivalent landmass. We are one nation, sure, but the differences between fandoms from one region to another don't seem all that much broader than those between, say, the



**by  
España  
Sheriff**



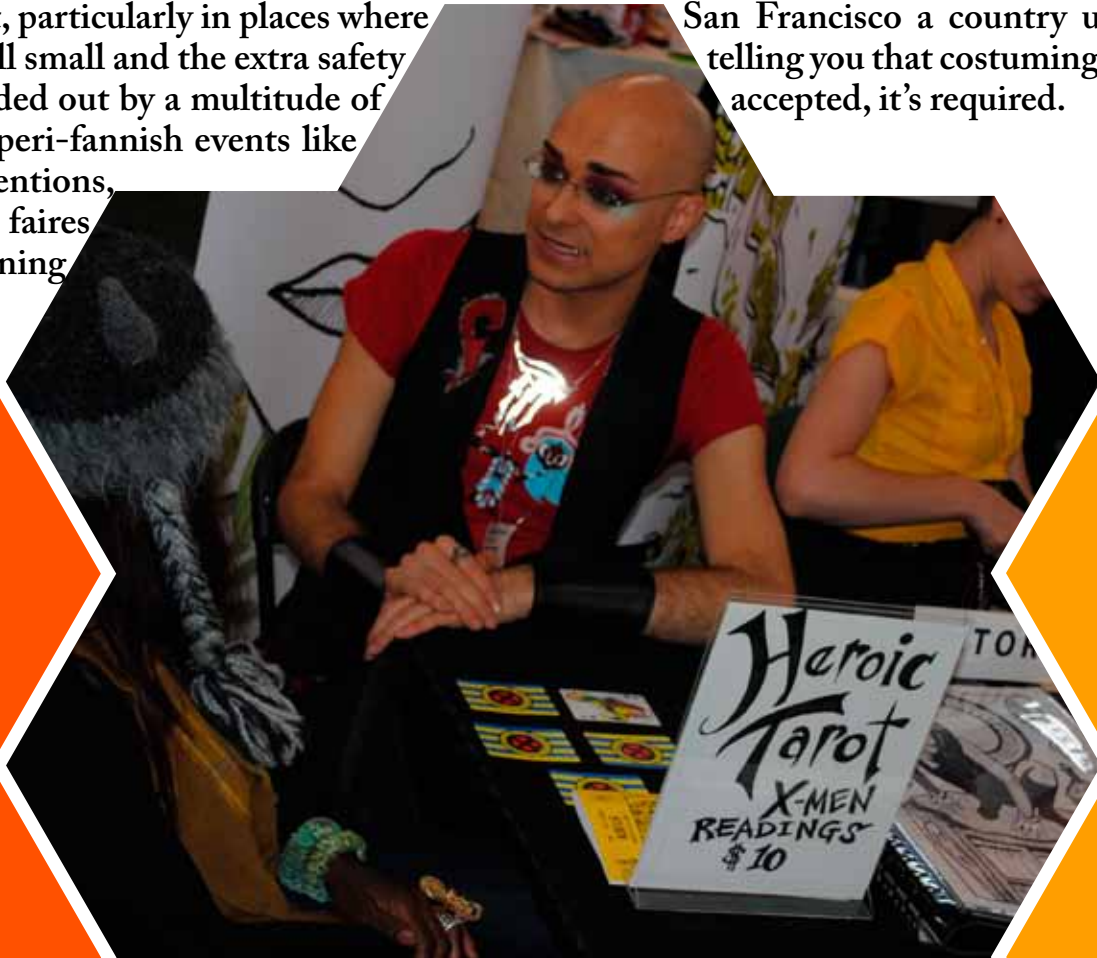


UK and Sweden. I hear fabulous stories of the wet consuites in the Midwest, and wild rumours about Southern fandom. But California, well California has always been a place apart.

