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Further Adventures at WonderCon

By **Diane B. Rooney**
Staff Writer

Panels at WonderCon (held last February 10–12 at the Moscone West in San Francisco) are an interesting mix of big studio presentations and smaller gatherings with particular artists or stars or on particular topics. I attended only a few panels but wanted to share some highlights and other interesting stuff.

Jim Henson Company

Michael Polis, executive producer of *MirrorMask*, led the Henson presentation, along with Rob Valois of TOKYOPOP. With the *MirrorMask* DVD coming out the Tuesday after the con, Michael's presentation focused on the saga of the film's production and release and the material on the DVD. Lots of big names are involved with *MirrorMask*, notably Neil Gaiman (writer) and Dave McKean (director).

MirrorMask was shot on a London soundstage over about a month on a slim budget of just \$4 million. It premiered at Sundance in January 2005 and went on to win festival awards there and at Sarasota,

Edinburgh, Locarno, and a bunch more. Although planned for direct-to-DVD release by SONY, a short theatrical release began in September.

The DVD release is supported by a ton of merchandise and collateral, including action figures, trading cards, apparel and prop replicas. There's a soundtrack album with songs by Neil Gaiman and music by Dave McKean.

HarperCollins is releasing a book for kids, a script/storyboard book, and the sumptuous *Alchemy of MirrorMask*. There's even a journal where you can write in invisible ink, packaged together with a black light so you can read it. Neil Gaiman is writing a



Sergio Aragones and Damien Metz

Photo by Diane B. Rooney

Manga-style prequel, which TOKYOPOP will publish early in 2007.

Upcoming projects include:

- A *Dark Crystal* prequel incorporating puppets and CGI, with a Fall 2008 target release.

Also a three-volume *Dark Crystal* Manga series. Local FX house The Orphanage will work on the film.



Scabrous Vermicelli Photo by Diane B. Rooney

- A *Labyrinth* film sequel and three volume Manga series. The first volume will be available at ComicCon in July, with the others to follow at six-month intervals.

Fox Searchlight

I went to the Fox Searchlight panel just to hear Marcus Nispel, director of *Pathfinder*, opening in July. Nispel is an appealing madman — he explained that he really wanted to be an illustrator for MAD, not a director. He worked at MAD for awhile and wrote a piece on uses for dead unicorns, but eventually parted ways with editors who didn't think their audience would get a lot of Nispel's stuff.

So he became a director, wanting to make a movie about gladiators, then pirates. Since those had been recently taken, he turned to Vikings. In *Pathfinder*, set in the 9th century, Vikings come to North America and encounter Native Americans with, uh, violent consequences. Sort of *Lord of the Rings* meets *The New World*,

as Nispel himself said.

Nispel believes lead Karl Urban is ideal for the part: "Perfect face, perfect look in his eyes." Plus, he explains, there was no real boot camp for the film and Urban was already an accomplished rider and swordsman from his work in *Lord of the Rings*, *Xena* and *Hercules*. Nispel didn't need a Native American consultant, he said, because Russell Means, one of the



Peter Mayhew

Photo by Diane B. Rooney



Annie Wallace with A Boy and His Shadow

Photo by Diane B. Rooney

founders of AIM, is in the film.

Nispel showed a day in the life clip that captured his manic energy on set. He explained that the shoot in Vancouver was difficult, cold and wet. They battled torrential rains, and, since it's an action picture, 80 people were hospitalized, mostly with broken legs and ankles. Nispel was inspired by Werner Herzog's *Fitzcarraldo*, saying he wanted to make "a real movie, not just a shoot in a park with miniatures."

Mark Cotta Vaz, Peter David and Gahan Wilson

In this panel, three legendary writers, successful in a variety of media, discussed their careers and changes in the book, art, comics and film worlds. Plus Mark signed our copy of *Living Dangerously*, his new bio of Merion C. Cooper, with a drawing and an elegant flourish.

Gahan Wilson, who started cartooning for *Amazing Stories* and *Colliers*, sold his first cartoon for \$7.50. He explained that in the old days, cartoonists also did paintings that they'd show in small art shows. They always talked more about the paintings, many of which weren't very good, than they did about their comics. Now comic artists no longer have to do that. A lot of the snobbery associated with high art has disappeared.

