

Science Fiction/San Francisco

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Contents

News and Notes.....	Chris Garcia.....	2
Letters of Comment.....	Chris Garcia.....	4
Editorial.....	Jean Martin.....	6
Alex Baker.....	Jack Avery..... Photo by Richard Man.....	9
A Costume A-Faire.....	Eva Barrows..... Photo by Jean Martin.....	12
Steamcon to World Fantasy by Rail, Bus and Balloon.....	España Sheriff.....	15
World Fantasy Con: A Fantasy World Becomes Reality.....	Jean Martin..... Photos by Jean Martin and Kevin Standlee.....	22
Halloween Victorian-Style.....	Jean Martin..... Photos by Jean Martin.....	31
The Loscon Lounge Report.....	España Sheriff.....	34
BASFA Minutes: Meetings 1007-9.....		36
Bay Area Fannish Calendar.....	España Sheriff..... Photo by Lucy Huntzinger.....	39

Art Credits

Cover

Round and Round by Lucy Huntzinger

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News and Notes

By Christopher J. Garcia
Editor

By the time you read this, LosCon will be over. I'm sorry to say I cannot read the future, but I'm sure it was a good time. I'll be writing about it later, that's for sure.

The TAFF race continues with Frank Wu and Anne KG Murphy & Brian Gray battling it out for votes. They both have words in *The Drink Tank 232* about why they should be your delegate. It's a fun topic and they'll both do great!



There's also the auction of Tuckerizations for TAFF coming, featuring some names you might have heard of. Cory Doctorow, Charlie Stross, David Brin, Elizabeth Bear, Nalo

Hopkinson, Julie Czerneda and Mary Robinette Kowal. It's going to be huge! I'll have more details later.

There's the 40th issue of *Banana Wings* out and it's great stuff with articles from James Bacon, Dave Langford, Nova Award winner Claire Brialey, and Mark Plummer, a front cover by Pat Vrizi, a BaCover from Ditmar, a pair of Anticipation reviews from Randy Byers and Niall Harrison, both of whom write about our dinner at Au Pied de Cochon, and my article, "TAFF Viewed as a Series of Haiku."

It's a really good issue showing why it's won so many Nova Awards.

By the way, the Novas were given out and the winners were Claire, *Banana Wings* for Best Fanzine, and Sue Mason winning just barely over Alison Scott for Best Fan Artist. In an odd twist, I came without six votes of winning Best Fanzine with James and Claire for *Journey Planet*. That's awesome largely because no American has ever won a Nova because technically we're not eligible, but since *JP* is majority a UK zine, it's eligible and I'm along for the ride!





Exhibition Hall is out and its fourth issue is really fun as it covers all sorts of fun. eFanzines.com is its home so go and check it out.

Speaking of eFanzines, there are some great things that've been posted lately. First off, there's *The Panoramic Route* by Guy and Rose Marie Lillian. It's a fantastic trip report from the Lillians on their trip to Anticipation. I'm in it. That's awesome. Guy also put out a fine issue of *The Zine Dump*, his zine review zine. I like that Guy guy. He's a good guy.

If you haven't read Christina Lake and Doug Bell's *Head*, issue 8 is on eFanzines.com. It's got a great cover and is well worth reading. Sadly, I've only managed to skim it, but I read issue 7 and it was a delight!

Speaking of great zines that I seldom get a chance to read, largely because it only comes out once a year, there's *It Goes on the Shelf*. Ned Brooks does an incredible job with each issue, which may explain why it only comes out once a year. There are looks at books, magazines, and folks. It's got a great Brad Foster cover that I think is one of his best B+W pieces in recent memory.

Vegas fandom is at it again. There's issue #10 of *Home Kookin'* with Arnie Katz at the reins. It's good stuff, though sadly I've only gotten to skim. Curse this money-payin' gig which now leaves me little time for at-work FANAC!!!



Bruce Gillespie is probably the World's Top Fan Writer. That's a big claim, but you go and read *Scratch Pad*, issues 71 and 72 now on eFanzines.com, and you tell me different. His zines *Steam Engine Time* and *Scratch Pad* are both great. If there's justice, and after the

failure of Taral Wayne to win the Fan Artist last year, I'm beginning to think there isn't, Bruce will walk off with a Hugo at Worldcon next year.

Steve Green's new zine, the *Fortnightly Fix*, is also up on eFanzines.com and is well worth the time and effort. A really nice little zine!

Also, *New Moon*, the latest edition in the *Twilight Saga*, is pretty much the greatest thing ever, though I totally wanna see the movie within the movie, *Gambling Gods and LSD*.



Letters of Comment

Let us begin with the editor of one of the finest fanzines going today, *Alexiad*, with a LOC from Joe Major!

Dear Chris & Jean:

A couple of years ago one of the local radio stations changed format. To fill in the hiatus, they played “I Am the Walrus.” Only “I Am the Walrus.” Any hour of the day or night one could turn to their channel and hear goo goo a joob...

So now I must say to Lisa, when we both get home from work, “I am thee and you are me and we are all together...” That is to say, nice comment on the review of *Soulless*, but Lisa wrote it.

Chris Garcia replies: Noted. You know, there was a radio show out here on one of the college stations that got a letter from a listener who accused them of over-playing Metallica’s “Master of Puppets.” They responded by playing “Master of Puppets” every other song, with Guns ‘n Roses’ “Sweet Child of Mine” played in-between. It was awesome.

As for the naked girls from *Gia* I prefer Angelina, but I think she’d make

a great Phedre in the adaptation of Jacqueline Carey’s *Kushiel* books myself.

Let me say I will say nothing against a naked Angelina, but let there be no filmaic version of the Kushiel books. PLEASE!!!

The University of Louisville library had for some unaccountable reason a subscription to *Amra*, so I sat down one afternoon and read the two bound volumes they had. (For other interests they also had *The Baker Street Journal*.) Now that was a remarkable zine, with still useful stuff written by pros. There was a hardback of the best articles which is now I understand a collector’s item costing \$\$\$\$. It was divided into two paperbacks which I do have.

I got a long run of Amra from Recycle Bookstore which I totally bought and now love. Even better is that I got a run of The Baker Street Journal back in the day, though it’s not that big. I’ve been looking for copies of Ripperana and Ripperologist, both of which they used to hold at Stanford.

I see John Purcell has a copy of the Klingon *Hamlet*. I also have the Klingon *Gilgamesh*. Qapla’.

“Wear my Medal Ceremony Princess Leia costume.” Yeah, wearing the Slave Leia costume would probably be a good way to be kept out of the concert. Carrie Fisher said she really had to get in shape for that scene. It seems a very popular costume, though I don’t know if the pillow-fighting Slave Leias or the Slave Leia bellydancing is the more interesting version.

There’s a Slave Girl Leia t-shirt that I’ve been tempted to purchase since I don’t think I can pull off the outfit itself.

So you saw the *Buckaroo Banzai* fest in Reno... was *Big Trouble In Little China* really the rewrite of *Buckaroo Banzai vs. the World Crime League*?

Supposedly it was a spin-off and Jack Burton was supposed to be in BBvWCL and there’s been word of a couple of groups trying to get it made still.

See you in Raleigh.
Namarie,
Joseph T Major

*Always good to hear from you, Joe!
Rock on!*

And now...Lloyd Penney!

Dear Jean and Chris and David and España and Tom:

Thank you all for yet another *SF/SF*, issue 97. It is Remembrance Day here, Veteran's Day where you are, and as of today, I have finished my second day as a production assistant at the Law Society of Upper Canada, one of the oldest law societies in the world. Finally got myself another daytime job. So, writing locs like this are going to have to be done in the very spare time I will have left.

I come from a line of vets (and a couple of folks who were drummed out of the army) and I always think about them on the various holidays. Sadly, I've not spent much time with any of them in recent years.

The end of the con season? That's what it was for us, having been in Rochester, New York last weekend for Astronomicon 11. Good times for all, old friends, a treasure or two in the dealers' room. Can't ask for more on that one. Steamcon sounds great... I haven't heard any more reports from it. Pictures? I will look for good stuff from Chris and España. World Fantasy has been in Ottawa (1984), Montréal (2001) and Calgary (2008), so perhaps Toronto

is due? And, no, I'm not running it. I'd like to see it, though.

There are reports and pictures in Exhibition Hall. It was a great event (as was WindyCon) and there's a lot of talk about the explosion in the number of Steampunk cons coming up. It's be cool for a Toronto World Fantasy, though I'll never turn down a reason to go to Montreal!

I've had eye problems, too, Jean, remember my operation? It was to reattach the retina in my right eye. Hurray for good quality optometrists who can detect eye problems as they examine you. My optometrist saved the sight in my eye, in my opinion. In a couple of months, I have my annual check-up with my ophthalmologist, and he may determine if it's time for an operation to have the cataract forming in my right eye removed.

People need cons and zines and other fun activities more, but fewer have the desire, knowledge and money to stage those activities. I am trying my best to keep zines and cons as going concerns, at least in my little corner of fandom.

I'm right there with ya, Lloyd!

Thanks for the reminder on *Yipe!* I've just left a message for Kevin and Andy and Jason, that I'll write letters for them as they produce issues.

It's a fine zine and one that'll do well over the long haul. I love the layouts. I'm never going to be that good at it!

SiliCon sounded great... why was it small? Is money that tight for everyone? Or are more people going to the larger conventions, especially the anime cons? The Sweeney Todd event sounded very good indeed. How were the meat pies, Mrs. Lovett? Did they taste like chicken? Or perhaps long pig?

SiliCon had one year where it topped 1,000, as I understand it, but since then it's been much smaller. The big year, there was a focus on horror and films and they drew a lot more people. Still, 'tis a great con.

Ah, I am done, and another zine is a fond memory. Off it goes to you and to my LJ archive. Take care, folks, and many thanks. Could there possibly be early talk about a huge meeting of the lot of us in Reno ? Someone has to look after that Garcia guy... See you all next issue.

Yours, Lloyd Penney

Always good to hear from Lloyd Penney! Keep on readin' and writin', brother.

Editorial

By Jean Martin
Editor

I was going to write a litany of my woes from the past few months, from work to personal to health issues. Not to mention car troubles. But I will spare everyone and just concentrate on the latest... that I was in a car accident a couple of weekends ago and wound up in the emergency room to get a CT scan (diagnosis: whiplash). It seems like whenever I'm too tired and decide to cancel my plans and just drive home to rest, I wind up in the ER. A couple of months ago, I had to get an emergency MRI to rule out a brain tumor. So I'm doing the rounds with insurance and doctors all over again. All this stress and exhaustion has really made me realize: a) I have to prioritize my life, b) I'm grateful to have all the other good things in my life including friends and family, c) I'm a strong and capable person and am successfully (barely!) dealing with a rough patch that has been going on for several months, d) things could be worse and things are not that bad (more on this later), and e) the Universe is truly trying

to tell me something and I just need to figure things out.

All this also made me unmotivated to write and do creative projects and I even missed a party that I was looking forward to for a year. And the world still exists and I am still alive. Despite my fears, life goes on without my constantly doing things and going places. That Saturday, I literally just sat on my couch and vegged. I don't recall the last time I've ever done that. I watched the entire Series 3 of *Sarah Jane Adventures*. It was pretty enjoyable, especially "The Wedding of Sarah Jane" two-parter with one of my favorite actors, Nigel Havers, as the groom.

I also caught up on Series 3 of *Robin Hood*, which I am enjoying more than the first two. This time, the themes are more adult and not constrained by the Robin Hood mythos. It's gone into different directions exploring the medieval world such as religion, disease, law, royalty, war, etc. Several new compelling characters are introduced, including the familiar Friar Tuck and Prince John and made-up characters in

the form of Isabella (Guy of Gisborne's sister), Kate (new romantic interest) and Archer (Guy and Robin's half-brother). Toby Stephens as Prince John is simply amazing. Isabella is a strong female role. I don't like Kate too much as she seems too modern. I like how they've shown a more vulnerable and sympathetic side to Guy this time around. Robin has matured and come into his own and into the legend that he's become.

Recently, as well, I checked out the first two episodes of the *Prisoner* remake on AMC. I almost gave up after the first 20 minutes but I wanted to give it a chance as Sir Ian McKellen is in it. But judging by people's posts on Facebook, everyone agrees that this production is terrible. There was no sense of mystery, suspense, sophistication, color or atmosphere. It was very hard to care for Number 6 and the storyline was changed for no apparent or logical reason. I don't mind when remakes are different if they are good and keep the spirit of the original. I had to watch all of the episodes of the original *Prisoner* to get rid of the bad

aftertaste after watching the new series. It was that bad.

A remake that just came out that I am happy about, though, is *V*. I loved the original miniseries and its sequels so I was hoping this new one would be good as well. Morena Baccarin, Inara from *Firefly*, is the leader of the Visitors and she is quite good in this. All the characters are interesting and seem realistic. Their stories are cleverly interwoven and revealed gradually and logically. Their respective plights draw you in emotionally and you can relate to their different reactions and what they're going through. The plot has been modernized and made relevant to our post-9/11 world but still harkens back to the original. I like how one of the main heroes is a Catholic priest. And how the topics of religion, politics, media, family and human freedom and survival are all explored. I'm looking forward to seeing more and to see what other twists and turns are in store.

A spinoff, *Stargate: Universe*, debuted recently as well. It is pretty bland and not even the talented Robert Carlyle can save this clunker. His character is too reminiscent of Baltar from the new *Battlestar Galactica*, too. I watched three episodes and didn't care

for it at all. I liked the original *Stargate* and I'm wondering why they keep doing spinoffs that just don't do justice to the franchise.

I just watched the new version of *Emma* with the always-delightful Romola Garai and the handsome Johnny Lee Miller (who unfortunately doesn't seem to be aging very well). Four episodes was too long (it dragged) and there were too many awkward script interpretations of the novel (and extraneous details presented). There also didn't seem to be much chemistry between the two leads. Yet, it was still lovely to see beautiful country manors and landscapes, and of course, Regency costumes and dances.

The latest *Doctor Who*, "Waters of Mars," was excellent! Thank goodness after the so-so "Planet of the Dead." I, and I'm sure a lot of fans, just have such high expectations of this incredible franchise that even a good episode is just not good enough. So I'm happy to say that "Waters of Mars" puts the show back on track and I'm looking forward (but am very sad as well) to see David Tennant's last two episodes coming up this month.

But what's up with all the sequels, new seasons, spinoffs and remakes? Is

there no good original programming out there anymore? I checked out *Big Bang Theory* and *Dexter* recently — which friends have recommended highly — and was not impressed by either. I've watched a few *Castle* episodes with Nathan Fillion (Mal from *Firefly*) and it's been hit or miss. The Halloween episode was great, though: It showed Nathan donning a Mal costume for Halloween and the story explored L.A.'s vampire underworld. The vampire teeth artist who made my fangs last year is part of that scene so it was quite interesting to see it. There is a vampire scene here in San Francisco, which is really appropriate due to *Interview with the Vampire*, but I haven't had a chance to check it out. I did get new vampire teeth made this year at BayCon and wore them to the PEERS Le Bal des Vampires last month, which I will be reviewing in a future issue.

I did discover, through a friend, a relatively new hilarious and extraordinary British comedy entitled *The IT Crowd*. I highly recommend it! More than that... I urge you to see it! It's available on Netflix Watch Instantly and I saw all three series in three days. It was that good! I missed all the characters already after I was done. I

wish they would make more. The third series is the best, and one episode in particular, “Friendface,” I related to a lot. It explored the effects of social networking sites such as Facebook, especially regarding getting in touch with people from our pasts.