Even outside of fandom, California has a reputation for eccentricity. In the arts and in the sciences, politically and right down into the ground itself. Los Angeles has Hollywood, (and the San Fernando Valley, of course) and up here, right outside my window we have San Francisco, my home town. And perhaps that is at the heart of the matter. I am aware that costuming isn't popular everywhere and that some in fandom feel they fought the good fight to not be regarded as freaks and weirdos and are therefore understandably wary and weary of the costumed types who, they feel, might make the fannish subculture seem less serious and who will inevitably be the people most likely to be approached by a reporter at any convention regardless of topic, size or ratio of costumes to civvies. This issue was evident at World Fantasy when it was held in San Jose and costumes were prohibited, despite it being on Halloween weekend (yeah, that didn't work out) and I can understand how that attitude might persist, particularly in places where fandom is still small and the extra safety of being padded out by a multitude of fannish and peri-fannish events like anime conventions, renaissance faires and Burning Man.

But I seem to have been fortunate enough to arrive into American fandom at a time when costuming is on an upswing to say the least, and to a geographical place where it is not just acceptable within fandom but a part of the fabric of most people's lives. Mostly I see costuming as not specifically a fannish thing, but as another form of fashion and culture, and as being all around us. This city takes particular pride in expressions of colorful individualism, almost any occasion seems to be an opportunity to dress up funny and hit the streets here; costumes are common at most races, parades, street fairs and we even seem to be in the habit of inventing new holidays to dress up for when no immediate opportunities spring to mind. You know that conversation you have with another fan in which you say something like 'I had my gorilla suite dry-cleaned' and everyone chuckles because, who has that conversation except fen? Well, San Franciscans have that conversation all the time. My roommate has a gorilla suit. Hell, he probably has two; the everyday one and the good one, for interviews.

So in a time-honored San Francisco tradition, for the purposes of this issue; I am declaring San Francisco a country unto itself, and telling you that costuming here is not just accepted, it's required.







# The Impressionists

by Gailynne Bouret

On learning that the DeYoung was going to host “Birth of Impressionism,” a number of us within our costume circle thought it would be fun to go in late 19th c. costumes. What better excuse to indulge a love of art and a love of costuming.

Some of us already had outfits of the era. I, however, coming late to this hobby/obsession, had nothing. I had bought a reproduction 1870s hat that

was predominantly blue, and I envisioned a gown in this color. I later found a trim that matched the hat and, in search of a similarly colored fabric, instead found a yellow silk taffeta that would complement the blue. Truly Victorian’s cuirass bodice, overskirt, and underskirt patterns were the basis for my outfit. (Of course, waiting until last minute to create it, which involved too many long nights of last-minute sewing, left me cross-eyed and a little too tired to appreciate the

exhibit!]

However, my companions were better prepared. Claudine Wong’s outfit was based on a fashion plate from 1887, reprinted by Dover. The dress is a “seaside costume” that she translated into a summer gown by modifying the striped bodice and adding the orange ribbons. She drew the patterns that she machine embroidered onto the purple skirt while another friend, Feather Tippetts, did most of the stitching. Mia Jackson



had already constructed her costume for an earlier event using a black-and-white silk taffeta that she had purchased last year in LA's garment district. Amy [O] had modified her red bustle dress that she created for a Bal de Vampire event a few years ago. Sahrye Cohen had already had an outfit created from the Truly Victorian day bodice pattern. But we hadn't thought to replicate an outfit that was depicted in any of the paintings as we did not know what would be exhibited. As Sahrye noted afterwards, there's far less costuming detail in Impressionist paintings,

making it a challenge to construct anything from a specific painting and forcing you to think more about the colors and feeling of the garments. Kali Pappas, however, met and matched this challenge with her white ruffled creation. She loves natural form and bustle era fashions, and much of that interest comes from and runs tandem with her interest in Impressionist art. She's made two versions of this dress, the first with her friend, Victoria Riddenour, that incorporated Kali's hand-embroidery. That and the later ivy gown that she wore to the exhibit were based on the

Newport archery dress worn by Winona Ryder in Martin Scorsese's 1993 film adaptation of *Age of Innocence*. Inspired by Renoir's painting of the Bal a Bougival, Kali commissioned the first gown for the Parisian guignette that she and Danine Cozzens had organized for GBACG in 1999. No doubt, Kali's efforts were recognized by a public unaware of costume details, form and construction as she received the majority of comments that she looked like she stepped out of one of the paintings, particularly Renoir's "The Swing." Indeed, as most of the portraits





of women in the exhibit, most were dressed predominantly in black. In contrast, our small group dressed in bright red, crisp white, buttery yellow and bold stripes was quite a contrast to the art on the wall and to the throngs of viewers in the halls.