Comics are slowly growing beyond being seen as a kids' medium. In countries like Japan, France and Belgium, Manga authors are superstars. The general public, though, still thinks of comics as "fights in tights." They haven't grasped that films like *Road to Perdition* and *A History of*

Violence started life as comic books.

Integration across genre, especially when it comes to merchandising properties, has grown significantly. The Batman 50th anniversary in 1989 had only a sidebar on the Tim Burton film, while today it would be completely integrated from the beginning.

Peter David noted that genre crossover is not new and is actually a career path. Many past comic book writers had sci fi



Arielle, James, and David at the CA Browncoats booth

Photo by Diane B. Rooney

writing credits. He observed that comic writers need to move on after a few years when they are no longer the big new thing. Many go to TV, film or animation. Also, many TV writers turn to writing comics since they can't write for television forever because of the industry's ageism, and the comics want them because they are big names from their TV work.

Peter closed the panel by reminding us that no visual medium can match what the viewer has in his own mind, which is why radio remains such a great medium for storytelling. (Um, not to mention books.) He noted that Ray Harryhausen said that



Daniel & Dawna Davis with Caught Creatures
Photo by Diane B. Rooney

the perfection of today's CGI "has taken the fantastic and made it mundane," while the jerky motion of old style stop-motion animation added an element of terror absent from today's perfect CGI creatures.

Taken together these guys must have about a century's worth of experience, so listening to them trade stories and impressions was great.

Walking Around

Authors of books about management and innovation often say you can learn a lot by just walking around. That's true of conventions as well, especially for first-timers. Turns out there was a lot to see in the Exhibit Hall, lobbies and hallways of Moscone West.

California Browncoats had one of the busiest booths in the Exhibit Hall. They



Noodles

Photo by Diane B. Rooney

were selling tickets for a charity raffle benefiting Equality Now and The Wooten Center, distributing DVD trailers of *Slither*, passing out special *Slither*-edition gummy worms, and just generally serving as a gathering place for *Firefly* and *Serenity* fans to talk about the series, the film and the premiere of *Done the Impossible*, the making-of documentary for *Serenity*.

Dave McCloughan was one fan staffing the booth. He's been a Joss Whedon fan since *Buffy* and was thrilled to get Whedon's



Crew of the Dirty Rotten Oar

Photo by Diane B. Rooney

autograph at last year's WonderCon. He graduates from the Academy of Art University in May with a degree in acting, and wants to work in the *Serenity* sequel, or in anything that would get him work with Whedon. Also helping in the booth were James Richardson and Arielle Kesweder.

Among many artists and authors I spoke to, two who stood out were Ben Ilka of Mad Sea Dog, creator of *A Boy and His Shadow*, and Daniel M. Davis, author of *Caught Creatures* from Steamcrow Press. *A Boy and His Shadow* is a graphic novel suitable for all ages that tells the story of a lonely boy,

ignored by his family and teachers, who immerses himself in reading. He hopes to make connections at school, but "the halls of knowledge he had imagined were more like cages." He becomes more and more isolated, until the day he meets the Shadow, who seems to serve as a teacher, coach, and administrator of tough love. Watch for the second issue coming in March. Check it out at <http://www.thedrawingstudio.org/Faculty/ilka.htm>.

Daniel M. Davis's *Caught Creatures*, published in November 2005 by Steamcrow Press, is also a book for all ages. Daniel and his wife Dawna came up from Phoenix for WonderCon, their first convention. Described as "a monster haiku art book," *Caught Creatures* features wonderful, not-too-scary creatures that are appealing and beautifully colored, and, yes, each one has its own seventeen-syllable haiku by way of introduction. Daniel explains: "The illustrations came first, but that's probably because I'm much more of an illustrator than a poet. Then, I'd try to capture the personality or emotional state of each creature in the haiku."

Daniel's art is created digitally. "Most of the time, I'll draw straight in the computer with the mouse and the pen tool. I'll visualize the kind of monster that I'm attempting to draw, picturing the shape,

the emotion and pose, and then try to hack it out. At the end, I'll drop the illustration in Photoshop for texture and finishing." More at <http://steamcrow.com/content/view/5/34/>.