I was so happy to get in touch with my old heavy metal friends this year. It’s been great to see some of them again. But I’ve realized we are all living different lives now. I’ve found it sad and frustrating that reconnecting has been tenuous with most, and even disappointing in one instance. As I mentioned in a previous Editorial, I don’t know where all this is heading but I’m no longer making it a priority. The exciting rocker lifestyle I used to have in my 20s is gone forever. While I can

experience glimpses of it, I have resigned myself to the fact that it’ll never be the same again.

Which makes me all the more grateful for what I have now. Times have been tough for me lately, and I haven’t been motivated to write, do creative projects and go to events, but when I do (I haven’t really slowed down much, if at all), I feel great and am glad to have such supportive friends. And that I keep meeting kindred spirits, most recently at the World Fantasy Convention that I went to and am reviewing in this issue.

And as I mentioned earlier, things aren’t too bad with me, all things considered, especially after I found out that a friend lost her husband the night before I write this Editorial. We have an

obituary for Alex Baker in this issue. We are very sad about his passing and our thoughts and prayers are with Johanna during this difficult time. I hope she gets lots of comfort and support from her real family as well as her fandom family.

To end this Editorial on a different note, I finally started reading the *Watchmen* graphic novel. I liked the movie version and decided that it was time to find out why it is hailed as the greatest graphic novel of all time. My mini review is embedded in my article on the Gaskell Halloween Ball in this issue.

I wish everyone a happy and safe leadup to the holiday season, and to *SF/SF* Issue Number 100. We’re almost there!

Join our crew!

We are looking for writers to cover local events, conventions, fan groups and the fannish scene in general. Contact Jean Martin and Chris Garcia at SFinSF@gmail.com

Alex Baker

By Jack Avery

Founding Editor

Alex Baker's life was full of stories.

The stories he created as a GM and player in many LARP and tabletop role playing games.

The true stories he would tell of his adventures, hair flopping, arms waving, full of theatrical flair.

The stories his friends are telling now about his kindness, his wit and the effect he had on their lives.

Stories full of the characters he brought to life and the character he was.

Known as DancingShaman on Livejournal, and as General Zod in fandom, Baker died December 1st at his home in Concord following a lengthy battle with cancer.

Baker was a well-known and respected figure in Bay Area gaming circles, putting on games at a number of local conventions as well as running and playing in many local tabletop and LARP campaigns.

"My favorite moment as a GM is that moment of satori - when you can see by the expression on a player's face that



by Richard Man

they get it," he wrote in his Live Journal, "The plot just unfolded for them, they've figured out the bad guy from a series of clues...whatever. That instant when their expression lights up, and you see that self-satisfied smirk that says 'got you, sucker!'"

He was a role player for more than two decades, having been introduced to Dungeons and Dragons by his mother.

Gaming was also responsible for Baker meeting his wife, Johanna Mead.

"In May of '96, I had been back in California for about eight months, and was living in Antioch with my first roommate, Mike. Mike was, like myself, a gamer and a LARP'er, and he had found this local LARP troupe he was going to join.

"On the evening in question, I was home that evening when Mike called. He was stuck at work, and couldn't make a meeting of the group to turn in his character sheet, so could I do it for him? I said sure (I had no pressing interest in joining the group at that time, as work and my old gaming group were taking up a fair portion of my time), and I drove out to Pinky's Pizza, which is where Mike told me the meeting was occurring.

"I arrive, and the place is packed out with gamers. The troupe ("Diablo's Children") used Pinky's to do downtime meetings and general get-togethers. I

handed in Mike's character sheet, and got to talking to several of the players (BrookW, RobA, and many others), and decided that, what the hell, I'd hand in a sheet myself. 'OK,' says Brook, 'but you've got to clear your concept with the Storyteller. That's her over there.'

"Her?"

"Brook points to this Goth chick standing at the bar with her back to us, a beer in her hand and watching a re-run of *The X-Files* on the tube. I wander over, order a brew for myself, and introduce myself. We start to talk, first about the game, then the show, then about all sorts of stuff. Eventually we end up outside and talking still, when I notice the wedding ring she's wearing.

"So where's the hubby?" I ask. She tells me that there isn't one, that she wears the ring to keep people from hitting on her as she takes the bus to SFSU.

"And that's how I met britgeekgrrl."

They were married in 1999.

"He treats me like a queen and can make me laugh until I hiccup," Mead said. "'What else does a woman need?'"

Baker was later a member of, and GM for, the Cthulhu LARP troop Serious Moonlight before he and Mead broke away and created Chuckling Cthulhu, a LARP group that ran several

well-received games, the most famous of which is probably "Black Sun, White Light" at Dundracon in 2006. He and his wife also ran Namahage Station, a LARP based on the *Firefly* universe.

He was known for his ability to invest his characters with life and depth, often being given the most unplayable characters in a game as GMs knew that he could not only survive but triumph. In one campaign even earning his character the nickname "The Teflon Cockroach" for his ability to role play his way out of adversity.

Deirdremoon remembers in particular one moment from a 7th Sea game at ConQuest:

"I can see him in his dark blue and black doublet, white floofy shirt, dark pants, and tall boots, drawing his sword," she said, "He was going to do his duty to protect his people and his family, a wife he didn't even particularly like (in character-- NOT Britgeekgrrl), and was facing down a threat he didn't think he could handle (myself and Fintach, actually).

"But he drew a deep breath, knitted his brows, and took a graceful and powerful stance with his sword that said, 'All right, I don't want to do this, but come on. I'll take you.'

While he wore numerous costumes

and played many characters, he is most associated with Superman foe General Zod. Baker, who bore more than a slight resemblance to Terrance Stamp, often used Zod's catch phrase "Kneel before ZOD!" as his own.

"I *do* know that he could make an entire room full of people kneel before him, simply by the proclamation that he was Zod," said friend and former roommate Jennifer Wylie. "He was just that bloody awesome."

Friends even arranged for Baker, dressed as Zod, to finally defeat Superman (as portrayed by Baron Law) and force him into submission at Baycon 2007.

Although he could be fierce in his Zod persona, his friends also remember his nobility, kindness, warm hugs and willingness to help when needed. He was protective of his friends and of his fandom.

One of Baker's more famous escapades was his run-in with KLLC radio personality Hooman Khalili at ConQuest 2006. Khalili was known for a segment where he attends public events and makes fun of the attendees, choosing his targets to make the members of the group look bad and using editing tricks to make fun of them. A key component is that he does not

reveal who he really is, pretending to be a reporter.

As Baker explained it:

“Khalili deliberately and methodically ridiculed the attendees he spoke to, with the kind of glee you expect from a five-year old that just discovered how to set ants on fire. Khalili especially loved targeting people in-costume, trying to get them to answer questions ‘in-character.’ Because, of course, the mocking could then be upped by orders of magnitude.”

Baker, who was playing an Imperial Officer in a *Star Wars*-based LARP at the con, was approached to talk to a reporter from CBS who wanted to interview him. In character. Alarm bells started ringing.

“It was the wheedling, conniving tone that did it,” Baker wrote in his Live Journal. “All at once, the whole thing dropped into my head. The voice clicked, the face resolved, and with a burning clarity I will never EVER have again, I knew what was going on and the opportunity that the angels (with singing and clouds opening and everything) had just wheeled in front of me.

“I smiled.

“He smiled back.

“I stepped in to address the

microphone.

“He flipped it on.

“And in the loudest, deepest, most military bellow I could find within me, I shouted at the top of my lungs to the world at large:

“HI HOOMAN!! HEY EVERYONE, THIS IS HOOMAN!! HE WANTS YOU TO GUESS HIS NAME, BUT HE’S HOOMAN!! HE’S HERE TO MAKE FUN OF YOU!! DON’T TALK TO HIM, ‘CAUSE HE’S A DICK!!”

Faced with the wrath of a merciless General Zod, Khalili quickly retreated to find weaker prey.

Baker was well-read in science fiction and fantasy and described himself as a long-time addict to the writing of H.P. Lovecraft. He enjoyed a wide range of media science fiction and loved movies and movie soundtracks. His ability to quote from *Star Trek* was legendary among his friends.

His own quotes are equally legendary, including “The Senate demands more bacon.”

While no one will ever be able to tell his stories, like the story of the dollar bill in the road, quite the way Baker did, his friends are collecting memories of him at community.livejournal.com/zods_henchmen

Baker’s family moved to the Bay Area when he was seven. After graduating from high school in Antioch, he joined the Air Force.

Baker was proud of his service in the military, serving for 16 years and attaining the rank of Staff Sergeant. Johanna Mead said he enjoyed being in the military. His time in the service gave him a number of notorious stories to tell.

“Whilst stationed in England, there is an infamous incident that started with a can of Foster’s at Bury St. Edmund’s USAFB and ended with him waking up in Australia,” Mead said.

For most of his military career he was based in Alabama, but he had fond memories of the three years he served in England. During his last tour, he was stationed in Oakland and became involved in the East Bay gaming scene.

While in the military, he obtained his Associate’s Degree in Information Resources Management from Troy State University.

He is survived by his wife, Johanna Mead; his father, Dan; his stepmother, Anna; his sister, Melissa; his niece Emmy; and his father-in-law Christopher and Christopher’s wife Jennifer. Baker was 43.

A Costume A-Faire

By Eva Barrows

Contributing Writer

It started with an email from a friend inviting us to join her in going to the Renaissance faire in a few weeks. My husband of course wanted to go. He is an artist obsessed with the artwork of the Renaissance.

My first instinct was not to say anything about the email but I knew my husband received a copy and I didn't want to be rude to our friend by not answering her invitation.

"Honey," I asked, "Did you want to go to the Renaissance faire this year?"

"Yes, sure," he said.

It was as I had suspected, he wanted to go but I didn't have anything to wear. My husband expects me to dress up when we go to the Renaissance faire. I learned that last year when I went to the faire with him, my mom and her friends. I wore my street clothes as I had grown out of a peasant outfit that I had made a few years before. The moment we got to the faire, my husband rushed me over to the costume rental tent.



Eva and John Barrows

by Jean Martin

Once in the tent I was whirled around by the clothing attendants that worked there. I was offered a rose pink skirt and a waist length chemise undergarment. I was instructed to go to the back of the tent and put those items on in the dressing room. When I came out of the dressing room a female attendant put a leather bodice on me, instructed me to lift my boobs so that they would hang over the top of the bodice but not out of the chemise, then she laced me up so tight that the weight around my mid section was squeezed out below the bodice. I am not sure how I feel about wearing a tight bodice. It adds a feeling of authenticity but it also redistributes my weight in places I am not used to having it.

The Renaissance faire that we have been going to the last few years is located at Casa de Fruita, near Hollister, California. More often than not the weather there is warm to hot and there is no way around sweating. As I was wearing the rented costume, I accumulated dirt around the bottom of the skirt, dirt in the middle of the skirt

when I sat down on hay bale seating, and ounces and ounces of sweat all through the outfit. When I returned the costume at the end of the day I noticed pronounced stains on the skirt. I turned the garment in not knowing how the rental clothing was handled. I noticed that the undergarment was put in a laundry bag to be washed and the soiled dirt and body fluid soaked skirt was put back on a hanger ready to go for the next renter to be clothed in. I thought about pointing out that the skirt was unfit for someone else to wear without a good washing, but I decided against it due to embarrassment and fear of being charged more for having made the skirt too dirty for the next person to wear.

With the thought of having to rent another costume looming in my mind, I calculated how long it would be until we went to the faire this year and how long it would take me to sew a new Renaissance outfit. I decided that I could comfortably sew my own undergarment within the month until we went to the faire, squeezing the project in between a full day of work and other projects I had going on at the time. I also had enough time to order an overdress from Museum Replicas' online catalog.

I put my order in for the princess style overdress and started work on making the chemise. I bought cheap unbleached muslin from Joann Fabrics and had the rest of the materials I needed on hand. The pattern for the chemise consisted of simple front, back and sleeve pieces.

The most complicated part of the garment, which shouldn't have been complicated at all, was a simple button hole that needed to be sewn into the neck line at the front middle of the chemise. The buttonhole was to be where the length of ribbon to go around the neckline would be inserted, then tied in a bow to cinch the garment at the neck. I had difficulties in sewing the buttonhole because the material was too thin and the thread bunched up several times. I spent so much time trying to do the buttonhole the right way, and in the end had to give up on it. I decided to put the instructions for the garment away and do the construction in my own way. To get the buttonhole over with, I slit a hole in the material with my seam ripper, and glued the cut edges with good old Elmer's tacky glue so the hole wouldn't get any larger as the ribbon tugged on the opening.

I started to worry about the overdress I had ordered a month before the faire when it was down to one week before the event and I had not yet received a package. I called the customer service phone number for Museum Replicas and found out that the item was on back order and would not arrive in time. I told the customer service representative to cancel my order as I wouldn't need it when it did come. I was upset that I wasn't notified beforehand of the delay, as I didn't have time to come up with an alternative. I told my husband that I wouldn't have the overdress in time but suggested that we buy something at the faire itself for me to wear. There are always plenty of vendors there selling clothing, and it would be a perfect solution to my costuming problem.

I did realize that buying a Renaissance outfit at the Renaissance faire itself would be expensive, but I didn't realize how expensive. Once we got to the faire my mission was to find an outfit, then start enjoying the other activities that were going on there. My husband started to poke around the vendor stalls looking for a cavalier hat to complete his lordly ensemble but I warned him that if we didn't get my outfit soon, I would give up the idea

completely and I wouldn't be dressing up this time. With that warning he started to look in earnest for an outfit with me.

We passed by a stall that didn't have many bodices left to choose from as this was the last weekend of the faire, but they had a few leather bodices with Celtic designs on them. We flipped the price tag of one of them over and found that the bodice was going for much more than we would want to spend. I also did not like the bodice itself as it was for a tough warrior princess and not a peasant who just wants to fit in with the rest of the faire goers. We went on to the next stall and found a lone princess style overdress that was the last one in my size. It was gold brocade fabric with gold detail in the lace-up bodice front. The saleswoman at the stall verified that the price of the overdress was \$260. My husband and I grimaced and walked away from the dress.

At the next stall we looked at we found a modest selection of separates to choose from. There was a large rack of skirts in different colors to match with a plethora of bodices made from different

kinds of fabric. There were bodices with skulls and cross bones, kitty cats and floral motifs. A saleswoman approached us and asked how she could help us. I informed her that I had a chemise with me that I would like to match up with a top and skirt to complete the outfit. She took a look at the chemise for the color and found that it was a natural white. She showed us the rack of bodices that were in my size and I took a look at them, and picked out a green brocade one with thread variations in the green that made a floral design.

The saleslady picked out an olive green round skirt that went well with the bodice and asked me to put that on over my chemise. I went into the dressing room and put them on. When I came out the saleslady had me put my arms behind my back and then she slipped the bodice on from behind. She laced up the front and asked me to pull my boobs up (I had forgotten about that part), and she tightened the top up the rest of the way. I looked, well, authentic. Then I asked the big question. How much does this cost? She said that the skirt was \$60 and the bodice was \$170. Wow, I thought. That

was a lot for something that I could make myself, but obviously didn't. I know that my husband would have let wear my street clothes over paying that much for a costume but I was already dressed in it. It was hot out, I didn't want to look anymore and I was hungry.

"Let's split the cost," I said to my husband.

"Um, OK?" He almost questioned.