For me, this was the first non-GBACG or fair event that I had ever attended in costume and I was unsure how the general public would react. My companions were

not as “virginal” as I was. Claudine doesn’t consider herself a craver of attention, but she loves the idea of giving people a reason to stop and think and enjoy the effort and effect. The reaction of the crowd at the De Young was overwhelmingly positive, and a number of requests for photos were numerous. The staff all enjoyed it, and we received compliments from many of the attendees. The overwhelming question we got was something along the

lines of “Are you part of the exhibit?” We weren’t seeking this sort of attention. All of us enjoy art, museums, and dressing up and it was fun to combine these pleasures. With the crowd as dense as it was, we did have to be conscious of where we stood and moved among the crowds. Sahrye noted the congeniality of the DeYoung employees. In many cases they seemed more enthusiastic about us being there in costume than the visitors. Finally those who





did ask us about our costumes were in awe that we created and sewed our gowns. How sad to think that creativity is becoming a passive activity, admired by many and attempted by few, much like the scenario within the museum that day.

For me, however, the most memorable reaction I received was the encounter with a mother and her young son. She had tapped my shoulder while Claudine and I were admiring a painting. As I turned, she asked, "Are you ladies princesses?" She was holding a little boy, no more than 2 or 3 and, by the way he ducked his head into his mother's neck, looking at us with saucer-wide blue eyes beneath white-blond bangs, we knew he'd put his mother up to this inquiry. Claudine replied that yes, we were, but we forgot our tiaras that day. "See?" she said to her son. "You were right." He smiled, we smiled, the mother whispered "Thank you" to us and we went back to examining the paintings. It was later, while in the cafe for lunch and I was in line to pay for my food, that the mother again tapped me on the shoulder.

"I wonder, if you don't mind, giving my son a hug?" she asked. I noticed that the boy

was now on the ground, hiding behind her legs, peeking up at me.

"Sure," I replied and bent down. He hesitated. "Don't you want a hug?" I asked, opening my arms. In an instant, he flew into them, wrapping his own small arms around my neck and clung fiercely to me. I was startled, but returned the embrace, giving him a little kiss at the top of his head and not sure when he would let go of me.

"Come along, Jason," his mother coaxed. "Let the princess have her lunch." He reluctantly let go and as I rose, he gave me a shy smile as he

let his mother lead him away. Well, I thought, he'll probably have fantasies of princesses in yellow taffeta for the rest of his life. I turned to pay for my meal and the cashier smiled as he took my money.

"That was the nicest thing I've seen all day," he said, ringing up the cash register. I can only hope that the impression lasts and that he will appreciate finely dressed women of other eras rather than the polyester prototypes of Cinderella, Belle, and Snow White that he will eventually encounter at Disneyland or in the commercialized culture of today.







# Letter from the [evil] Editor

Exciting adventures and exotic locales... tropes that are near and dear to my heart. One of the great attractions of the books I love to read is that opportunity to explore all those interesting new places in the theater of my mind's eye. Even better is the opportunity Andy and I have to explore the equally fascinating and very real world as we travel to conventions and events across North America, and occasionally, more distant parts of the world. I subscribe heartily to the notion that Travel broadens the mind and raises the spirits. I find it also provides some really astonishing inspiration for costume projects. (You may recall that Tiki Dalek Kraziness was inspired by a tassel spotted while shopping on a convention trip).

In case Andy's article doesn't make it clear, we fully intend to expand the range of our explorations to Japan some day; we just think we're going to need more time and focus to do so than a trip to Worldcon would have provided! I also hope someday to surprise the lovely ladies of Modern Mixers by joining them for one of their what look to be spectacularly fun soirees in Edinburgh. In recent months, Andy and my travels with TDK have ranged from the steampunk Victoriana of Nova Albion to the high-tech automated mixology of BarBot 2011, and most recently to the quite international flavor of Costume-Con 29





in Hasbrouck Heights, NJ. The doors opened by that whimsical concoction of bamboo and coconuts continue thrill, astonish and delight me; he's featured in Issue 2 of Dr Who Insider magazine and will now be on display at RenovationSF, (this year's Worldcon in Reno, NV)!