Down the aisle from the booksellers and the *Star Wars* fan tables was the delightful Peter Mayhew, who seemed to enjoy talking to fans. Peter is gentle and approachable, has dazzling blue eyes, and if you see him standing up, you can't miss him as he is 7'3" tall.

There were also some fabulous hall costumes. By the 501st Legion table I met Cathy of Los Gatos in her stunning



Capt Jack Sparerib & Friend

Photo by Diane B. Rooney

blue and purple Padme Amidala Senate or Committee dress from Episode 2. Cathy has made several costumes, including Jeannie, Princess Leia and Arwen's mourning dress, and plans to make a *Moulin Rouge* costume for this year's Dragon*Con. The Padme dress, which involved hundreds of hours of embroidery, is made of acetate and rayon silk velvet. She worked on it "on and off for two years." The headpiece is a wire frame basket, with human hair dyed and styled. She also made all the jewelry for the costume. She plans to remake the costume in silk.

Lurking in the exhibition hall was Scabrous Vermicelli, a wonderful armored dragon presented by Phil B. Scabrous features a fiberglass head, claws made from Sculpey, and amazing leatherwork. Phil has been presenting Scabrous at Further Confusion, SiliCon, and several Renaissance Faires in the last year and a half. He's a fan of dragons. The hardest part of the costume to make was not the head or the armor, says Phil, but the trousers. They're actually almost three-legged with a generous gusset to accommodate the huge tail. The armor, originally designed for riders, was acquired second hand and adjusted to accommodate the tail. It takes about an hour to dress as Scabrous, and he usually works with an assistant to help him

navigate crowds. Phil's other costume is also a dragon, a friendlier, fuzzier one known as Kingsford, who often appears at kids' events and charities. Yet another dragon, a shy 200-year old named Noodles, was presented by Richard Halliday and was also popular with attendees seeking pictures.

Another hit was Damien Metz of Las Vegas, costumed as Jesus Christ from *Dogma*. Damien debuted his Christ costume at Las Vegas's Fetish and Fantasy Ball about four years ago and has shown it several times at Dragon*Con (where I first met him). His other costumes include the Angel of Death and Qui-Gon. Damien works in laser cutting acrylic, custom vinyl and custom embroidery, and recently became head of Las Vegas's Neon City Garrison of the 501st Legion. He's with noted artist Sergio Aragonés in the photo.

Last but not least, there were a good number of pirates in attendance, including professional pirate (and entertainer, magician, juggler, etc.) Ace Miles as Captain Jack Sparerib (www.pirate4hire.com), other members of the Tales of the Seven Seas (www.talesofthesevenseas.com), and the Crew of the Dirty Rotten Oar, a crew of 16th- and 17th-century pirates (www.dirtyrottenoar.com) that included Grace O'Malley (Maria Biny), Hurricane Lil (Nicole Lynn) and Capt. Woody

Puckernut.

The walking-around time was well spent in terms of photo opportunities, interviews and new contacts.



Cathy as Padme Amidala

Photo by Diane B. Rooney

Loyd Auerbach Q and A at WonderCon

By Chris Garcia
Editor

I ran into a lot of people I didn't expect to see at WonderCon. Most of them were old friends I hadn't seen in years, but one was world-renowned paranormal investigator Loyd Auerbach. A fixture in the field for more than two decades, Loyd was kind enough to answer a few of our questions.

Christopher J. Garcia: Let's start with a bit of background. When did you first become interested in the paranormal? Was it the classic "Ghost in the Closet" scenario that so many researchers point to as their beginning?

Loyd Auerbach: I've been interested in all sorts of paranormal and weird things since very young – I can't even recall when.

It was really nothing psychic or ghostly, contrary to what most people expect. In actuality, I was watching TV shows from a *very* early age that influenced me, such as *Topper*, *The Twilight Zone*, and *One Step Beyond*. Looking back, *Topper* probably gave me my first "taste" of ghosts. Early on, I also read lots of mythology and science

fiction, and especially superhero comic books.

I was also a bit of a science geek as a kid, partly due to my father being involved in the NBC News coverage of the Mercury and Gemini space shots (and an interest in collecting rocks and minerals).

Combine all of that, throw in a dash of *Star Trek* and *Dark Shadows*, and I think I almost *had* to discover the books in the library on parapsychology. I believed then, as I believe now, that psychic abilities are probably normal and untapped. This never seemed a strange conclusion, to me.