We really couldn't afford it. I mean we could have bought two weeks of groceries or something, anything more important than a Renaissance costume. I knew it was too much and insensible to buy the outfit, but if we bought it, my long quest to find an outfit would be over and I wouldn't have to cringe each time the faire came to town and someone asked the question, "Do you want to go to the Renaissance faire?" If my husband and I bought the outfit now, I could always answer yes to that question and not have a feeling of dread in the pit of my stomach.

So we bought it, and are still paying for it.

Steamcon to World Fantasy by Rail, Bus and Balloon

By España Sheriff
Staff Writer

Being all hardcore steampunk (well, scared of flying), I took Amtrak's *Coast Starlight* up to Seattle for Steamcon last month. The *Starlight* runs from Seattle to Los Angeles so I'm familiar with it from its Southern leg and looked forward to completing the route.

I overpacked in my usual compulsive fashion, shoving enough outfits for two full conventions into one large suitcase and one carry-on. I didn't think to weigh the suitcase before checking it in, so it was a relief to discover upon handing it over to the ticket agent that it clocked in at 49.5 pounds — just a half pound shy of the weight limit. And although I didn't wear everything I packed, I did manage to go through a sizeable portion of it, changing two or three times a day. The only real embarrassment was the 22 pairs of stockings that my fevered pre-con brain had deemed absolutely essential.

The trip up was restful: I napped, enjoyed the views of the passing Fall foliage from the viewing parlor, and read. I finished *Lost Horizon* — the Capra film is in my top ten but I'd never read the novel, which is a fine example of an era when you could bring in a classic and satisfying tale in under 200 pages and no one felt shortchanged. I also got a ways

through the Jack Cady short story collection *Ghosts of Yesterday*, which I picked up mainly for its opening short ghost story which is set in the city and which I will review in some later issue of *SF/SF*. The last novella in the book *Time that Time Forgot* was what occupied the bulk of the ride and fit it well, since the story takes place in a haunted mist-enshrouded woodscape just after the American Civil War, mirroring the Northwestern landscape the train was passing through.

I arrived in Seattle at around 8 p.m. and took the light rail and a very short bus ride to the Hilton Garden Inn with minimum fuss. By this point it was just after 10 p.m. and although I could see quite a few obvious congoers in the bar area, I decided to unpack and get settled and rest up in order to start my con in earnest the following morning. And boy was I glad I did this.

I will preface the next bit by saying I had a very enjoyable convention overall and would consider returning next year, so please don't take this as illustrative of the whole event.

That said:

At-the-door registration was listed as opening at noon so I grabbed some coffee and poked my head out to the poolside reg area at 10 a.m. About twenty or twenty-five people were in line so I lined up as well. The

organizers had made a big deal about how memberships were almost sold out and I figured given that some folks might be buying more than one ticket, my odds were good but not certain.

As it turned out there were other fun folks in line and I chatted with them, with Tim Powers who dropped by for a bit and with our own Chris Garcia who flaunted his guest badge most viciously. Eventually noon rolled around and I looked back at the back of the line, several hundred people away, and wondered if the convention was going to do a count so the people at the end wouldn't have to wait for no reason (my understanding being that the membership cap was 1,200, with about 200 available). After about fifteen minutes we noticed that although things were happening at reg, the line was not moving. After about 45 minutes this became a little irritating. Apparently, pre-registered was still being handled exclusively.

I didn't mind making the choice to stand in line early, since that was my own decision, but ignoring several hundred people for the better part of an hour seemed more than a little rude. Eventually someone at reg realized that pre-registered members were going to keep coming in and they seemed to start alternating between the two lines. Only one membership at a time

was being handled by the three or so folks at reg as far as I could tell. Eventually the twenty-five or so people ahead of me were done, and at just past 2:00 p.m., after being in line for four and a half hours, two and a half of those after registration “opened,” I went up to get my badge. My form was filled out, I marked “check” as payment and had the check filled out and ID in hand. The person who helped me had been drafted at the last minute from a different department, apparently, and looked at my check (and at my form with the three payment options printed on it: “Check,” “Cash,” and “Credit Card”) and asked another staffer, “Do we take checks?” I remembered my breathing exercises and tried not to scream.

The volunteer was not to blame for this, of course, and not wanting to hold up the line I offered to pay with a credit card to speed things up. I was told that they did not have a credit card machine available at the moment. I bit my tongue and watched two other volunteers stuffing reg bags while my form data was entered, and then my check data. In the process I discovered that they did not have a stapler, either, so I offered to bring them one but was told one was “on the way.” I’m sure I looked skeptical. I got my badge and reg pack with no further conversation and went to have my first meal of the day and check what programming I had missed so far.

I checked at intervals throughout the day as the line slowly crept along and there were still people being handled at 4:30 p.m. Yes, shit

happens and yes the staff was working very hard. But registration is something that every convention has handled and no visible effort seemed to be taking place to change the system even as it was obviously failing hard. The responses from the concomm after have blamed the unexpectedly large turnout, however even if I had been the last person in line, opening 45 minutes late and taking an hour and a half to register 25 people still seems to point to problems with the process, not the size.

Additionally there seemed to be a lot of confusion about just how many memberships were available. I personally was told 1,200, then 1,300 which would fit the eventual official count of “about 1360.” I was also told “very few were remaining,” however my number was 1040 which implies nearly a quarter were still left. Still I haven’t heard or read about anyone being turned away at the door due to a sellout, and I have to say that with one very loud and annoyed exception who stomped out at 12:30 the attendees were by and large good spirited about the debacle.

But enough of that. The convention clearly knows this was a problem and I would strongly recommend they contact the committees of any number of other conventions of a similar or larger size to discuss the pre-existing solutions for registration in order to avoid such issues in the future.

Tired, hungry and irritated, I frankly expected the rest of the weekend to be an utter disaster, but I ate lunch and looked over the reg

materials and felt better. The badge and program book were lovingly designed and there were plenty of interesting panels and events coming up. Aside from Powers and Garcia, other Californians of my acquaintance present included TL&T Linda Wenzelburger as well as Merv Staton and Judith Richardson who I ran into in the restaurant and who smugly proclaimed their pre-registered Patron level badges which allowed them to skip queues and get first dibs at tickets for the tea party and Saturday concert.

My first official stop was the dealer’s room. Like Steam Powered before them, Steamcon had exclusively Steampunk and related items on sale. This makes for a nice solid selection of thematically appropriate wares, but as with Steam Powered, it seems to have discouraged or confused book dealers. Aside from one-title shows like Studio Foglio and the artist GOH Paul Guinan’s table, the only other book vendor I saw had picture books, comics and some manuals for the Steampunk RPG. This meant that there was no vendor selling Powers, Priest, Lake, Rambo or any other the other authors present as guests. Neither could you find any of the books or stories mentioned during any of the discussions.

This was covered back in August by *io9* and both the convention and the book dealers seem to think that the decision was made entirely by the other side. But honestly, if Steampunk conventions are going to continue, this is something that I would love to see

addressed. I can't imagine that with a bit of flexibility both sides couldn't be made happy, with the convention allowing Victoriana, a certain amount of horror, alternate history, dark fantasy and historical titles and the booksellers leaving some of their less appropriate titles at home. Luckily I had brought three books along with me so I was fine regardless.

The dealer's room was also a bit smaller than at Steam Powered and therefore very full all the time but with a smaller selection, but partly that's me being jaded — everyone for whom this was their first steampunk event was just blown away at a room full of goggles, watches and other wonderful things. I myself picked up a lovely red flouncy skirt and the usual last-minute accessories, in this case "attitude" feathers and a lovely black and white ribbon from Realms of Regalia.

Outside the dealer's room, several bands had a table set up to sell their wares and I bought a shoulder from Abney Park to replace my own decrepit one. Of the things Steamcon did well, the best was almost certainly the music track. Like anime, steampunk seems to have a strong musical streak and the big event for Saturday evening was the Airship Invasion concert featuring San Francisco performers Vernian Process and Unwoman as the opening acts and Abney Park as the headliners. Additionally there was the Sepiachord Saturday Cabaret which ran from noon until 8 p.m. with a different performer each hour. I particularly

enjoyed Rober Rial's Bakelite 78 and their rendition of "Brother Can You Spare a Dime?"

Another thing they got right was that unlike Steam Powered, which didn't have an art show at all, Steamcon had a nice variety of art all fitting the theme: paintings, drawings, photography, jewelry and sculptures. I was pleased to see some art on display from Sarah Dungan, whose sketchbook *Oh My Stars and Garters* I had picked up at Steam Powered. Other standouts included some gorgeous pistols and an impressive modded-up bike that made a nice centerpiece. It's early days yet, but if I do go next year I will certainly be comfortable joining in the fun.

The first panel I saw was on modding and distressing. The first speaker covered modification of plastic guns. Most of the information was things I knew, but there were several tips and tricks towards the end that I look forward to trying out soon. Afterwards, the two other panelists covered distressing clothes for costumes. Their experience was in the theater but it translated very easily to both hall and masquerade costuming and it was a little thrilling to consider purposely trashing an outfit. I decided to apply some of the techniques to the wedding dress that I've used as a base for one of my steampunk outfits to finally complete a concept that I've been mulling over for quite awhile now, hopefully in time for the Nova Albion Steampunk Exhibition in March.

For the evening I disdained the pile of skirts I had brought in favor of my newly purchased one, and almost immediately upon donning it realized it was essentially a flamenco skirt and no amount of pinning or draping was going to change that basic fact. I resigned myself and complemented it with a black top, Spanish fan and red carnations in my hair to seal the deal. It wasn't particularly steamy but it sure was fun to dance in. There were DJ dances both nights in the music room which almost made up for the lack of parties.

Which brings me to the second big hole in my convention experience, besides books: no party floor. Although this was apparently due to the con-hotel policies, it meant that there was no place to wander to between dancing. Once or twice I went to the lobby or to the pool area but I sorely missed the social aspect of being able to wander party to party and get into conversations. The lobby and bar of the Hilton are nice for chatting but better suited to private groups, not designed in a way that encourages mingling.

Saturday I almost by chance wandered into the *Boiler Plate* panel and was glad for it. It's a hoaxstory by Paul Guinan about an automaton that participated in pivotal events during the Victorian era. I had of course seen the website but had been unaware that there was a book. Guinan is a historian and political activist and the panel turned out to be very interesting, the book more than just a gimmick expanded into saleable form.

Afterwards I did another round of the dealer's room to stretch my legs. I got back in time for Powers's panel which was very amusing and during which he mentioned that he is working on a follow-up to *The Stress of Her Regard* which is my favorite of his novels, so I am looking forward to it. The panel was in an interview format, followed by questions from the audience. At both this and his Sunday "Victorian Era" panel, Powers's method was an interactive lecture style — probably because he also teaches — with a lot of walking into the audience and up to the questioner, especially the quieter shy ones, poor dears. Even some of the more awkward questions (or questioners) got handled with grace and humor.

I changed into my black and white number for the evening concert. I had not seen or heard Vernian Process before, although I'd seen their name around, but they did a fine job, and Unwoman is always wonderful. Abney Park is a crowd favorite of course, and they put on a great show. I had not heard about their change in lineup but am glad to report that their new female vocalist, Jody, was just great.

When the concert ended the DJ dance was still going, although just till 1 a.m. As the last songs played they announced next year's theme, Weird Weird West, which was met with great approval from the audience. Then it was time to wish for someplace to go as most folks wandered off to bed. I stayed up a while chatting poolside with a lovely group of Canadian fans before calling it a night.

Departing on Monday, I overestimated my transit skills and didn't realize that the hotel shuttle while convenient (it was raining) would lose me about half an hour since it would hit the airport first and then double back to drop me at the light rail station. Thus I missed my train by just a couple of minutes, to the amusement of my twitterlist. I rebooked for the next day's *Coast Starlight* and looked out the window at the pouring Seattle rain. Sightseeing was not an option.

Luckily Leigh Ann Hildebrand, Transit Professional (retired) Extraordinaire came to the rescue and hooked me up with a place to crash in Portland. So an hour later I boarded the *Cascades* South. The Portland weather was fine, and since I had checked in my giant suitcase I was only burdened with my little rolley overnighiter which I proceeded to roll all over the very walkable downtown area, grabbing a tasty pastrami sandwich and ale, then visited Powell's which was just as amazing as advertised in theory, but in practice was in the process of remodeling the SF section and therefore missing everything from M-Z that I was interested in. I popped into the Buffalo Exchange across the street to see what the Portland kids were wearing (answer: nothing I wanted) and picked up some gloves, then headed to the slightly seedier end of town for a dozen Voodoo Donuts before grabbing a bus out to Reed. Every single person I met was helpful and friendly. It was a bit creepy.

The next morning I grabbed one donut for the road (the maple bacon) and caught my *Coast Starlight* home at last. Of course it turned out someone had broken the Norton Bridge while I was away so the thirty minute Amtrak bus from Emeryville became the two hour Amtrak bus from Martinez instead, but eventually I found myself back home to an eerily quiet Embarcadero area.

My original two days to rest, recoup and do laundry became one day of sleep-deprived madness when my brother arrived in town for the evening and I remembered I had committed to head to the Marina for a meetup with Tim Powers and a bunch of folks from the Powers Yahoo group. I cleverly combined the two and so my brother picked me up, tossed my suitcases in the back of the giant Penske truck he was driving and we headed up for beers and a very fun evening. He is not a fan himself and so some of the explanation of what I had been doing the previous weekend and what I was doing the coming one (World Fantasy) were lost in translation, but he is a reader and so fit in fine with the great group of folks at the dinner and he ended up discussing Catholicism with Serena Powers. In addition, an old friend from my SFNet days was there. Afterwards I was wired and wanting to catch up a bit with Raul, so we stopped off for some more drinks at Home over on Church Street. We chatted and had some wonderful Maple scotch that tasted like breakfast and a very good vodka recommended by the bartender.

Eventually I got home, pulled the essentials out of my big suitcase, threw them and whatever quasi-respectable clean clothes remained in my closet into my small suitcase, and grabbed a few hours of sleep.

I felt surprisingly good on Thursday morning, probably because it was my Friday. Work zoomed by and soon enough I was on Caltrain headed South to San Jose for World Fantasy.

Trusty Google Maps had served me heroically in Portland and didn't fail me in San Jose. A fifteen minute walk got me to the Fairmont, where after a brief irritation with hotel checkin I got to my room and changed for the evening, then hit the consuite where the VanderMeers were co-hosting a party for *Last Drink Bird Head*. I ran into a bunch of friendly faces right away, like the consuite staff which included Kevin Roche and Andy Trembley as hosts, plus a full support staff that made me feel less guilty for not helping out on my first night.

In short order I ran into Jeremy Lassen from Night Shade, Jacob and Rina Weisman and Jill Roberts from Tachyon, and some of our own crew including Chris Garcia and Jean Martin. At ten the Australians opened their party down the hall in the Presidential suite, but it was so packed initially that it was not worth going in. When I did make it over I ran into Tim Powers again who introduced me to Kim Stanley Robinson... I managed to mostly keep my shit together. They were chatting with some

Clarion graduates including Nayad and her husband whom I had met at Steamcon. Eventually I wandered back to the consuite and got into a conversation with Kevin and with a writer from Texas, who was very fun and terribly patient (my tweets for the evening suggest I was pretty drunk by this point) and who later research indicates was Chris Roberson from Money Brain books and someone whose work is on my to-be-read shelf. At around two a.m. I called it a night and hit the sack.