At Costume-Con, a group of Canadian costumers from Toronto won the right to host Costume-Con 32, so 2014 looks to be good year for international costume travel, especially if London wins their bid to host the 72nd World Science Fiction Convention in England.

More locally (shameless plug), my work as co-director of the Renovation Masquerade in August is now heating up; by the time you read this our online contestant registration system should be up and running. If you've ever considered entering a competition masquerade, I hope you'll think about coming to Reno and playing in our sandbox. We've got a spectacular space to work with and a great crew to help you show off your work. (Said masquerade registration can be found at <http://www.renovationsf.org/masquerade>).

In many ways, every issue of Yipe! is a sort of travelogue. We want to hear about your costume travels, and share your tales of wardrobe adventures across all the worlds of fiction, fandom and fashion. Help us out -- send your stories and photos with us at [editors@yipezine.com](mailto:editors@yipezine.com)

Send all complaints to:  
[Kevin@yipezine.com](mailto:Kevin@yipezine.com)







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April 15, 2011

Dear Yipers:

Sorry I've done to you what I usually do to Chris Garcia... let more than one issue pile up.

**Jason:** For the record, this is the sole reason our May issue was a month late.

I've got some good work updating the website for the Ontario Association of Architects...it's a short-term contract, but a good one, and a great place to work, so that kills my spare time al-

most completely. Here's some smart-ass remarks on Vol. 3, Nos. 2 and 3.

3.2... This is a huge issue indeed, all about Doctor Who. I will admit from the beginning that I do go back as far as Jon Pertwee and Tom Baker, old man that I am, and because I work evenings and have nearly no free time to watch television, I have not followed the newer series at all, no Christopher Eccleston, David Tennant or Matt Smith at all. (I've seen a few snippets here and there, and I've seen Eccleston turn into Tennant...) It hasn't been from not being interested, I may just have to deal with the fact I don't have the time to catch up.

**Jason:** Most of us on the staff seem to be loving the Matt Smith. I'm peculiar in that, as with comics, I'm drawn more to a creator than a character, so Steven Moffat getting keys to the TARDIS was bound to sway me.

The best couples are the ones that share interests, and best of all they understand. If one in the couple is non-fannish but understanding, they're worth keeping, too. I've seen several relationships and even marriages fail because one

spouse could handle "your weird friends" or "your weird interest".

**Jason:** The same rationale has been used to explain cops marrying other cops. Or hookers. Not quite sure how the latter works out so well.

The problems with weaponry of one kind or another, including peace-bonding, crossing international borders, and a general dislike of them has meant that any costume I've had over the years is weapon-free. Besides, I like keeping my hands free for other things, like hugging friends, having lunch with them, etc., and weapons just get in the way.

**Jason:** On the other hand, the simple addition of a weapon can make an otherwise plain outfit a costume (see *Any Cosplay Using Characters in a Contemporary Setting*).

Ulterior motives... and not every weapon can be holstered.

Then, I go to the next article on returning to Gallifrey One, and there's someone holding a weapon that looks like a cross



between a wine glass and a sex toy. A psychologist could have a grand time with some of these weapons...

**Jason:** And they have, but that's a less PG zine.

Palle does have the right idea about taking a piece of clothing that fits you well, and taking it apart to use as a pattern.

I've never sewn a costume, but I have designed what I wanted to wear, so I can understand Mette wanting a fresh challenge when it comes to a costume. We have egos enough to want to create something people will oooh and aaah over, so we look further afield to see what designs will give us the challenge and ooohs/aaahs. Mette, I got into fandom nearly 35 years ago through Star Trek, but its appeal faded as other interests arrived, and I got into them, too. One must start somewhere, but at least there's no limit as to where newer interests can take you.

**Jason:** I always find how far Mette's gone with her costumes staggering. I remember first meeting her playing the X-men United version of Nightcrawler and being



**blown away, but that pales in comparison to what she's got in store this year.**

Did either of the ladies featured knit the Who scarf that Chris Garcia was promoting a few years ago? Or did the Lovely Linda put it together?