In the early 70s, the short-lived TV show *The Sixth Sense*, coupled with my being able to meet and talk with some NY area parapsychologists (through a neighbor who was the yoga teacher for one of them) pushed me over the cliff and I just had to get into the field.

And by the way, for most parapsychologists, personal experiences with the paranormal are the exception, not the norm for why they got into the field.

CG: You've been writing and researching for more than two decades. I can remember when my dad would come back from investigations and he'd be wiped

out, sometimes for days. How much of a physical toll do your investigations take on you?

LA: Actually, it's generally the logistics – distance and time spent – that take more of a physical toll than anything else. Sometimes we have to spend time on a long stake-out if the place seems that interesting, but lately that's the exception. In addition, contrary to what so often shows up on TV, overnight investigations are really not necessary unless it's the only time we can reasonably access some places. Most people have ghostly experiences at all times of day and night – and mostly during more reasonable hours, since most people are asleep during the very late night/early morning hours and therefore don't experience as much.

CG: You're a regular on many of the shows that populate The Travel Channel's Friday Night Paranormal TV line-up. Do you ever watch *Most Haunted?* What do you think of their techniques for investigation/presentation? What's your take on the controversial Derek Acorah?

LA: I'm a regular only because so many of the shows I've done are in eternal

reruns.

To be honest, there are so few hours in the day for me to watch TV, and I'm often so busy, that I rarely watch many of the shows such as *Most Haunted* – and frankly, after so many years I find the shows repetitive and even boring (especially *Ghost Hunters*). Plus I sometimes have to turn them off simply because of how stupid the activity of the ghost hunters is. I can only groan so much.

Most Haunted and so many of the shows suffer from the “gotta shoot in the dark for atmosphere” syndrome. We actually never sit around in the dark (night vision or not). It only looks cool on TV.

I've not made up my mind about Derek Acorah. I hear from some people who have worked with him that he's very good (meaning has real psychic abilities), and from others that he's not all that psychic, that it's all for show.

Psychics can be real characters – but that has little to do with how psychic they are.

CG: As a guy whose job is to investigate the things that freak most people out, what scares you?

LA: People. Living people. They carry guns and knives. Oh yeah, and I'm not too fond of spiders.

CG: As far as your most famous

investigations go, it seems like I've been hearing about the investigation you led on the USS *Hornet* since the week it happened. Which of your investigations would you point to as the most intense? Which would you say was the most disappointing?

LA: This is a tough question – it depends on what you mean by “intense.” The case I've been most involved in over the years, and where I've experienced the most personally, is that of the Moss Beach Distillery Restaurant south of SF. Cayte (a.k.a. The Blue Lady) is a well-known ghost of the coast, and I've been investigating/working with the place since 1991.

I have seen objects move there, felt the ghost's presence (including the sensation of being walked through several times), and even heard her voice call my name. The longest write-up of the case (as well as an extensive write-up of the USS *Hornet* case) appears in my latest book *A Paranormal Casebook: Ghost Hunting in The New Millennium* (Atriad Press, 2005).

CG: You teach courses on various matters in parapsychology. Do you think there's a greater interest in looking at the paranormal as a serious subject now? Do you think that parapsychology will ever be taken seriously by the “mainstream” scientific community?

LA: I wish this was the case, and with all the thousands of amateur ghost hunters out there one would think this was the case. In actuality, the vast majority of them know nothing about parapsychology, have no idea why they should know anything about the field, and have even been encouraged to NOT learn about parapsychology (by some of the main people behind the biggest ghost hunting organizations).

On the other hand, there certainly are more and more scientists interested in questions around consciousness coming out of the closet, and parapsychology is one field that directly studies the impact of consciousness on the world around us.

CG: Give me a brief idea of how you work an investigation. Where do you start and how does it progress to completion?

LA: There's no way to do this justice in “brief” but here goes.

I start with a phone interview, and try to get as much of the detail before even deciding to head out. Cases need to have witnesses and current (or very recent) activity reported. They have to be more than one-time experiences, and preferably have more than one witness to the events. In the interview, I'm also looking for alternate non-paranormal explanations.