I remembered to hydrate but forgot to put up the Do Not Disturb sign, so I woke relatively early on Friday. Up to the consuite for coffee I went, and got a chance to take a better look at the wonderful job Kevin & Andy had done decorating the place. The large main room was done up in homage to the Great Balloon Hoax, as the Corvidian Aeroscaphic Adventures airship embarkation waiting room, with posters of exotic destinations and all manner of clever touches. In the adjacent room the destination of Fiji was created with Tiki decor and a wonderful large portrait of Poe done by Mo Starkey who continues to amaze me with the great decor pieces she contributes to these shindigs.

I picked up my badge and my giant bag of swag, which lived up to its reputation. Off to the side a table had been set up for people to leave books they didn't want or already had. I dropped off two novels and picked up a copy of *Escapement* and the *Eclipse Two* anthology. I

was amused to note that fannish OCD kept the table organized with one pile for each book or magazine.

Unusually for a convention, I had to leave the hotel for a quick errand, and was surprised at how nice downtown San Jose is. I'd been to the city a number of times of course, but rarely wandered about and my impression was that it was a bit of a dump, but in fact the whole area has been revitalized and is extremely walkable with a bunch of shops, restaurants, museums and green areas and SJSU's lovely campus. The Tech Museum right across the street from the Fairmont is currently showing the Star Trek Exhibit and I am hoping to make it down to that before it closes.

When I got back I headed back up to the consuite for a bite and a chat and accidentally found myself drafted into service by the daytime shift leader Lamont Jones whom I unwisely allowed to see me being useful. I restocked food and drinks until 4 p.m. when it was time for my first panel of the convention, about overlooked writers of the supernatural. It was an overview of writers, mostly ones born in the late 19th century and deceased in the middle of the 20th, whose star had faded mainly due to unfortunate timing, being not quite modern but not quite classic enough to be rediscovered, and additionally mostly being authors of short fiction. I took copious notes and look forward to digging some of their work up.

After the panel I checked out the dealer's room which was quite impressive and contained almost nothing but books, although Spring Schoenhuth was there with her amazing jewelry. Next door was the art show, which was smaller than I expected, and good but not great. With a juried show I had for some reason expected something extraordinary. That said, there was John Picacio and some really neat pieces by artist GOH Lisa Snellings, some great Lee Moyer pieces and a nice print of one of my favorite recent F&SF covers, *Finisterre*.

I decided on a quick nap before I was due to help Kevin with the bar at the consuite. The nap was not as quick as I had hoped but I eventually made it up there, apologized for my tardiness and put in some hours at the bar. I took a couple of breaks to wander the 19th floor where *Locus* and Night Shade and others were throwing parties. The MythosCon party room was notable for its Great Wall of Pizza where they had covered their food needs by ordering 104 pizzas from Dominos. While staring at this aghast I met up with Jean Martin and her friend Stephanie and we wandered next door to see what was going on over across the hall. It was packed and some sort of awards were being given. I poked my head in a little later when the mass diminished and it was wall to wall authors I recognized. Somewhat intimidated, I retreated to the consuite.

We served drinks until around 2:30 and on my way back to the room I checked the 19th floor again, which was completely dead.

Curious, I went down to the lobby and spotted about ten or so people still conversing in the bar area. We hadn't quite closed the place down, but we'd made a brave attempt.

Saturday was Halloween and despite the Blue Meanies who insisted that costumes were verboten for such a lofty professional event, plenty of people dressed up anyway, fans and pros alike. I woke up around eleven feeling a little tired and mostly spent the morning in the consuite chatting with Chris Garcia, Mo, Lamont, Chris and John O in the sort of rambling tag-team conversations that I associate with a good con, with people wandering in and out of the discussion and sentences like "I tell you, don't ever eat osprey."

After my near-apocalyptic levels of overstockingness at Steamcon I had managed to arrive at World Fantasy minus a single pair of sheer black stockings. The hotel gift shop only had them in petite (hah!) so Lamont who used to live in the city was kind enough to walk me down to the Safeway. Unfortunately not to the new nearby Safeway built after he moved, but the old one a mile and a half down the road. On the other hand, between my excursions and all the running around during my shifts I managed to lose a couple of pounds despite my indulgent eating habits during the weekend.

Back at the consuite I loitered for a while before hitting the Notable Books panel which was entertaining but wandered from the subject into discussions of the popularity of certain

subgenres, SF vs. Fantasy, the rise of Young Adult, etc. I had hoped for the sort of panel I've seen at Worldcon for this subject where the panelists recommend their favorites from the previous year. I left about halfway and did another wander of the dealers and art show before going back upstairs in time to see the amazing Sugar Bowl cake that had been especially prepared for the evening's Edgar Allan Poe birthday celebration. It was a hot air balloon in white, silver and blue with little ravens on it. A cask (or so) of Amontillado was also provided.

After some more loitering I changed into my LBD for the evening and came back up for a full shift of helping at the bar, this time with Lamont so Kevin could host the cake cutting and later on the tiki bar in the Fiji room. There were a lot of Halloween costumes, and some fannish ones. In addition to the parties on the floor below and the consuite there was also Gail Carriger's book launch party across the hall from us which was steampunk themed and had the best spread I have seen in a while, with tea sandwiches, petit fours and some tasty Scotch Eggs. They had a little bar going on as well, but there wasn't really much mingling space so I admired and retired back to the consuite.

I took a couple of wanders of the other parties but mainly stayed at my post, since I was having a ball serving drinks and letting the world come to me instead. The cake cutting was a great success and the cake itself mighty

enough that we only got through about two thirds of it. The Amontillado was also lovely, and I mostly stuck to that along with the occasional “Death in the Afternoon” (Champagne and Absinthe.) Leigh Ann came down after finishing up her volunteering for the Spiral Dance in San Francisco and it was like quasi-Fanzine Lounging except I wandered off a lot less.

As other things shut down more people filtered in, and around two or three we closed the doors but kept going for a few hours longer just hanging out, finally doing some cleanup and packing it in at around four or five in the morning.

After very late nights I often wake up early, which is perfect for the last day of a con. I woke and headed down to a 10 a.m. panel called Rural Fantasy which was very interesting and added to my ever-growing list of books and authors I must check out. When I got back up to the room Leigh Ann was up and she kindly treated me to the fancy Fairmont buffet for a nice leisurely breakfast before taking one final round of the dealer’s room. Of particular interest this time was the Eraserhead Press table, with such titles on display as the now classic *Shatnerquake* and *The Faggiest Vampire*. We spent some time chatting with

them then visited with Radar, who was watching Spring’s table for the morning.

Then it was checkout time so we headed over to the consuite for those final lingering hours until Dead Dog. Leo came by to pick Leigh Ann up but I decided to stick around for a while and get some final conversations in with old friends and new before dragging my suitcase and giant bag of loot over to Caltrain, tired but satisfied.



World Fantasy Con: A Fantasy World Becomes Reality

By Jean Martin

Editor

The World Fantasy Convention (WFC), a professional convention for publishers, editors, agents, authors, booksellers and the press, was slated to come to the Bay Area this year. Several of my con friends and acquaintances were involved in organizing and staffing it. But I almost didn't go because I didn't think I'd have anything to do there and I wouldn't know very many people attending. Besides, I heard that costuming was discouraged, and unlike fan-run and media conventions, there would be no masquerades or dances — two of my favorite activities at conventions. Also, I seemed to be burned out on conventions. BayCon this year was not as good as it had been in the past and I only went to SiliCon for a day and a half and there weren't a lot of people there (plus I got in a minor car accident driving to the PEERS Sweeney Todd Ball afterwards). In addition, I was still reeling from moving at home and at work and being diagnosed with glaucoma (still inconclusive at this point) and low blood pressure.

But Rina Weisman from SFinSF (the other organization in the Bay Area with a name similar to ours) asked if I would like to volunteer to work as a Press Officer for the con. I was honored to be considered for this

and I was hoping to expand my experience doing public relations work. I worked in high tech PR a long time ago and did not enjoy the fast-paced and aggressive field of technology (although I love science and technology), but I still hope to do entertainment and/or media PR someday. I was also thrilled to get the chance to work with and learn from Hugo award-winning writer Cheryl Morgan, who was the head of Media Relations. In the months before the con, it was interesting to see the inner workings of con planning and I even helped out compiling a list of press contacts. Lastly, Kevin and Andy told me they would be running the Hospitality Suite and they throw the best parties. The "Fires of Pompeii" party they helped organize with Merv and Judith at Gallifrey One in L.A. earlier this year was phenomenal. Kevin also mentioned that parties at WFC are legendary. With parties being my third favorite thing at conventions, I was curious.

I'm glad I went because WFC was easily among the best conventions I've ever been to, on a par with the heavy metal industry conventions I used to go to in L.A. Talk about partying like a rock star. I partied with real rock stars in those days.

But WFC, held last October 29th through November 1st at the Fairmont Hotel in San Jose, literally rocked my world and made me

seriously think about where my life is at and what else I want to accomplish. It broadened my horizons about what's possible and I met lots of people who inspired me with their enthusiasm, passion and dedication. It was great to be around people who still have dreams and are working toward them — or are already living their dreams. For those four days, dreams I thought I'd long dismissed as youthful idealism were brought back to the fore. Dreams of becoming a sci fi/fantasy novelist.

But I haven't written fiction in ages! I don't even know if I still know how or have it in me. The last time I wrote was for an online novel writing workshop that led, through researching details for my novel, to my discovering Regency dancing and the Bay Area English Regency Society. Dancing has been my life ever since. But I still remember that I used to just write and fill pages of notebooks since I was a little girl.

However, I always seem to gravitate back to journalistic writing, as evidenced by my publishing and editing a heavy metal magazine in the early 1990s and now with *SF/SF*. I do love reporting on events that I love attending. Writing fiction is fulfilling when I'm in my more introspective phases, but these last several years I've been more extroverted, and as I've been called often lately, a social



Kevin and Cheryl in the Press Office

by Jean Martin



Guests of Honor at Opening Ceremony

by Jean Martin

butterfly. I realized, when I was trying to explain *SF/SF* to people at the con, that this zine is like the society pages of Bay Area fandom. I am excited about sharing news and reviews of events that I'm passionate about so people can enjoy them vicariously, or better yet, want to experience them for themselves, and also for people who were part of these experiences to relive them and have a souvenir via our articles.

It was great to be able to say to people at the con that I am a writer, editor and publisher, and that I'm actually doing something that has been going strong (and that I'm proud of) for over four years. It seemed to be my reason for

being at the con that made sense, other than my working at the Press Office.

Thursday

I got to the Fairmont several hours late, as seems to be my wont these days. I'd only been to the Fairmont once before to see Sir Ian McKellen (Gandalf from *Lord of the Rings*) at Cinequest. So it was quite fitting to be going back there for a fantasy con.

I checked into my hotel room and then went to the Press Office to report for duty. Cheryl and Kevin were already there busily working on their laptops. I dashed to the Registration area for a few minutes to get my badge and book bag full of free books. Of course, I ran into my esteemed co-editor Chris Garcia there,

who was visiting the Lovely and Talented Linda who was working at Registration. I always seem to run into Chris the minute I get to a con. The guy is everywhere! It was good to see friendly faces though. The Registration area was huge and decorated in Edgar Allan Poe-style. The con was celebrating Poe's 200th birthday as its theme this year.

After the Press Office closed at 5:00 p.m., Cheryl, Kevin and I went to the Opening Ceremonies in one of the big ballrooms. Toastmaster Jay Lake introduced the Guests of Honor. I looked at the audience in the ballroom and didn't know anyone at all except for Cheryl and Kevin, and con chair Dave Gallaher, who's

one of the nicest, calmest and most efficient persons I've ever met.

I was worried after that because I felt suddenly lonely. Not a good feeling to start a con with. But I thought at the very least I'd do my job, gain experience, and network, and that would be good enough.

I went back to my room to freshen up. The Fairmont is a posh and luxurious hotel, and the rooms are big and beautifully appointed. My friend Stephanie and I roomed together and she was an awesome roommate. I'm glad I was able to hang out with her more than I ever had before. She's so smart, friendly, intelligent and easygoing. She was also, I found, a great wingman at parties. We covered for each other

whenever either of us attempted to connect with other people. So between the two of us, we made lots of new friends and acquaintances. Ancilla also hung out with us for a little bit each night at the parties. We three ladies made quite an impact as we all dressed to the nines each night.

Stephanie, Ancilla, Shayne and I went out for dinner Thursday night at the nearby Britannia Arms, then went back for the evening parties.

There were only two parties that evening and they were mad crushes. The first was in the Hospitality Suite run by Kevin and Andy. The suite, on the 20th (top) floor of the Fairmont, had vaulted ceilings and looked like living

rooms from some rich person's mansion. There were couches, bookshelves, décor and a fireplace. There were two rooms. The main room was decorated to look like a Victorian embarkation point and the second room was the destination, Fiji.

The suite led to other rooms that kept going across the entire side of the floor facing the main street. All the windows had a gorgeous view of San Jose at night. San Jose has certainly shaped up in recent years. I was actually excited to explore the downtown area, even though I did want to keep to the feeling of being at a con and far away from home in another world. It did seem like I was in L.A. or somewhere outside the Bay Area.



Diana Paxson and Jon De Cles in the Hospitality Suite

by Jean Martin



Garth Nix and Sean Williams serving Australian wines

by Jean Martin

The other party was the Australian party hosted by guest of honor (GOH) author Garth Nix. He and his compatriots were serving Australian and New Zealand wines all evening. Aussies are so friendly! But there were so many people in their suite that it was well nigh impossible to walk across the room or even talk. So I went back to the Hospitality Suite where The Last Drink Bird Head Charity Event was taking place. It was spearheaded by another author GOH, Jeff VanderMeer, whom I met last year at Steam Powered. I bought Jeff's latest book and had him autograph it. It was a book on the business of writing in the 21st century, which will be useful if I ever start writing fiction again.

There were other friends of mine at the con and they all seemed to be volunteering at the Hospitality Suite. There was España, Leigh Ann, Yvette, Mark, Lisa, Ed, etc. Mo was there too and she did a fantastic portrait of Edgar Allan Poe that was displayed prominently in the suite.

I had fun that first night of partying. However, most people kept to themselves. It was hard to break into conversations with groups of people who all seemed to know each other already. I did talk to a guy in a kilt, Chris Colvin, an aspiring writer from the Bay Area who was really nice. Most of the people I met at the con were writers starting out, writers who were already making a living in the field, or even famous authors. It was thoroughly thrilling, inspiring yet daunting, intimidating



Tim Powers

by Jean Martin

and frightening at the same time. With the young people I thought: "How do I match their enthusiasm, idealism and energy? They still believe in their dreams." With the more established ones: "How do I match their expertise, experience and confidence?" I suppose I should accept that I have to start somewhere and I'm only too old if I keep delaying and letting the years pass me by.

Thursday night was over and done with and I went to bed relatively early, for me, as I was working each day and needed to keep my strength up after all my ordeals two months prior to the con.

Friday

I had a buffet breakfast with my gal pals at the elegant hotel café, which was lit by chandeliers and the sun streaming through the glass windows. It brought up fond memories of my childhood when my family and I would go for Sunday brunches at nice hotels in the Philippines, and also of my travels in Europe. It was expensive but worth it. The croissants were heavenly.

Then I worked at the Press Office, which was pretty quiet all day. I had lunch at an Indian fast food place across the street that was just so-so. I had some time to check out the dealer room of mostly books. There were several local booksellers and publishers there. Springtime Creations was one of the few vendors that sold non-book items. I bought a Rassilon pin from Spring. The art show was in the same ballroom, separated by dividers. John Picacio's and Lee Moyer's work were my favorites. The art was mostly by professionals and they were amazing.