**Jason:** The infamous Doctor Who scarf of impossible to estimate value was knitted by our own Leigh Ann Hildebrand. I'm sure she would gladly knit another for you after graduating from Harvard Divinity. For a price...



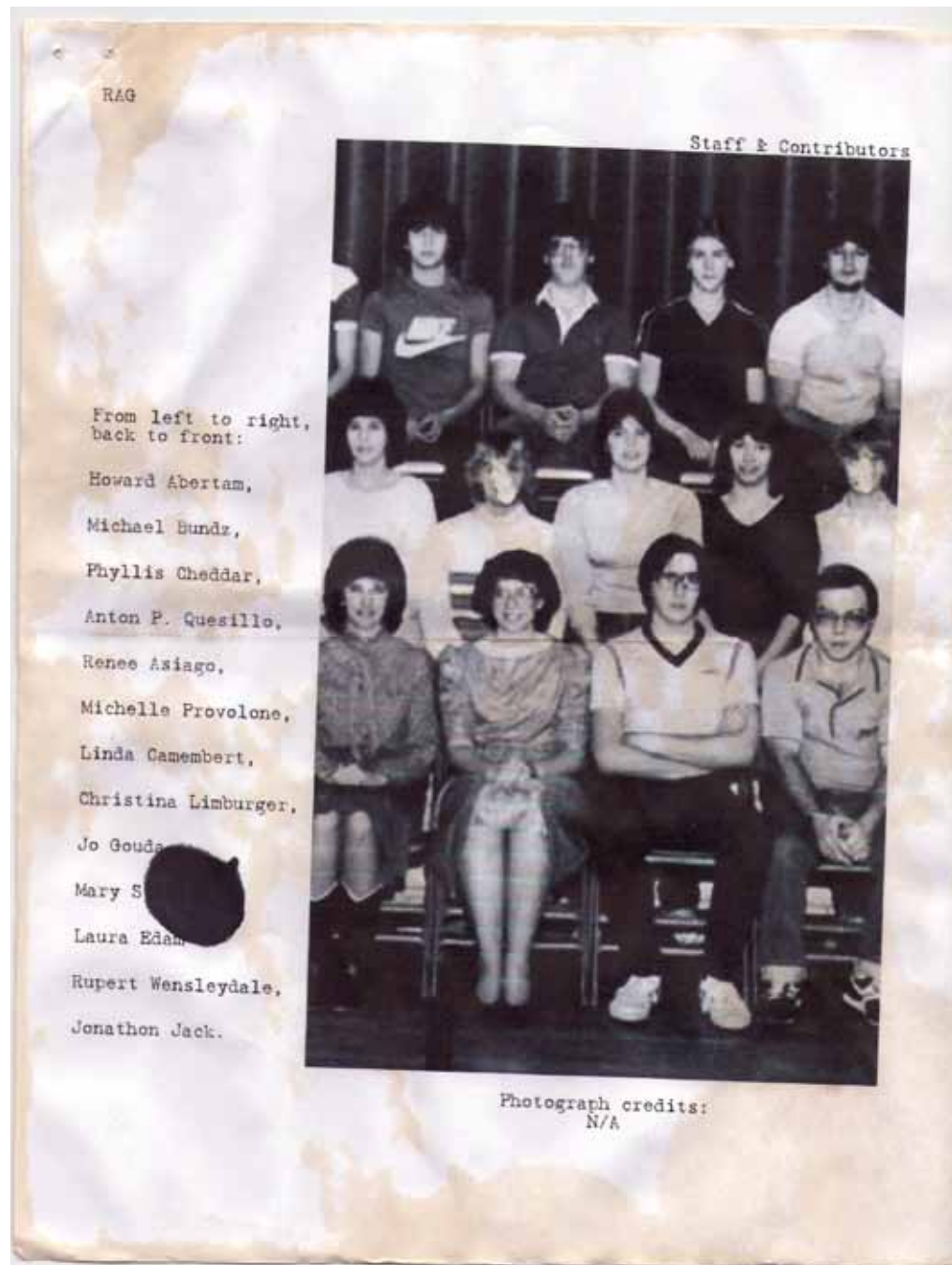
Nope, no locs. I didn't send you one. Bad me. Punish me until I get to like it.