If it's decided to visit for an investigation, I (and folks from my group) go to the

location and interview the witnesses. Witness testimony is primary in all our cases. I may have a psychic or other non-pro sensitives with me, and we use various environmental sensors such as EMF detectors (mainly for the magnetometer function), thermometers, cameras and the like. However, the tech can only supply sensings of anomalies in the environment, anomalies which mean nothing without human experience to tie them to.

We look for non-paranormal explanations not just for the overall case, but for each individual incident in the case. It's been my experience that people having an actual psychic/paranormal experience are often on edge enough to begin looking for anything out of the ordinary they'd not noticed before (such as house-settling noises), which get grouped into the case.

If the conclusion is that something paranormal is occurring, we discuss what that is (apparition, haunting, poltergeist or other psychic experience) and how to help the folks deal with the experiences and the phenomena.

There's much more, which can be found in my books *Ghost Hunting: How to Investigate the Paranormal* and *Hauntings & Poltergeists: A Ghost Hunter's Guide*, both from Ronin Publishing (2004).

CG: Where around the Bay Area can

us normal folks get a taste of the haunted (other than the Winchester House)?

LA: Visit the USS Hornet in Alameda, the Moss Beach Distillery in Moss Beach (south of Pacifica off Highway 1), or the Banta Inn in Tracy. Those are all great places to start, and you're much more likely to experience things at those places than at the Winchester House.

CG: I also heartily endorse the Moss Beach Distillery's Sunday Brunch. OK, Last question: You've written several books, put out an audio CD of tales from your most impressive investigations, you have the video of your Hornet investigation and so much more. Ever thought about perhaps making a movie?

LA: Oh yeah! TV series too. I've got the media in the blood: my father worked for NBC, my uncle for CBS; one brother currently works for the *Today Show*, the other co-owns a company producing movie trailers for some of the major studios.

I've actually had a few near-misses with fictional TV series success over the years. But the series were either not picked up or in a couple of cases were cancelled just as I was about to jump onboard with the writing.

Also co-wrote a script based loosely on one of my cases for a TV movie (unsold,

but still trying), and even submitted (with a friend) a treatment for one of the *Nightmare on Elm Street* films.

One of these days perhaps someone will be interested. Perhaps a Professor Paranormal mystery? (Note: I perform psychic entertainment as Professor Paranormal).

For tons more info and articles, visit my website at www.mindreader.com

Folks can contact me via email at esper@california.com or at the Office of Paranormal Investigations at 415-249-9275.

Also, I am teaching a Parapsychological Studies Certificate Program at HCH Institute in Lafayette, CA, open to all interested parties. For more info, go to <http://www.hypnotherapytraining.com/parapsych.cfm>

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The Phantom Comes Alive at the PEERS *Phantom of the Opera* Ball

By Eva Kent
Staff Writer

Messieurs Firmin and Andre, the hapless new owners of the Paris Opera Populaire, had a small problem on their hands during the Period Events and Entertainments Recreation Society's (PEERS) *Phantom of the*



The Song That Goes Like This

Photo by Jean Martin

Opera Ball, held on Saturday March 4th at the San Mateo Masonic lodge.

All seemed to be going smoothly for the owners as patrons in masquerade attire began to fill the ballroom. The Brassworks Band was present and provided enchanting opera and ballet music for ballroom dancing. A variety of costumes were represented such as authentic reproductions of Victorian bustle and Civil War era hoopskirt dresses. Several ballet dancers with tulle skirts flounced throughout the crowd. Gentlemen wore a variety of costumes such as period suits, tuxedos, capes, robes, and pirate shirts. One of the most striking costumes was a reproduction of the "Masquerader of Death" as seen in the Lon Chaney version of *The Phantom of the Opera*. The dancer wore a red robe and a wide brimmed red hat that was adorned with red feathered plumes. A very scary mask of death finished the look.

A distinguishing aspect of this PEERS ball was the variety of masks created to coordinate with the

costumes worn by the dancers. The masks were decorated with anything from fabric,



The Phantom and His Lady

Photo by Jean Martin



bangles, feathers, and leaves to paint and ribbon. Several dancers wore the Phantom's white half mask. One interesting mask was a cardboard cutout that was a reverse mask which started at the eyebrow and went up into a beehive hairdo. Another lady had painted a blue mask with gold swirls onto her face, and it matched her blue and purple fringe cut gown.