The one "panel" I attended at the con was Guy Gavriel Kay's reading that morning. Stephanie, Shayne and Ancilla are big fans of his so I thought I'd check him out. He read from his latest book, which sounded interesting as it is set in Tang Dynasty China. But I kept

falling asleep and I was right in front of him. I felt bad but I'm generally not good at readings in general (they do make me doze off) and I was also unusually tired and sleepy even after eight hours of sleep. I was worried because it was only the first full day of the con and I was already exhausted! But I got more energy as the day went on and toward evening. I'm not a morning person after all.

We missed all the afternoon and early evening parties because we went to dinner at the Old Spaghetti Factory at the quaint and magical San Pedro Square. And we also all changed into nicer evening attire.

We weren't interested in going to the mass autographing event in the main ballroom that evening but there was no one at the parties and we were told that everyone was still in the ballroom. So we went to the autographing session and actually had a wonderful time. Everyone had name cards including myself! So anyone could take a seat, put their name card up, and wait for people to ask for their autograph. Outside the ballroom were several tables of free food. Real food... not just appetizers. If my friends and I had known that, we would have just eaten there. We're not used to professional cons where there's a lot of free stuff!

Some authors I wanted to meet had already left, but there were still a few who were there. I finally got up the nerve to meet authors whose work I've enjoyed in the past and famous ones whose novels I haven't had the chance to read

yet. There was S.M. Stirling and Michael Swanwick (who was really nice). I got reacquainted with Tim Powers who remembered me from BayCon last year, and Diana Paxson who also remembered me and was very friendly.

After that, the parties got started and that night there were a lot of them. I finally started meeting more people and they were all very interesting. These were parties thrown by publishers who have marketing budgets, and it



Jean, Connie Willis and Cordelia

by Kevin Standlee

showed. The Nightshade/Eraserhead Press party was fun. They had home brewed beer (brewed by Eraserhead publisher, Rose O'Keefe, herself) in bottles with covers of their novels in a bathtub full of ice. As I'm a teetotaler I didn't get the full experience but I had a great time talking with people about intellectual or literary subjects that ran the gamut from environmentalism to bizarre fiction. It seemed like most novels nowadays and most of the works in progress by the writers I talked to are either dark or urban or postapocalyptic or various combinations of these three sub-genres. These really aren't my cup of tea. Apparently, wizards, dragons, elves and castles are passé at the moment, but that's what I still prefer.

Locus Magazine had a party on the same floor, the 19th, as the Nightshade/Eraserhead party. There was a short moment of silence and remembrance for the late Charles Brown, *Locus* Magazine's publisher, editor and co-founder, who recently passed away. Also on the same floor was a party by MythosCon, which I will always remember for their 100+ Domino's pizza boxes and numerous boxes of Corona. Back on the 20th floor was Tor Books/David Hartwell's party. I hung out there for a while with Travis Heermann, a published author from Nebraska who's spent some time in Japan. His novel, *Heart of the Ronin*, is the product of his fascination with Japanese history and culture.

I finally was getting to know people at the con and it was a blast! I didn't want to go to



Steampunk Desserts

by Jean Martin



Edgar Allan Poe Portrait and Birthday Cake

by Jean Martin

bed but I did because I didn't want to wake up Stephanie (who went to our room earlier than I did) much later than was considerate.

Saturday

I had a less expensive and quicker breakfast on Saturday morning at the French café outside the hotel. I had another of the Fairmont's delicious croissants and a hot chocolate there. For lunch, I went to the delicious Good Karma vegetarian restaurant a couple of blocks away.

The Press Office was busy that day with several journalists who came in. People from the San Jose *Mercury News* and San Francisco *Chronicle* showed up as well as Gary Singh

from the San Jose *Metro*. Rick Kleffel of *BookBanter* (and an NPR contributor) was there the entire extended weekend recording interviews with lots of authors. On Saturday, when my friend Cordelia came to visit me at the Press Office with her mom, award-winning author Connie Willis, Rick grabbed her for an interview. It was great to see Cordelia and it was also nice to finally meet her mom. They were both wearing Halloween-themed attire... they reminded me that it was Halloween that day! There wasn't much else to signify that it was Halloween at the hotel since costumes weren't encouraged.

I decided to wear my Steampunk aviatrix costume because it isn't too much of a "costume." It would also be appropriate for the Steampunk tea party that evening. Gail Carriger was the hostess of the party to celebrate the launch of her Steampunk novel *Soulless*. It was great to finally meet Gail, whom I've corresponded with via email and seen at conventions in the past. Her party was probably the best party I've ever been to. There were three rooms in total and each one was decorated with flowers, lace parasols, Victorian tablecloths, and artwork. The food (like scones, truffles, shortbread, Scotch eggs and escargot)

was served on glass platters and the tea in silver pitchers. It was classy, elegant, sumptuous, creative, imaginative and extraordinary. It must have taken a lot of time, coordination and money to create such a lavish and well-organized party. To top it all off, her friends helping out were all in Victorian costumes. There was a separate section for tea service and another for alcoholic and other beverages.

Stephanie, Ancilla and I roamed the 20th floor from party to party after eating dinner at a Mexican restaurant that had slow service and sub-par food. We attracted attention because of our costumes. Stephanie was wearing a colorful pirate costume and Ancilla had a Film Noir-era dress on.

The other highlight that evening was the cutting of Edgar Allan Poe's birthday cake, a huge, elaborate cake shaped like a hot air balloon with ravens. Kevin and Dave cut the cake, which was red velvet and apparently delicious. I didn't have any appetite as I was full from dinner and the food from the Steampunk party.

Also on the 20th floor were the *Weird Tales* and *Fantasy and Science Fiction* Magazine parties. Gigi, who was responsible for the mass autograph session, also had a birthday party. She was dressed as a zombie bride and she served little cute Halloween cupcakes.

On the 19th floor was the Hippocampus Press party which had a three-piece band that played ambient music. The MythosCon party

was on again that night with yet more pizza boxes.

The parties that evening blurred together after a while, but it was the last party night and I was determined to party till I dropped. The one thing that stood out for me that evening is that I met a lot of people who went to Clarion in San Diego or Seattle. The Clarion workshops are an intensive six-week educational program geared toward preparing writers for a career in the field of science fiction/fantasy writing. The programs and students must be good, as Clarion alumnus Grá Linnaea recently won the prestigious Writers of the Future award. But what really struck me was that they were all so friendly and had such close camaraderie with each other. It was like they had gone to college together.

I felt out of place at first but I wanted to get to know them, to be inspired by their enthusiasm and to feel the sense of community that they have. There was no air of competition at all. They were all very supportive of each other's work and they all genuinely liked being with each other. I gravitate toward this type of people and I almost want to go to Clarion just to feel this bond with kindred spirits. So I asked them if they could adopt me for the evening and Grá said yes. My original entrée to the group, though, was Damien Walter whom I'd met earlier at the Press Office as he knows fellow Brit Cheryl. He also writes for the U.K. *Guardian* so I had previously corresponded with him via email. I followed the "clarion

call" and tagged along with their group from party to party. We even got one of their professors, award-winning author Graham Joyce, to join us. Graham is also from England.

I don't think I got back to my room until 4:00 a.m. and I was grateful that Stephanie was so understanding and kind enough to put up with my coming in that late when she was already asleep. I tried to be quiet but hotel doors are loud even when you try really hard not to make any noise.

Sunday

Con expenses add up after four days, so to save money I just grabbed a croissant from the concession stand in the lobby. Lunch was at a flatbread place that Chris and Linda recommended. Chris compiled an impressive, Zagat-style dining guide for the con, but I had the benefit of getting recommendations from him in person, which I preferred. The flatbread place was very good indeed.

I worked in the Press Office in the morning for the last time. On Sunday, a correspondent for *Time* Magazine showed up and wanted to film interviews in the dealer room. I helped him out for a while and I got to meet John Picacio whose work I had admired the day before in the art show. John was one of the interviewees. I ordered one of John's pieces, which I'm looking forward to receiving in the mail.

I also broke down and bought several autographed books from Borderlands' booth. I bought one unsigned one that I asked Connie to

sign later on. I've never been to Borderlands even though I used to hang out in the area for a few years. Maybe someday soon I'll go to one of their events so that I can keep in touch with new acquaintances in the Bay Area.

The last official con event I attended was the World Fantasy Awards, which was held after the banquet. I didn't go to the banquet as it was expensive and I didn't really want to go by myself, but the awards ceremony was a lot of fun and I felt like I was part of the industry. I saw tables reserved for Tor Books and other publishers. I was glad to recognize people at several tables. From not knowing anyone at the beginning of the con, I knew so many people at the end of the con!

I met publishers, editors, agents, authors and journalists and they were all great. I also learned that there are a lot of publishers and magazines in the Bay Area. I had no idea! Someone told me that next to New York, San Francisco is the second-biggest publishing Mecca. Right in my back yard, and I never knew.

I was able to grab an empty seat up front so I could take photos of the emcees including David Hartwell. I was able to snap pictures of all the winners or the people who accepted the awards in place of the winners. A list of award winners is at the following web link: www.worldfantasy2009.org/?p=1159.

The Clarionites were toward the back of the room and I went over to them after the awards ceremony was over. I hung out with them at the



World Fantasy Award Winners

by Jean Martin

lobby of the hotel until it was time to go over to Cordelia's house to meet her, her mom and mutual friends who weren't at the con for dinner. I was exhausted and sleep deprived. I was literally running on adrenaline. But I didn't want to say goodbye to my new friends.

It was such a heady, life-changing experience to be surrounded by talented, intelligent and creative people for four days straight! I got the idea of starting a salon of intellectuals like in the Victorian and Regency eras, but I realized that SFinSF already does something similar. Yes, the other SFinSF. People get us confused all the time and I had to explain the difference to people a few times at

the con. What made things even more confusing is that SFSFC, another organization with Bay Area connections, ran the convention.

I drove off high on life and was very sad to leave. At least I had a reprieve... a gradual return to reality by meeting up with friends for dinner at Chevy's. So it wasn't such a harsh transition going back home after an amazing four days in another world.

The entire week afterwards, I had major con crash and was alternately giddy and depressed. I couldn't focus at work. I had met and established connections with people from other parts of the U.S. and all over the world... whom I more than likely will never see again.

But it was nice that I got to meet them and became friends with them on Facebook, and who knows who I'll be in touch with in the future. I may have to go to cons outside of the Bay Area to see them, but chances are, unless I switch careers into the field or make a lot of money so I can go to cons whenever I want, this is not going to be a regular occurrence. I wanted to be back at the con or quit my job and switch careers immediately. But both options are unrealistic and I do like my job, which enables me to afford all these things that I do. So going back to reality was hard but I seem at least now to have some long-term goals that I didn't use to have. I had been feeling goal-less this year and seemed to be coasting on all that I've accomplished. It seems like it's once again time to grow, explore and create an even more expansive and fulfilling life.

I did meet some local gals: Clarionites Emily (who's a singer like myself) and Megan (who dances like I do). And their friend Carrie

who's a lot like me in our interests and the amount of work and hobbies we do. It was great to meet them and I'm glad that they live in the Peninsula/South Bay!

What the future holds for me in the realms of fantasy or science fiction, I don't know right now. But I'm happy to have had such a peak experience. All I can say is that the seeds have been planted and we'll see how the garden grows in time. I'm also grateful for the Internet — especially email and Facebook. It is so much easier these days to keep in touch with people with similar interests all over the world. There are no limits to the communities and connections we can create and nurture. And the reality is that we make the world a better place when we share what we love with other people. Even when it's fantasy.



Author Paolo Bacigalupi with his own beer label
by Jean Martin

Halloween Victorian-Style

By Jean Martin

Editor

Ye Gaskell Occasional Dance Society held its annual Fancy Dress Ball last October 24. It's the one dance a year when the organization relaxes its rules and allows Halloween costumes. Still, the dress code calls for elegance because it is "a costume ball as the Victorians would do it."

I had only previously gone to one of their Fancy Dress Balls. That was in 2005. There were lots of great costumes then. No cheap store-bought costumes were in sight.

So when I prepared for the ball that was to be held at its usual venue, the gorgeous Scottish Rite Temple's ballroom in Oakland, I couldn't decide what to wear. I wanted to wear something elegant but comfortable for dancing. I toyed with the idea of wearing sci fi or fantasy, but I wear these often enough at conventions. So I opted to reuse my custom-made Natasha Rostova Regency ball gown that I wore to last year's Bay Area English Regency Society's *War and Peace* Ball. I hadn't worn it since, and I was glad to be able to do so again as it was quite expensive. It was also perfect for Gaskells that evening

because it is a character costume, and Regency is dressy but very comfortable to dance in. Nobody recognized it but several people complimented me on it.

I had a hard time at dinner beforehand, though, because my friend Mike and I ate at

Enssaro, an Ethiopian restaurant close by. My gown was white and I didn't want to spill any food on it. I didn't care what other people thought so I put napkins all over myself and asked for a fork even though it's traditional to eat with one's hands. The food was amazingly delicious, the best Ethiopian food I've ever had. But it took a long time and so Mike and I missed the first set.

We arrived during the break before the second set, so I was determined to dance as much as I could for the next three sets. Brassworks were in fine form that evening and provided excellent music. There were lots of people and it was good to see friends in attendance.

There were of course the usual lavish Victorian ballgowns in opulent colors. This time, though, being Halloween, there was some fantasy and Renaissance Faire garb and even German Oktoberfest lederhosen. Some ladies wore masks, including talented seamstresses and costumers Maggie and Lauren. I personally award them for the best and most theme-appropriate costumes for the evening. Their ensembles were a spectacular combination of traditional Victorian and Regency with fantasy



Victorian and Regency Fantasy Gowns

by Jean Martin



Suki from Avatar

by Jean Martin

whimsies. Maggie with her Venetian mask looked like Christine from *Phantom of the Opera* whilst Lauren was in a Regency owl costume complete with a feather overskirt.

I didn't see any standout sci fi costumes this time around, but Vivianne was wearing an extremely accurate and well-made costume as Suki (a female Kyoshi Warrior from the Earth kingdom) from *Avatar: The Last Airbender* animated series. She was happy that I recognized her outfit as no one

else did, apparently. She inspired me to want to make a Katara water bender costume again. I loved that show and am hoping the live-action movie will do the TV series justice.

My award for huge impact and coordinating effort goes to the blue Degas ballet dancers. I recognized two of them from the recent PEERS Space Cowboys Ball, where one of them had worn a layercake Kaylee dress. I just love going to the events I go to. Where else will you find Degas-inspired dancers?

By the way, Mike was wearing an authentic East German army uniform, which he got at an army surplus store after the Berlin Wall fell. Which reminds me that happened 20 years ago. We take this for granted now, but I do recall that before that, the Iron Curtain and the threat of the mighty Communist regime was a cold, scary and oppressive reality. I still remember that the fall of the Berlin Wall was a huge occasion and cause for great joy and hope... a triumph of the human desire for liberty and peace. It was symbolic to me that Mike was wearing such a uniform as he danced eastern European dances in the U.S., the land of the free (well, for the most part). There he was doing something creative, individualistic and unconventional in a uniform of an organization that forced

conformity, control and totalitarianism on its populace.