**Jason: You called down the thunder...**

3.3... Geez, what a RAG! Even sez so on the cover. Based on the contributors, it's quite the cheesy rag, too. The photograph of the staff and contributors...they look like graduates from the Young Republicans of America summer camp. They've never had a naughty thought between them. Some of them might even hit puberty, but there's no guarantees.

**Jason: You'd think they'd take another picture after 30 years, right?**

Dear readers...you don't deserve our fanzine! We're arrogant enough to set the standard for fanzine fans, and not one of you come even close! You must be this fannish to ride this zine! Go home and grow up a little more! (Boy, does that ever sound like some fanzine fans I could name...) Dear editors...who did you say you were again? And, who did you think you



were? Get over yourself! You mentioned something about an assisted suicide...need any more help? (An old line from public school...you can't suck imagination.) What a charming bunch...

**Jason: You should've seen the correspondence flying back**

**and forth between their staff and ours. It was made all the creepier when we realized their staff was just one guy using psuedonyms and writing in different 'voices'.**

As I read the articles...a costumer's guild is not a costumer's prison, and shouldn't



be run that way. Bill Rotsler came up with his Rules of Costuming for a reason. I can think of some people who look fabulous in Spandex because they would look equally fabulous naked. The rest of us...well, Spandex covers but does not conceal. Some Spandex costumes I've seen required me to wash my eyes out with soap. Some of the politics hinted at here are close to what drove us out of costuming fandom in the late 80s.

**Jason: Don't worry. Those**

**politics have never wandered far away from costuming.**

A weird issue. Most parody has a grain of truth about it, so I am sure it would have been funnier if it hadn't had some truth in it. I usually say that about the Dilbert comic strip. Maybe this issue has a Colbert-like truthiness about it?