The Messieurs Firmin and Andre bravely held their composure after Madame Giry, the manager of the Opera's ballet, brought them a strange note which demanded both a hefty sum of money, and that a choice seat in the theater remain vacant. After pocketing the unwelcome correspondence, the duo announced the Grand March as the next dance. Dancers took partners and followed the lead couples around the dance floor in intricate patterns that were somewhat confusing because they involved weaving through a second line of couples and brief separations from one's own partner. The confusion at the start of the March was made worthwhile by the extravagant ending, where all of the dancers held hands in a giant spiral that took up the whole of the dance floor. The line twined toward the center of the room where a walking stick was raised and participants slipped under as they made their way out of the center of the spiral.

The distressed opera management succeeded in providing excellent entertainment during band intermissions. Persephone and Charles, local dance

Masked Revelers

Photo by Jean Martin

teachers, portrayed the fragile Christine and the incensed Phantom in a ballet. The scene, which takes place after the Phantom finds out that Christine has another suitor, was done to the song *The Mirror*. The second number was performed by the coy ballet girls of the Opera House. The ballet was still in rehearsal, so understandably a few “mistakes” were made.



Jean and Eleanor

Right: Christine and the Phantom

Photos by Jean Martin

At the following band break, the owners of the opera brought their best singers out to serenade the crowd. Carlotta, the opera's reigning diva, sang *Think of Me*. After she was done there was a great crashing sound and she ran off the stage saying that she would never perform there again. To keep the patrons of the opera calm, the owners put Piangi, the opera's tenor, on the stage to sing *Music of the Night*. Christine was then introduced to the crowd, and she sang with her new suitor and the Phantom himself. Everyone loved her just as much if not more than Carlotta.

As the evening went on, more letters were delivered to the owners, and the night culminated with the kidnapping of Christine by the Phantom. Regrettably, the owners were not able to prevent the disappearance of their new star, but they managed to provide an excellent evening of entertainment and ballroom dancing for their masquerading guests.



Life of an Artist: The Imagination to Run Wild!

By Sasha Nealand
Staff Writer

What is it like to be a professional artist?

Local Bay Area artist John Barrows



knows. He has been drawing and painting as long as he can remember. “I always knew I wanted to be an artist,” declares Barrows. “Art is like a best friend to me, because it entertains me when I’m bored and cheers me up when I need it.” John went to art school locally too, graduating with a BFA degree in Illustration from the San Francisco Academy of Art College in 1986. The artist’s vocation has never been easy or particularly stable, and Barrows has found it “necessary and rewarding to be able to do any art that comes my way.” This has included traditional painting, illustration, comic books, video games, theater backdrops and even theater makeup.

Being flexible in the media and style he works in, Barrows has managed to keep his life centered on art and the creative process, and during the many lean times, he has done all manner of eclectic jobs, including exterminator for the animals of the San Francisco Zoo. Dangling high among the eucalyptus on a 100-foot crane over a

John Barrows and one of his backdrops

Photo by Sasha Nealand

gorilla enclosure for removal of a wasp nest certainly gives one a unique artist’s-eye view.

I asked John to tell me more about working in the video game industry, during the fast-paced, dot-com era of 1991–2001. “It was extremely deadline motivated,” he recalls. “The game development industry was going through a very volatile period. In the ten years I was in it, I worked for eight different companies. I’ve worked on too many games to list here, but my favorites were the science fiction adventure games. The first game company that I ever worked for was Ceridus, on the game *Jorune: Alien Logic* (a PC role playing adventure game that won E3’s PC Role Playing Game of the Year award).” When asked how video game art differs from traditional art, he says, “When I started in games, it was all hand-drawn, so you needed to be a talented artist. Today it’s changed for the worse, for the true artist is no longer necessary. Now you just need to know how to push a series of buttons to create a 3-D object and scene.” He is both glad and sorry to be out of the game development industry. “I’ve made a

lot of friends in the video game industry and have had a lot of disappointments too,” he recalls.

The style of the old masters, such as Da Vinci and Rembrandt and the like, has always been Barrows’s favorite, and in the summer of 2000 he journeyed to the Linos School of Art, in Todi, Italy, to study with the Italian Master Fiorello Tosoni.