Another fannish costume was Eric wearing a Rorschach costume from *Watchmen*. I finally read the *Watchmen* graphic novel after enjoying the movie version. I couldn't put the book down once I started. I took it everywhere to read bits and pieces whenever I could. I initially had a great reluctance to read it as it is quite violent and I thought it would be too grim,



East German Officer

by Jean Martin



Rorschach from *Watchmen* by Jean Martin

but I liked it a lot. It is very profound, if a little dated. The fear of World War III still looms over us, of course, but not as much as before the decline of Communism. The plot was very interesting and the characters complex and believable. There were a lot of intertwining plots and great exposition, pacing and mystery. I didn't like all the supplemental prose pieces, which I didn't read, as I thought they were jarringly obtrusive and broke the momentum of the

plot for me. They gave more details than I needed and wanted. I just wanted the story to keep going. I may read them someday, though, if I have the time.

Other great costumes were Jessica as a belly dancer, Sam as a Pierrot clown, Kim as saloon girl, Jane as Mrs. Lovett and Greg as the King of Siam. There was a lot of variety showing the creativity and imagination of the dancers.

And, of course, the dancing was fun. I did as much dancing I could, which included, but was not limited to, the waltz, polka, gallop, schottische, mazurka and other historical social dances from western

and eastern Europe. And, of course, the Congress of Vienna, my favorite dance, which was actually created in the 1970s but using historical dance music and steps.

I'm always sad when a ball ends because once I start dancing, I don't ever want to stop. And this one was a particularly fun one because it had the added element of fantasy, sci fi, comics and anime. But it's comforting for me to know that there'll be another Gaskell Fancy Dress Ball around Halloween next year.

For more information, visit: www.gaskellball.com.



Degas Blue Dancers

by Jean Martin

The Loscon Lounge Report

By España Sheriff
Staff Writer

I arrived at Loscon on Friday at around 5 p.m. and after first stopping by the hotel restaurant, Latitude 33 very briefly to say hi to Leigh Ann, I checked in, got my badge, unpacked and hung my art before the 6 p.m. art show closing time.

The art show seemed much bigger and better than last year, with a very good selection of 3D art tables and a bunch of artists that I didn't remember seeing before. I was very pleased given my impression that the last few years have been slow and low in sales. As always it was extremely well-run, and Elaine Pelz was very helpful with getting everything hung and keeping her artists happy.

When I was done I went back to the restaurant to find Leigh Ann and found Jason Schachat had just arrived, so all three of us headed over to Champions, the hotel bar, to get some food since the restaurant service was kinda lacking. The downside of Champions is that every available wall surface is covered with screens playing sports. The first thing I noticed is that they had scrunched together the groups of four screens in order to add surrounding groups of six smaller screens framing them. Not all of them play the same

channel which adds to the insanity. Still, we needed food and eventually we got it.

Afterwards we headed up to the Fanzine Lounge PM. At Loscon the daytime lounge is located in the convention programming area on the ballroom level and our evening lounge is on the party floor. Normally we would have started setting up right away, but we had arranged with Eric in the Elevator, of BayCon fame, for him to use the lounge for a couple of hours for a screening. This meant we were essentially free until about 10 p.m., so we relaxed and caught up for a bit, then I changed into my evening outfit and wandered the early parties. In particular I meant to visit the Rotsler birthday party put on by Arizona fan Paul Turner who had arranged for a display of Rotsler's art in the daytime lounge, but unfortunately I lost the room number so I kept an eye out for John Hertz who had put us in contact with Paul originally.

There were about half a dozen parties on Friday, including the ever-popular Herbangelists over in the large suite with their wine and cheese spread and giant chocolate fountain. BayCon, Loscon and a few others were also going, mostly fairly low-key. I ran into Dave and Colleen whom I hadn't seen in nearly a year, and of course all the late-arriving Bay Area folks like Jade and Erik. I was

surprised not to see John Hertz around at all until someone mentioned Regency Dancing. I popped down to check and indeed there he was.

Back upstairs I checked in on the Eric screening which was just winding down, so while they dismantled I headed over with Hertz as my escort to met Paul Turner and check out his Rotsler collection. The party was on the 3rd floor and small, but it was nice to see the drawings in his collection, many of them originals. Most of us are familiar with Rotsler's cartoons, but there was a nice selection of line art illustrations as well and his range is a lot broader than most people assume.

Eventually it was time for me to get back to the PM Lounge, which was mellower than usual due to the late start and lack of signage. I had picked up some Bakon Vodka in Portland for Leigh Ann and she was kind enough to share it with the lounge. Unfortunately it tasted like burnt rubber instead of bacon so it wasn't quite the treat we had all hoped for. On the other hand I also found some Lard Caramels and those were a greater, if more disturbing, success. Slow night and all, it's always nice to hang out with the gang, and we chatted until around 3 a.m. and then called it a night.

Saturday I woke around 11ish and headed down with Schachat to grab some food. Latitude 33 had stopped serving breakfast

already so we got omelets instead, which was not really the same thing at all. As it turns out Tim and Serena Powers were at the next table over so we chatted briefly, then I headed over to the art show to walk through and study up for my docent tour. Standouts were some papier maché dragons and some rocket ship art by an artist whose name I unfortunately forgot to write down.

With some time to waste, I checked out the dealer's room as well, but restrained myself from spending money until Leigh Ann showed up and forced me to buy some books.

The docent tour was only my second, and it turned out to be quite fun. Todd McCaffrey was scheduled to lead a tour on Sunday so he showed up intending to watch what I did since he hadn't done one before, but instead ended up jacking half my people as they were naturally much more interested in talking to him than me. Luckily Hertz and a couple of stragglers and I continued along and had some interesting conversations. I'm not certain I'm particularly good at docenting but I do rather enjoy it. If nothing else it's an excuse to see the art show in a new way and forces me to pay attention.

I headed back to the PM Lounge right after I was done. We had not decorated Friday because the Eric in the Elevator screening required a certain layout, so we set to work on our 2009 theme: Life Day! We made signs appropriate for Mos Eisley, draped red fabric and created some other appropriate Life Day

decorations. Then we put on the *Star Wars Holiday Special* and let 'er rip. It turned out to be almost too successful even with the sound off. In no time there was a room full of people giving it the full Mistie treatment. It was a lot of fun but not entirely appropriate for a Fanzine Lounge. Next year we will be celebrating Life Day on Friday with a limited screening announced ahead of time.

However, the silver lining was the opportunity to wander the party floor again. The Confirmation Westercon party was in full swing, so I wore a white dress with gloves and Leigh Ann did the same and we put in an appearance. As it turns out the actual theme of Confirmation was Jersey, with a wiseguy angle, but we enjoyed our little joke and got some very odd looks while wandering through the lobby, so it all worked out. We also visited the Harrigan anniversary celebration but were a little wary of the Soulgeek party. We completed the circuit in time for the end of the *Star Wars Holiday Special* and so we changed into red dresses in celebration of Life Day.

My sister Ashley and her boyfriend Andres stopped by for an hour or so; I've been trying to convince them to attend Loscon for years now and sneakily suggested that this year we have drinks at the hotel bar instead of offsite as usual. I couldn't show them very much, between the limited time window and being told they were not allowed to be on the ballroom floor at all, but they did get to see some pirates wandering about and met Tim

Powers briefly so I think I might have gotten new converts for next year. When they left, I headed by the dance for a bit and caught the end of our GOH Steven Barnes DJing a set, which was quite popular. When he was done the crowd thinned and some technical problems cleared the floor almost completely before Patrick Beckstead took over and a new group of people wandered in. I had lost my mojo by then, so I retired to the party floor for the rest of the night. In the end we went until 5 a.m., but Hertz's party was the winner, still standing long after we closed down.

Sunday morning I got up in time to have brunch with my brother and sister before it was time to get my art. I had managed to sell two pieces, which was a nice surprise and hopefully a sign of the improved art show. Once done I met up with Leigh Ann and Jason and we did the last slow wander through the dealer's room and then went up to regroup for the last evening in the Fanzine Lounge.

I dropped by Dead Dog briefly and there were about 20 people in the consuite but they only had the room until 10 p.m., so we let people know that we would be open again for the evening. We dropped off the Bakon Vodka with a staffer, nabbed some sodas, and retired to the lounge to pack up and wait. Several people dropped by almost immediately and the lounge remained open for them until we closed down at 2 a.m., so we could get some rest before our traditional trip back to the Bay Area on the *Coast Starlight*.

BASFA Minutes: Meetings 1007-9

Meeting 1007

November 16, 2009

Trey Haddad, President

Chris Garcia, Vice-President

Dave Gallaher, Treasurer

Galen Tripp, Sergeant at Arms

Barbara Johnson-Haddad, Secretary

Held at Coco's, 1206 Oakmead Parkway
(Lawrence Expressway/101 fwy), Sunnyvale.

Began 8pm - with me wondering why I wasn't home playing *Dragon Age*.

We established a party jar.

28 people attended.

Secretary's report: the minutes of meeting 1006 were accepted as "accepted."

The Treasurer reported that "we got money."

The Vice President reported that there's a new *Drink Tank* out and there'll be a whole lot of steampunk cons in 2010 [10 of them?] - and "hi Cheryl."

The President reported that he's happy to see many club members in good health again and "It's not yet Ed time."

The Party Committee reported that he needs help with FurCon - needs panelists for an

invertebrate panel - and needs help with both the SorcererCon and FurCon parties and that he has 2 free con memberships for those who help him.

Announcements

Glenn announced that he has a new job with Linden Labs/Second Life & that San Jose is now uncontested for the 2010 SMOFcon.

Andy announced that St George Spirits will have an open house this Saturday, Nov 21 at Hanger 2801, tickets are on sale now; call 510/864-0635.

Harold announced that the Leonid meteor shower is tonight.

Ken announced that next Friday - after Thanksgiving - is the Legion of Rassilon meeting = 7pm, 1st and Trimble.

Dave C announced that he has a copy of *Ash* with him & couldn't recall who had ordered it.

Cheryl announced that she brought her Hugo award to the meeting [Oooo! Shiny!].

Warren announced that he was a guest at Kaiser - got our "get well" card ... and got well.

Mo announced that she is selling things [art and books] so if interested, contact her & she's doing programming for SorcererCon [book a room at the Doubletree & get 2 free

SorcererCon memberships] and still is looking for panelists.

Adrienne announced that Bay Area Ghost Hunters will have a meet and greet on December 13 in San Jose at Trial's Pub.

Lisa announced that she & Big Harold are approaching their 32nd wedding anniversary & will celebrate it at LosCon this year.

Dave G announced that Twitter has moved into his work building in SF & are hiring.

Blackfeather announced that he is back in the area and is looking for someone to carpool with down to LosCon - and a hotel room share too.

Reviews

Chris reviewed WindyCon as really fun, awesome and definitely worth the time spent on it; worth full price.

Glenn reviewed *Where the Wild Things Are* as he really liked it; worth full price.

Fred reviewed *Makers* by Cory Doctorow as well-written, he enjoyed it and recommends it; worth full price.

Dave C reviewed *2012* as mindless fun, an entertaining roller-coaster, worth matinee; then reviewed the new *Prisoner* as it's not must-see, it's not compelling, it's got a very vague, uninteresting hero; there were follow-on's

which summed up as everyone hated it and it managed to be boring.

Ed reviewed *Monsters and Aliens* on DVD as only worth DVD & reviewed *The Men who Stared at Goats* as he should've waited for DVD to see it.

Lynn reviewed a cake cook-off on the Food Network as OMG, then OMG again - there was a cake detonation and a fire extinguisher was required.

Mo reviewed *Dark Star the Special Edition* on DVD as the movie is still funny and clever and the extras are great [and way too many of us began doing quotes from the movie].

Harold reviewed the new *Scrooge* Disney production as over-blown, over-done and not very good; Lise follow-on'd and disagreed - she enjoyed it very, very much; Adrienne was very impressed with the art; then Harold reviewed *Pirate Radio* as it has a kick-ass soundtrack & worth matinee; then reviewed *2012* as it had the worst movie science since Bugs Bunny met Marvin the Martian.

Adrienne reviewed lunch at the Oak room at the St Francis Hotel as very expensive but very attentive service and the food was very good & the locale is awesome.

Andy reviewed *Dr Who - Waters of Mars* as worth stealing & the SFInSF reading was a lot of fun.

Lisa reviewed *Coco before Channel* as a wonderful movie, excellently costumed, really well done.

[evil] Kevin reviewed Hamthrax as not worth having.

Cheryl [brought along a copy of each book she reviewed for us so we could check them out] & she reviewed and recommended for buying & Hugo nominations: *Fables* [a graphic novel], *Captain Britain and MI13 3: Vampire State* by Paul Cornell [graphic novel]; *Grandville* by Bryan Talbot [as steampunk furies do Tarantino & a graphic novel] - and then for best-related books showed us *Powers*, *the Secret Histories* -as everything you've ever wanted to know about Tim Powers & *Boilerplate* as Forrest Gump meets steampunk historical fiction.

We did auctions: birthday auctioned off Warren for \$4.00 to Lynn; then books for \$0.50, \$1.50, \$0.75, \$5.00, & \$2.00, then videos for \$5.00 & \$2.00.

We adjourned at = 9:51

And the rumor of the week was: "Yes, there is slash fiction of Chris Garcia touching Frank Wu's Hugo."

Meeting 1008

November 23, 2009

Meeting 1009

November 30, 2009

Trey Haddad, President
Chris Garcia, Vice-President
Dave Gallaher, Treasurer
Galen Tripp, Sergeant at Arms
Barbara Johnson-Haddad, Secretary
Held at Coco's, 1206 Oakmead Parkway
(Lawrence Expressway/101 fwy), Sunnyvale

Began 8pm - with wonderful blueberry pancakes!

We established a party jar.

25 people attended.

Secretary's report: the minutes of meeting 1007 were accepted as "derivative" & the minutes of meeting 1008 were accepted as "lacking finger puppets."

The Treasurer reported that last week we took in \$7.50 in the regular jar and \$1.00 in the party jar.

No Vice President.

The President had nothing fannish to report as he has been a yam.

The Party Committee reported that he needs help with FurCon - and that there were 2 BASFA parties at SorcererCon - the ONLY parties there [and very well received].

Announcements

Adrienne announced that there's a new social meeting group for *Mystery Science 3000*.

Dave G announced that their next party will be next year on Jan 2 & announced that a new episode of *Dr Who* will be filmed in Serbia.

Cheryl announced that there's a convention coming up - SMOFcon this weekend.

[evil] Kevin announced that the Imperial Snow Ball is Dec 12, 7:30 & that he might be performing.

[tall] Kevin announced that after this meeting he won't be back to BASFA until next year.

Reviews

Glenn reviewed that getting his new job with Linden Labs/Second Life as worth full price & that he really likes his new Mac desktop for it -- and then he reviewed LosCon as time was spent with family, then he spent most of the con sitting behind a table at LosCon & that the wireless at the Marriott "sucketh mightily" & that Westercon 64 had a party there and drew great crowds, plus he [and others] had "issues" with Programming & he got to take Dave McCarthy out to dinner; Dierdre follow-on'd to comment about other programming mess-ups.

Lynn reviewed SorcererCon as small and intimate and GOOD; Andy reviewed that since the con was centered around the "city rooms" that it seemed less small than it was and the programming there was good & the BASFA parties were excellent; Dave G commented that at least one dealer came away happy; Adrienne reviewed it as small, well done and cute ("chibi-con" suggested [tall] Kevin) - she really liked it; [evil] Kevin said that it was fun and full of incidents & Mo reviewed it as she enjoyed the themes and had a good time.