**Jason: Strategy.**

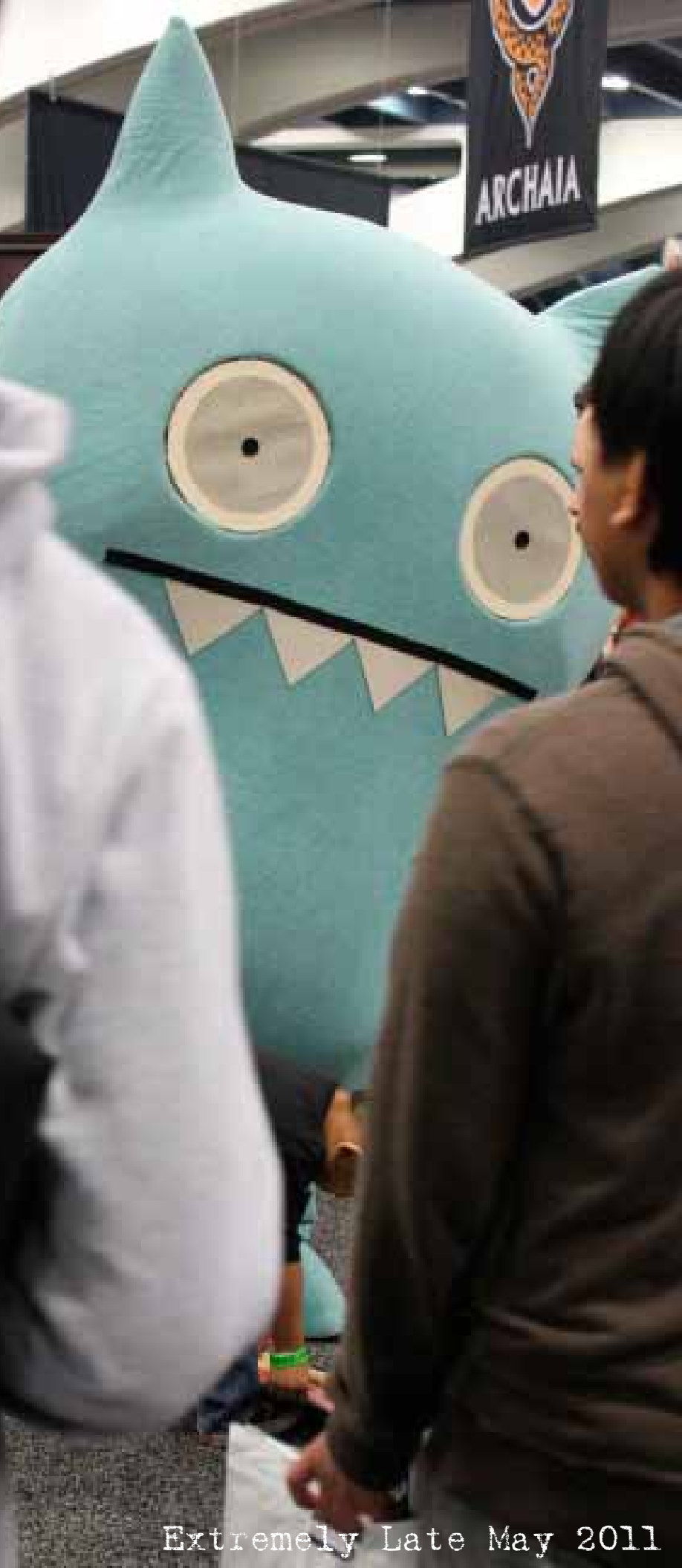
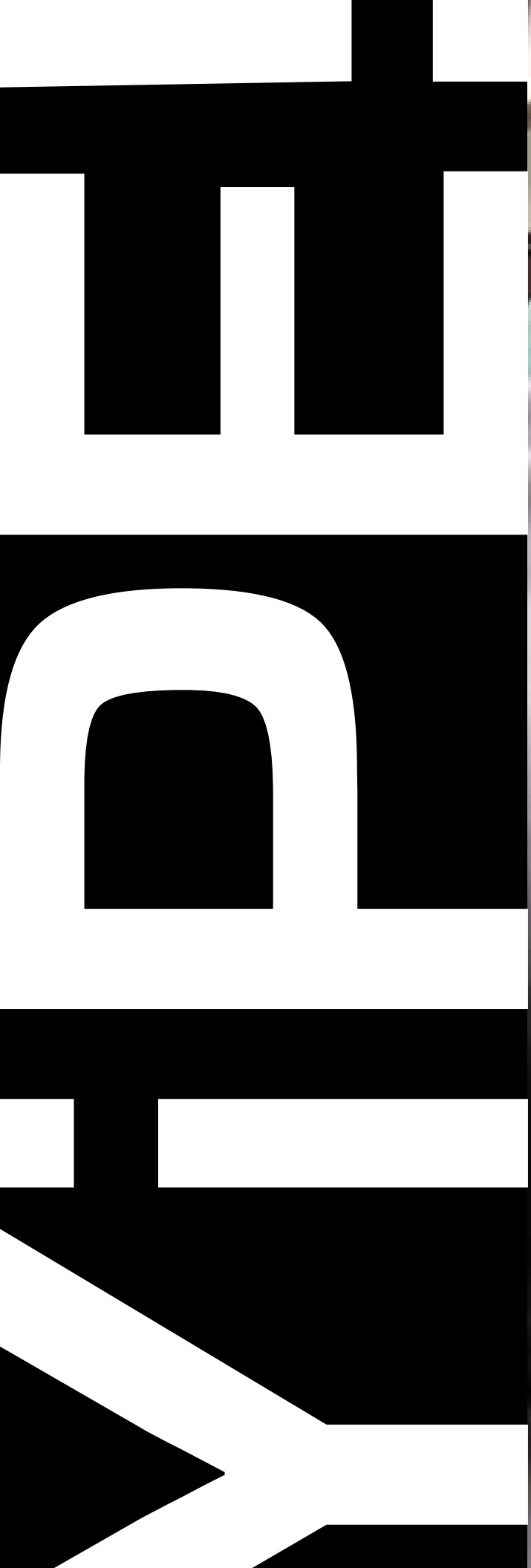
I am done for now, and many

thanks. I will respond to the next issue at some point. I'd say Real Soon Now, but who are we kidding? At least you know the spirit will be willing, even if the schedule isn't. See you then, and hope you are the same.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.







Extremely Late May 2011