Says Barrows, “I’ve always been greatly inspired by the art of the old masters, so going to Italy was a life-long dream. The trip was incredible! I saw as much art as I could... and gladly Master Señor Tosoni and I are still in touch with each other. The Linos School of Art is in the region of Umbria, about two hours from Rome and Florence.” To get there, says Barrows, you

need to “take a train to a bus to a train to another bus.”

On arrival, he found himself in the medieval hill town of Todi, the views of which have been attracting artists for centuries: Raphael’s master, Perugino, and famed artist Corot to name a few. Here Barrows lived and worked in an 11th-century monastery with stone vault classrooms and frescoed lecture halls. It was a bit odd because at the time he was the only student. “The training was from the time I got up in the morning to the time that I went to bed.” he recalls with delight. “During the daylight we’d paint all day; then at night we’d talk classical art. There was a saint there (at the monastery), and he blessed my crucifix for my godson for me.” As proof that great art requires suffering, Barrows admits that he painted his best Italian painting, a view of the river, on a day when the Italian sun was beating relentlessly down. “The heat was unbearable,” he recalls, “and to top it all off I had gone most of the day without anything to eat!”

Switching back to less traditional art in the comic form, Barrows has recently been happy to illustrate a pirate of his choice for the *Pirate Tales* comic book published by Black Swan Press. “It was great fun doing the historical research,



Barrow’s Lady Ching

Photo by Sasha Nealand

finding an interesting pirate to portray, and then seeing the published magazine with everyone's drawings in it."

Pirate Tales is the new version of the *Bloodthirsty Pirate Tales* comic book that lasted for eight years. It tells anecdotes from the history of various pirates, rather than just the career of Blackbeard as *Bloodthirsty Pirate Tales* did. In Issue #2, Barrows has illustrated a highly detailed

scene from the infamous escapades of the pirate Lady Ching. A former prostitute, she married the dread Pirate Ching with the agreement that she would gain half of his fleet in return. Together they organized an enormous gang of pirates and terrorized the South China Sea, extorting protection money from villages along the coast. After the mysterious death of Pirate Ching in 1807, Lady Ching assumed command and

built a vast fleet manned by over 80,000 crew. She was among the most notorious and feared pirates of her day. No one knows exactly what she looked like but Barrows has used artistic license to render his idea. "I decided take on the challenge in honor of Lady Ching. For reference I used extensive photos and a model of an early 19th century Chinese junk so I could get just the right angle needed for the picture."

"A friend who's an illustrator recommended me to Black Swan Press... and I'll be doing more illustrations for *Pirate Tales* and also the *Vampire Tales* comic book," says John. But for the past year his main art project has been a large muslin theatrical backdrop for a degree in the Scottish Rite at the Masonic Lodge in Burlingame. Today, Masonry is a brotherhood whose members symbolically apply the tools of the trade of stonemasonry to the idea of character building. Historically, when stonemasons built a structure, they erected temporary shelters called lodges, so the Masons hold meetings in a building called a lodge. The Scottish Rite degrees are lessons taken from Biblical and historical events taught through allegory in the form of plays.

The backdrop scene depicts an encampment of the historical Knights



Barrow's Fantasy Demo

Photo by Sasha Nealand

Templar, complete with tents and symbolic flags, and Barrows's own personal touch, a depiction of a knight on horseback. These Knights Templar "monks of war" existed from 1118 to 1312 and protected pilgrims on the way to the Holy Land during the Second Crusade. They took monastic vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, and were widely renowned for their fierceness and courage in battle. Their traditions exist today in the Scottish Rite. "By the way I'm a 32nd degree Scottish Rite Knight," remarks Barrows.

The dimensions of the backdrop are 12.5 feet by 25 feet, and everything in the

scene has meaning. He used the landscape paintings of Corot and Bierstadt for inspiration and reference. "I found that working this large was totally different than working around 18 inches by 24 inches, which is my usual size. Especially challenging was how to apply my concept drawing to the large space." Barrows, who usually prefers to draw and paint in a tight, highly detailed style, says that "on the backdrop, I gained more confidence in painting large and loose." When asked how he felt about having to work on scaffolding, he replied, "I've always had a slight fear of heights and... it liked to bounce when I

walked on it."