Adrienne reviewed a website as a really good place for sound tracks = www.intrada.com

Harold reviewed scam emails as "do not respond to them" & reviewed *Monty Python, almost the truth* as funny & informative & reviewed ancestry.com as "mark him dubious" about its accuracy [and worth free during its 2 week promo right now].

Ed reviewed an sf book about an accountant as his [delightful] wife liked it and he thought it was entertaining: *The Audit Report* by Richard Neumann.

[tall] Kevin relayed a review by Lisa of OryCon as "avast ye Kumo!" and rated it as "3 grrrrs and no fish"; meanwhile, he had fun sleeping.

Fred reviewed the King Tut exhibit as well-organized, well put together & really worth seeing.

Stellan reviewed LosCon as very nice, worth full price.

Ken reviewed Houston Intercontinental airport as not worth full price for a 90 minute delay and several gate changes.

We did auctions: we auctioned off a calendar for \$0.50; then videos for \$1.00, \$0.25, \$0.50; audio books for \$4.00, \$1.50 & \$4.00, hangers for \$0.25; a puzzle for \$0.25; computer stuff for \$0.10; then a box of stuff for \$2.00.

We adjourned at = 9:30.

And the rumor of the week was: "The rumors will continue until morale improves."

Bay Area Fannish Calendar

Life is complicated; putting on an event is even more so. Please check before attending, as events are sometimes canceled or times and locations changed.

Follow the calendar on Twitter:
@sfsfcalendar

New listings are highlighted in red.

Ongoing events are toward the back.

Through Sunday, December 20

The Great Dickens Fair

Cow Palace Exhibition Halls
2600 Geneva Ave, San Francisco
www.dickensfair.com

A holiday adventure into Victorian London.

\$22

Through Sunday, January 3

Star Trek: The Exhibition

The Tech Museum
201 South Market Street, San Jose
www.thetech.org/StarTrek

Step inside the Star Trek universe and experience the unmatched imagination, vibrant artistry and groundbreaking technology that have made Star Trek the most enduring science fiction franchise in history.

\$25

Through January 19

There's a Mystery There: Sendak on Sendak

The Contemporary Jewish Museum
736 Mission St., San Francisco
www.thecjm.org

The exhibit will feature more than 100 watercolors, drawings and sketches by Sendak — including many that have never before been displayed, along with video footage of interviews with the author and will include a space for young visitors to enjoy Sendak's work. In addition to several Sendak-themed classes and lectures for adults, there will be a number of events for children, including a *Wild Things*-inspired costume-making day.

\$5-10

Wednesday, December 9

Leonardo Art Science Evening Rendezvous (LASER)

SETI Institute
Palo Alto
www.leonardo.info/isast/events.html

LASER is a monthly series of lectures and presentations organized by Piero Scaruffi on behalf of Leonardo/ISAS. This event is FREE but space is limited. Please RSVP to p@scaruffi.com.

6:30 p.m.

Free

Friday, December 11

Club Clockwork

The Cat Club
333 11th Street, San Francisco
www.clubclockwork.com

Steampunk danceclub makes its tentative return to the city.

\$10

Saturday, December 12

Monsters of Webcomics: Webcomic-con

The Cartoon Art Museum
655 Mission Street, San Francisco
www.cartoonart.org

Single-day mini-convention dedicated to online comics and their creators. Guests include Brian Andersen (*So Super Duper*) Leigh Dragoon (*The Faerie Path Manga*), Shaenon K. Garrity (*Skin Horse*), Victor Hao (*King of RPGs*), Karen Luk (*Raconteur*), Betsy Streeter (*Brainwaves*) and Chuck Whelon (*Pewfell*). Exhibit runs through January 24th.

11 a.m.

\$6

Saturday, December 12

The Aquabats

Slim's
333 11th Street, San Francisco
www.theaquabats.com
The all-crime fighting all-surfing rock supergroup! Also appearing; The Action Design.
8 p.m. \$18

Saturday, December 12

Writers With Drinks

The Make-Out Room
225 22nd. St., San Francisco
www.writerswithdrinks.com
Dan Fante, Joshua Mohr, Mark Coggins, Seanan Maguire and Cat Grant. All proceeds benefit the Center for Sex and Culture.
7 p.m. \$3-\$5 Sliding scale.

Sunday, December 13

SACCON

Scottish Rite Center
6151 H Street, Sacramento
www.sacramentocomics.com/html/index2.html
Sacramento's Toys, Comics and Anime show.
10 a.m. \$6

Wednesday-Thursday, December 16-17

Rifftrax Christmas Shorts - Stravaganza!

Various Century Theaters
www.ncm.com/Fathom/Comedy/
RiffTrax_Xmas.aspx
The stars of Mystery Science Theater 3000 are back on the big screen this holiday season with special guest "Weird Al" Yankovic! Show will broadcast live on Wednesday, December 16th with an encore on Thursday, December 17th.
8 p.m. \$12.50

Saturday, January 2, 2010

Victorian 12th Night Ball

PEERS Event, www.peers.org
Masonic Lodge of San Mateo
100 N Ellsworth Ave, San Mateo
12th Night Ball hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Fezziwig, live performance by Bangers and Mash. Suggested costume is evening or day dress from 1837 through 1870, any class. Modern evening dress is, as always, a completely acceptable substitute for period costume and there is no dress code for the evening
7 p.m. \$15 (till December 26)

Friday-Sunday, January 8-10, 2010

West Kingdom 12th Night

Hilton Concord Hotel
1970 Diamond Blvd, Concord
www.westcooks.org/12thnight2010
SCA event, we ask that everyone who is attending make an attempt at pre-17th Century clothing. 12th Night serves as the Coronation for the incoming King and Queen, and there are a host of other things to do too.
\$25

Friday-Sunday, January 8-10, 2010

SacAnime

Radisson Hotel
500 Leisure Lane, Sacramento
www.sacanime.com
Anime convention
\$35

Friday-Sunday, January 8-10, 2010

Anime Los Angeles

LAX Marriott
5855 West Century Blvd, Los Angeles
www.animelosangeles.org
Anime convention. GOHs: Kyle Hebert, Jessica Gaona, The Spooky Bards and Bekka the Alice. Tostmaster:Tadao Tomomastu
\$25

Friday-Sunday, January 8-10, 2010

QuatreCon

Solano County Fairgrounds,
900 Fairgrounds Drive, Vallejo
www.quatrecon.com

Science fiction, horror, supernatural, and
paranormal film festival and convention.

\$60

Saturday-Sunday, January 9-10, 2010

IndyEuphoria

Scottish Rite Center
6151 H Street, Sacramento
www.sacramentocomics.com/indy/index2.html
Sacramento's Vinyl, Toy and Indy Comics
show.

\$10

Sunday, January 10, 2010

Author: Deborah Ross

Dark Carnival Books
3086 Claremont Ave, Berkeley
www.darkcarnival.com
Ross signs her Darkover novel, *Hastur Lord*
2 p.m.

Free

Friday, January 15, 2010

The Phenomenauts

Shire Road Club
5525 Auburn Blvd, Sacramento
www.myspace.com/shireroadclub
With The Secretions, Boats!, Sharp Objects.
7 p.m.

\$12

Thursday-Monday, January 21-25, 2010

Further Confusion

Fairmont San Jose
170 S Market St, San Jose
www.furtherconfusion.org/fc2010

One of the largest international conventions
celebrating anthropomorphism in all its guises.
GOHs Michael Fry, T. Lewis, Sofawolf Press
and Ursula Vernon.

\$45

Friday-Saturday, January 22-23, 2010

Jonathan Coulton, Paul & Storm

Great American Music Hall
859 OFarrell St, San Francisco
www.gamhtickets.com/events/58344/Jonathan-
Coulton--fri-
9 p.m.

\$25

Saturday, January 23, 2010

The Phenomenauts

The Rickshaw Stop
155 Fell Street, San Francisco
www.rickshawstop.com
With Maldroid, The Cons, Shauna Regan.
8 p.m.

\$15

Saturday-Sunday, January 23-24, 2010

Creation Salute to Star Trek

Westin St. Francis Hotel
335 Powell Street, San Francisco
www.creationent.com/cal/stsan.htm
William Shatner, Patrick Stewart, Armin
Shimerman, Jeffrey Coombs, and more.

\$159

Saturday-Sunday, January 30-31, 2010

Animation on Display

Hotel Kabuki
1625 Post St., San Francisco
www.aodsf.org

Animation on Display (AOD) is a convention
that features Japanese animation, (relatively
recent) cartoons, and their related interests.
\$25 (till December 31)

Saturday, February 6, 2010

Le Mardi Gras des Vampires

PEERS Event, www.peers.org
Masonic Lodge of San Mateo
100 N Ellsworth Ave, San Mateo
New Orleans' most amusing hosts, Lestat de
Lioncourt and Louis de Pointe du Lac, and
their ward, Mlle. Claudia, invite you to a
joyous Mardi Gras Ball in true Nineteenth
century ante-bellum New Orleans style.
Suggested attire is period costume, fantasy
Mardi Gras costume, or a fanciful version of
period costume. Modern evening dress is
perfectly acceptable and there is no dress code
for the ball. To protect your reputation, masks
are strongly recommended.
7 p.m.

\$15 (till January 30)

Friday-Sunday, February 12-14, 2010

Creation Official Twilight Convention

Hyatt Regency Airport
1333 Bayshore Highway, Burlingame
www.creationent.com/cal/twilight.htm

\$169

Saturday, February 13, 2010

Writers With Drinks

The Make-Out Room
225 22nd. St., San Francisco
www.writerswithdrinks.com

Reading by Vikram Chandra (*Sacred Games*),
Cherie Priest (*Boneshaker*) James Rollins (*The
Doomsday Key*) and Andrew Porter (*The
Theory Of Light And Matter*)
7 p.m. \$3-\$5 Sliding scale.

Friday-Sunday, February 26-28, 2010

Gallifrey One

LAX Marriott
5855 West Century Blvd, Los Angeles
gallifreyone.com
Doctor Who convention. GOH Sarah Sutton,
Georgia Moffet and many more. Original GOH
Peter Davison canceled due to scheduling
conflict.
\$65 (till December 31)

Friday-Sunday, March 5-7, 2010

Consonance

Hilton Newark/Fremont
39900 Balentine Drive, Fremont
www.consonance.org
Filk Convention. GOH are Tricky Pixie, Chris
O'Shea, Ju Honisch & Katy Droege.
Toastmistress is Judi Miller.
\$50

Saturday, March 6, 2010

An Evening at Cabaret

PEERS Event, www.peers.org
Masonic Lodge of San Mateo
100 N Ellsworth Ave, San Mateo
Spend a swinging evening in the most decadent
cabaret in 1930's Berlin. Guest band for the
evening is the brilliant and notorious Lee
Presson and the Nails. Suggested costume is
1930's costume or vintage or modern evening
dress. Theatrical costume, including showgirl
attire, is also welcome. Just about anything
goes at Cabaret, as long as it's acceptable to the
local police, who are among Cabaret's clients,
after all!
7 p.m. \$15 (till February 27)

Sunday, March 7, 2010

SACCON

Scottish Rite Center
6151 H Street, Sacramento
www.sacramentocomics.com/html/index2.html
Sacramento's Toys, Comics and Anime show.
10 a.m. \$6

Friday-Sunday, March 12-14, 2010

Sonora Celtic Faire

Mother Lode Fairgrounds
220 Southgate Dr., Sonora
sonoracelticfaire.com
Celebrating the cultures of Ireland, Scotland,
Cornwall and Wales.
\$50

Friday-Sunday, March 12-14, 2010

The Nova Albion Steampunk Exhibition

Hilton Garden Inn
1800 Powell Street, Emeryville
www.steampunkexhibition.com

\$60

Thursday, March 18, 2010

Thrillville

4 Star Theater
2200 Clement, San Francisco
www.thrillville.net
Monsturd and *Retardead* double bill, live music
by Meshugga Beach Party. Filmmakers and
stars in person.
7:30 p.m. \$9

Friday-Sunday, March 26-28, 2010

Contact

NASA Ames Research Center
www.contact-conference.com
Keynote speaker is Dr. Penelope Boston.
Please check website for registration details
and pricing.

Tuesday, April 15, 2010

Thrillville

Camera 3 Cinema
288 S. 2nd St., San Jose
www.thrillville.net
13th anniversary party! *The Brain that
Wouldn't Die* and *Attack of the Giant Leeches*.
Special guest Mr. Lobo and Actual Rafiq live!
7:30 p.m. \$10

April, 2010

The Great Pan-Kinetic Exposition

www.pankineticexpo.com

Details TBA

Friday-Sunday, April 2-4, 2010

WonderCon

Moscone Center South

747 Howard Street, San Francisco

www.comic-con.org/wc

Comics convention

Details TBA

Friday-Sunday, April 23-25, 2010

Robogames

San Mateo County Fairgrounds

2495 S Delaware St, San Mateo

robogames.net

RoboGames invites the best minds from around the world to compete in over 70 events.

Combat robots, walking humanoids, soccer bots, sumo bots, and even androids that do kung-fu.

\$20

Saturday, April 3, 2010

La Legion Fantastique: A Victorian Steampunk Ball

PEERS Event, www.peers.org

Masonic Lodge of San Mateo

100 N Ellsworth Ave, San Mateo

Guests are invited to dress in conventional mid-to-late Victorian evening dress (1850s – 1900) or Victorian Steampunk attire. Costumes, as always, are admired, not required and modern

evening dress is a perfectly acceptable substitute for period costume). Live music provided by Bangers & Mash. Punch and a light snack buffet will be served. As usual, the Legion appreciates your potluck contributions to the buffet.

7 p.m.

\$15 (till March 27th)

Saturday, May 1, 2010

The Courts of Faerie Ball

PEERS Event, www.peers.org

Masonic Lodge of San Mateo

100 N Ellsworth Ave, San Mateo

The Unseelie King and Queen of the Fae honour May Day and resign their crowns for six months to the blessed Seelie King and Queen.

Fantasy, fairy, or fairy tale costume from any tradition is admired, not required. Period costume (authentic or creatively "mixed"), vintage evening dress, or modern evening dress is also welcome. Masks, either worn or hand-held, are strongly recommended. While wings are very welcome on our Faerie creatures, be sure to wear wings you can dance in. Live music by Avalon Rising. Intermission entertainment includes dance performances and romantic DJ dance music for the insatiable dancers. Complimentary light refreshments will be served throughout the evening and, as usual, your potluck contributions are very welcome.

7 p.m.

\$15 (till April 24)

Saturday-Monday, May 28-31, 2010

Baycon

The Hyatt Regency Santa Clara

5101 Great America Parkway, Santa Clara

www.baycon.org

GOH Peter Beagle, Colleen and Steve

Savitzky, Toastmaser Tadao Tomomatsu.

Special Guests: Mercedes Lackey & Larry Dixon

\$55 (till December 1st)

Saturday-Monday, May 28-31, 2010

Fanime

San Jose McEnery Convention Center

150 W. San Carlos St., San Jose

www.fanime.com

Details TBA

\$45

Saturday, June 5, 2010

The Golden Anniversary Victorian Ball

PEERS Event, www.peers.org

Masonic Lodge of San Mateo

100 N Ellsworth Ave, San Mateo

Please join us in celebrating the 50th birthday of Mr. Fezziwig, the most gracious party host in all of Dickens' London. Live music by Bangers & Mash. Late Georgian Regency, Victorian, or modern evening dress is admired but not required. Punch, cake and a light Old English buffet will be served (Potluck contributions to Mrs. Fezziwig's kitchen would be most welcome).

7 p.m.

\$15 (till May 29)

Sunday, June 6 2010

SACCON

Scottish Rite Center
6151 H Street, Sacramento
www.sacramentocomics.com/html/index2.html
Sacramento's Toys, Comics and Anime show.
10 a.m. \$6

Friday-Monday, August 6-9, 2010

Costume College

Warner Center Marriot
21850 Oxnard St, Woodland Hills
www.costumecollege.org
A three-day educational conference on all subjects relating to costuming and clothing. Check website for details and registration.

Saturday, August 7, 2010

Jane Austen Picnic Dance

PEERS Event, www.peers.org
Lincoln Park
1450 High Street, Alameda (Near the Rose Garden)
Our guests are invited to bring their own period-style picnic lunch and to make their picnic site look as period as possible (Please note that the event is not a potluck. Our hard-working catering staff will be taking a well-deserved holiday!). Suggested costume for the event is late 18th century or Regency summer afternoon dress (1780-1818), but, as usual, costumes are admired, not required. Live music will be provided by Bangers & Mash. This event is a thank you to all of our devoted fans, and we will not be charging a fee for

admission. Donations for our brilliant and hard-working musicians will be gratefully accepted, however, both before and during the event.
11 a.m. Free

Saturday, September 4, 2010

The Gilbert and Sullivan Ball

PEERS Event, www.peers.org
Masonic Lodge of San Mateo
100 N Ellsworth Ave, San Mateo
Mr. and Mrs. William S. Gilbert request the honour of your presence at a fancy dress ball honouring the musical achievements of their colleague, the recently knighted Sir Arthur Sullivan. Guests are welcome to attend either in "normal" evening dress of the late 19th century (1860-1900) or in costumes inspired by the operas of Gilbert and Sullivan (Costumes are, as usual, admired but not required, at the ball). Live music by Bangers and Mash and intermission entertainment includes a performance of song and dance excerpts from Gilbert and Sullivan's operettas. As usual, punch and a light snack buffet will be served throughout the evening (Mrs. Gilbert will gratefully welcomes your potluck contributions to the buffet).
7 p.m. \$15 (till August 28)

Saturday-Sunday, September 24-25, 2010

From the Land Beyond 3

Scottish Rite Center
6151 H Street, Sacramento
www.fromthelandbeyond.com
Horror & Sci-Fi con. Details TBA.

Saturday, October 2, 2010

The Evil League of Evil Villains' Ball

PEERS Event, www.peers.org
Masonic Lodge of San Mateo
100 N Ellsworth Ave, San Mateo
Guests are invited to attend as their favorite Evil character – historical, fictional, or original. Live music by Avalon Rising. Costumes may be historical, science fiction/fantasy, modern evening dress. The event includes musical performances, a no-host (cash) bar, and a light snack buffet. Potluck contributions to the buffet will be greatly appreciated.
7 p.m. \$15 (till September 26)

Sunday, December 12th 2010

SACCON

Scottish Rite Center
6151 H Street, Sacramento
www.sacramentocomics.com/html/index2.html
Sacramento's Toys, Comics and Anime show.
10 a.m. \$6

Sunday, March 6 2011

SACCON

Scottish Rite Center
6151 H Street, Sacramento
www.sacramentocomics.com/html/index2.html
Sacramento's Toys, Comics and Anime show.
10 a.m. \$6

Sunday, June 5 2011

SACCON

Scottish Rite Center
6151 H Street, Sacramento
www.sacramentocomics.com/html/index2.html
Sacramento's Toys, Comics and Anime show.
10 a.m. \$6

Wednesday-Sunday, August 17-21 2011

Worldcon: Renovation

Reno Sparks Convention Center
4590 South Virginia Avenue, Reno, NV
Reno, Nevada
www.renovationsf.org
The 69th World Science Fiction Convention.
GOH: Tim Powers, Ellen Asher, Boris Vallejo,
Charles N. Brown.
\$140 (till April 30 2010)

Sunday, December 11 2011

SACCON

Scottish Rite Center
6151 H Street, Sacramento
www.sacramentocomics.com/html/index2.html
Sacramento's Toys, Comics and Anime show.
10 a.m. \$6

Ongoing

Daily

Cartoon Art Museum

655 Mission Street, San Francisco
www.cartoonart.com
Once Upon a Dream, The Art of Sleeping
Beauty (through January 10, 2010). Masters of
Webcomics (through December 6, 2009) \$6

San Francisco Ghost Hunt Walking Tour

Begins: Queen Anne Hotel
1590 Sutter at Octavia, San Francisco
www.sfgghosthunt.com
7 p.m. – 10 p.m. \$20

VIZ Cinema

1746 Post Street, San Francisco
www.newpeopleworld.com/films
VIZ Cinema is a 143-seat underground cinema
inside NEW PEOPLE in San Francisco. Its
programming focuses on the latest and hottest
films from Japan, as well as classics, favorites,
documentaries and anime.
Please check theater for showtimes and tickets.

Sundays

**MGI SF&F/Horror/Speculative fiction
Writing Group**

Personal Residence (email for details)
Emeryville
groups.yahoo.com/group/MGISFFWriters
7:30 p.m. Free

Sakramento Anime Society

Rancho Cordova Library
9845 Folsom Boulevard, Rancho Cordova
Meets every Sunday to watch old and new
anime and anime music videos, play collectible
card games, practice artwork and make AMVs.
3-7 p.m.

Mondays

Bay Area Science Fiction Association

Coco's
1206 Oakmead Parkway, Sunnyvale
www.basfa.org
8 p.m. Free

Dukefish

Jake's of Sunnyvale
174 E. Fremont Avenue, Sunnyvale
Group meets weekly to play German-style
strategy board games such as Settlers of Catan,
Carcasson and other games, plus an occasional
game of bridge breaks out. Meet up at 8:00
p.m., figure out who wants to play what, and
typically start playing games no later than 8:30
p.m.
8 p.m. Free

Mondays and Wednesdays

Silicon Valley Boardgamers

Mountain View Community Center
201 S. Rengstorff Avenue, Mountain View
www.davekohr.users.sonic.net/svb
Group meets regularly to play mostly German-style strategy boardgames such as Settlers of Catan; also multi-player Avalon Hill-style, historical war games, and others.
6:30 p.m. \$2

Tuesdays

MGI Boffers & Outdoor Games

Codornices Park
1201 Euclid Ave, Berkeley
mgisciaf.angelfire.com
groups.yahoo.com/group/MGIFamilyclub
Bad weather: we meet the same time at 33
Revolutions Record Shop & Cafe, El Cerrito
for boardgames.
3 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. Free

Wednesdays

Bay Area Role-Playing Society

Go-Getter's Pizza
1489 Beach Park Boulevard, Foster City
www.BayRPS.com
Hosts a weekly game night. For club and game
night details email GM@BayRPS.com
6 p.m. - 10 p.m. Free

East Bay Strategy Games Club

EndGame
921 Washington, Oakland
www.michaeldashow.com/eastbaystrategy/
home.html
7:30 p.m. - 11 p.m. Free

Fanboy Planet Podcast

Illusive Comics and Games
2725 El Camino Real, Suite 105, Santa Clara
Live from Illusive Comics and Games, it's the
Fanboy Planet Podcast with your host, Derek
McCaw.
6 p.m. Free

Wednesdays and Saturdays

Hayward Collectibles Show

22300 Hathaway Ave (rear bldg), Hayward
www.toysandbaseballcards.com
Wednesdays 3 p.m.-8 p.m. and Saturdays 10
a.m.-5 p.m. Free

Fridays

FyDy SyFy

Eclipse Lounge, Hyatt Regency
5 Embarcadero Center, San Francisco
Casual meetup in the atrium lobby bar.
5:30-7:30

SF Games

Muddy's Coffeehouse
1304 Valencia Street, San Francisco
vax.hanford.org/dk/games
SF Games is a collective name for a bunch of
people who get together and play board games
and card games every week. Also has a regular
cards night at Atlas Café, 20th and Alabama
Streets, Tuesday nights from 6:30-10.
7 p.m. to midnight Free

Fridays-Mondays

Haunted Haight Walking Tour

Meets at Coffee To The People
1206 Masonic Avenue, San Francisco
www.hauntedhaight.com
Reservations required.
7 p.m. - 9 p.m. \$20

Fridays and Saturdays

Vampire Walking Tour

Meets corner of California and Taylor, San
Francisco
www.sfvampiretour.com
Led by Mina Harker. Tour is canceled if there
is heavy rain.
8 p.m. \$20

Biweekly

PenSFA Party

The Peninsula Science Fantasy Association meets every two weeks for a party at the home of one of their members. They also host parties at local conventions. Email commander@pensfa.org for information on attending. PenSFA standard party rules: bring something edible or drinkable to share, or pay the host \$2. Don't smoke in the house without checking with the host first. Normal start time is 8 p.m. but may vary depending on the host.

Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers' Group

Borderlands Books
866 Valencia Street, San Francisco
Meets the second and fourth Thursdays of each month at 6 pm. Contact Jade Livingston at sfscifi@yahoo.com for more information.

Monthly

Dorkbot-SF

www.dorkbot.org/dorkbotsf/
Dorkbot hosts regular forums for artists, designers, engineers, students, and other people doing strange things with electricity.
Free, donations welcome

East Bay Star Wars Club

Central Perk
10086 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito
510-558-7375
www.ebstarwars.com
Meets the second Friday of every month.
7:30 p.m. Free

Fantastic Frontiers

www.freewebs.com/fantasticfrontiers/
Social club for Sacramento County sci fi/fantasy fans usually meets the second Saturday of the month. Check website for meeting times and locations.

Foothill Anime

Building 5015, Foothill College
Los Altos Hills
Monthly event where people can get together to watch anime and meet like minded others.
Usually meets the first Sunday of every month at noon.
12 p.m. Free

The Gay Men's Book Club

Borderlands Books
866 Valencia, San Francisco
www.borderlands-books.com
Please contact Chris, the group leader, at cobalt555@earthlink.net for more information.
5 p.m. Free

Legion of Rassilon

Carl's Jr.
2551 N 1st St , San Jose
www.legionofrassilon.org
Doctor Who fan group usually meets the fourth Friday of the month: Episodes of Doctor Who, news, discussion of recent movies, and a raffle.
7:30 p.m. Free

Micro Gods, Inc.

Berkeley Public Library, West Branch
1125 University Ave, Berkeley
mgisciaf.angelfire.com
groups.yahoo.com/group/MGIFamilyClub/
Family Club for fans of Science Fiction, Fantasy, Movie, Anime & Manga. Meets every 3rd Saturday, please check Yahoo group for updates.
2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. Free

No-Name Anime

Saratoga Library
13650 Saratoga Avenue
Saratoga
www.nnanime.com
Anime screenings usually take place on the second Saturday of the month.
Free

Other Realms Book Club

Books, Inc.
1375 Burlingame Ave, Burlingame
www.booksinc.net
Meets the 4th Wednesday of the Month.
6:30 p.m. Free

Religion & SF Book Club

First United Methodist Church
1183 "B" Street, Hayward
Meets the 4th Sunday of the month. Please
contact Rev. Randy Smith at
RSmith2678@aol.com for more information.
7 p.m. Free

Rocky Horror Picture Show

The Clay, 2261 Fillmore Street San Francisco/
The Guild, 949 El Camino Real Menlo Park
www.bawdycaste.org
The Bawdy Caste presents the classic midnight
movie the first Saturday of the month,
alternating between the Clay in San Francisco
and the Guild in Menlo Park.
Midnight

Sci-Fi and Fantasy Book Club

Clayton Books
5433 D Clayton Road, Clayton
www.claytonbookshop.com
Meets the 3rd Wednesday of the month. The
December 16th meeting is a favorite book
exchange. The book for January 20th
is *Rosemary and Rue* by Seanan McGuire.
7:30 p.m. Free

Science Fiction and Fantasy Book Club

Borderlands Books
866 Valencia, San Francisco
www.borderlands-books.com
The book for December is *End of the World
Blues* by Jon Courtenay Grimwood. Please
contact Jude at jfeldman@borderlands-
books.com for more information.
6 p.m. Free

SF Browncoats

Cafe Murano
1777 Steiner Street, San Francisco
www.sfbrowncoats.com
SF Firefly/Serenity fans usually meet up on the
second Saturday of the month.
Noon Free

Silicon Gulch Browncoats

Various locations (see website for details)
www.silicongulchbrowncoats.org
Silicon Valley fans of Firefly/Serenity meet up
on the first Saturday of the month.
Noon - 2 p.m. Free

USS Augusta Ada

Round Table Pizza
3567 Geary Blvd, San Francisco
trek.starshine.org
Augusta Ada is both a chapter of Starfleet
International and a Linux and *BSD user
group. Usually meets the fourth Saturday of
every month.
1 p.m. Free

USS Defiance

5026 Don Julio Blvd, Sacramento
1566 Howe Ave, Sacramento
www.myspace.com/d2121978
Star Trek fan group meets the third Friday of
the month.
7 p.m. Free

USS Northern Lights

Contact firstjedi2000@yahoo.com for
specifics.
sites.google.com/site/ussnorthernlights
'Lights is a chapter of Starfleet International
and a swell group of science fiction fans. We
do more than Trek. Usually meets the third
Saturday of the month, with social event
TBD. December 19th is a festive potluck at the
Hooverarium
7 p.m. Free

Veritech Fighter Command ONE-THREE

Round Table Pizza
4403 Elkhorn Blvd, Sacramento
916-338-2300
Anime/cosplay group usually meets the last
Saturday of the month at 1800 hours.
6 p.m. Free



Bay Area Fannish Calendar – December 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>MGI SFF/H Writing</i> <i>Sakramento Anime</i>	<i>BASFA</i> <i>Dukefish</i> <i>SV Boardgamers</i>	<i>MGI Boffers</i>	<i>BA Role-Playing Soc</i> <i>E.Bay Strategy Games</i> <i>Fanboy Planet Podcast</i> <i>SV Boardgamers</i>		<i>FyDy SyFy</i> <i>SF Games</i>	
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
					<i>Dickens Fair (thru Dec 20)</i>	<i>Holiday Anime Fair</i> <i>The Phenomenauts</i> <i>Time Tunnel</i> <i>Silicon Browncoats</i> <i>Rocky Horror</i>
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<i>Foothill Anime</i>			<i>Leonardo Art Science</i> <i>Evening Rendezvous (LASER)</i>	<i>SF&F Writers' Group</i>	<i>Club Clockwork</i> <i>East Bay Star Wars</i> <i>USS Northern Lights</i>	<i>Writers With Drinks</i> <i>Webcomic-con</i> <i>The Aquabats</i> <i>Fantastic Frontiers</i> <i>No-Name Anime</i> <i>SF Browncoats</i>
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
<i>SACCON</i> <i>Gay Men's Book Club</i> <i>SF Santa Rosa Meetup</i>			<i>Rifftrax Christmas</i> <i>Shorts - Stravaganza (thru Thurs)</i> <i>Clayton SFF Book Club</i>	<i>Tangential</i> <i>Conjectures</i>	<i>USS Defiance</i>	<i>Micro Gods, Inc</i> <i>Clockwork SF</i> <i>USS Northern Lights</i>
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
<i>SF/F Book Club</i>			<i>Other Realms</i>		<i>Legion of Rassilon</i>	<i>USS Augusta Ada</i> <i>Veritech Fighter Cmd 13</i>
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
<i>Religion & SF</i>						<i>Victorian 12th Night Ball</i>