He also gets to do the character design, including costuming and stage makeup, for the Masonic plays. For making up faces, he finds his years of experience

portraits to be helpful, with the main difference being a 3-D rather than a 2-D surface. Barrows describes Masonry as "the world's largest fraternal organization. It's based upon the belief that each man has the responsibility to make the world a better place." Some interesting words in common usage today that derive from Masonry are: a square deal, on the level, hoodwinked, and the third degree. John says that as a Mason, "getting the third degree is a very memorable experience."

Asked if he has any advice for people who are thinking of pursuing art as a vocation, he says, "It's an extremely challenging field to go on. I only recommend it to those who have an undying passion for it, and they should follow a more practical path as well. With art there is no limit to what you put down or how good it can be, and that's a journey worth taking." He especially likes to depict "interesting characters in a fantasy or historical scene... a personal twist on a character in a movie... anything from an old weathered native American to as wild a character as my imagination will allow me."

"One of my current jobs is to design the characters for a Japanese martial arts movie with a lot of monsters in it. Things like this enable my imagination to run wild!" To check out more of Barrows's art, go to <http://cre8visn.tripod.com>.



The artist in front of one of his backdrops.

Photo by Sasha Nealand in painting

A Potlatch Trip Report

By Kelly Green

Just the facts, Ma'am:

Potlatch is a small writerly convention held ostensibly to benefit Clarion West, a six-week intensive writers' workshop held in Seattle each summer. Potlatch is held in varying cities each year, from San Francisco to Portland to Seattle (next year: Portland!), though it hasn't migrated as far south as Los Angeles. Genre writers from the local areas (and Seattle, Portland, and San Francisco each have saturated writer populations) attend, rub elbows, pass bon mots, and just generally do that convention thing. Don't get me wrong, it's not exclusive; I was Just A Fan at my first Potlatch.

Why Would Anyone Catch The Greyhound to Seattle Just for a Convention?

This section could be subtitled: When Choosing Your Convention City, You Could Do a Lot Worse than Seattle.

You know, home to NorWesCon and the Fairwood Writers, home to Clarion West and more genre writers than you can shake a stick at (not that you want to shake a stick at them, some of those guys are dangerously trained in vaguely Asian

combat techniques), home to The Space Needle! The Science Fiction Museum! The Experience Music Project! The cutest, teensiest city monorail system ever!

Of course Seattle does suffer from being in the Northwest, and I am very cold-phobic. The 40 degree daily temperatures forecast by weather.com disturbed me but not enough to stop my attendance; I figured I'd be in the hotel most of the time, and of course I have my wool peacoat and my Dr. Who scarf. Unfortunately for me, the temps dipped through the 30s during the day; and Friday even brought snow up on Capitol Hill. The snow itself was cold and powdery, and mostly melted to slush by midday. How do I know this, you ask? Well, seems Bruce Lee and his son, Brandon Lee, are buried on Capitol Hill in the Lakeview Cemetery. I hopped a downtown bus and spent the travel time (a mere half hour) discussing the peculiar weather with the driver who once drove for San Francisco's Muni metro. San Francisco is much more stressful, he said; Seattle is much more laid-back. I personally would be in bed a whole lot more if I lived in a snowy, cold-rainy city. But then that's why I live in LA.

Potlatch was held in the Best Western

Executive Inn, small as you'd expect, tiny restaurant and small bar, just a block from the Space Needle. The front lobby (equipped with a roaring fireplace, comfy chairs, and free wireless internet, not to mention free fresh cookies and coffee; utter heaven), while small, looked out on the monorail track and the Space Needle. Buildings hid the fascinating architecture of the EMP.

I overhear folks talk as they wait for the convention proper to begin.

Peggy Rae Sapienza talks to Ian Stockdale. "How big do you think a green room should be?" she says. She's liaison for the Yokohama WorldCon in 2007 and is working out relative sizing.

David D. Levine discusses the program book with Tom Becker. "What great swag!" Tom exclaims. A copy of Robert Charles Wilson's new novel, *Spin*; a shiny booklet of metro poetry; a *Corpse Bride* picture book; a lovely black bag from Borderlands Books.

We're off to a great start.

The con suite doesn't suck. Coffee, soda, beer, wine; four tables and many many chairs, a buffet of snackables. I'm overhearing Lenny Bailes discuss magic realism, South American novelists, dead

fathers speaking with sons in a totally natural but plot-relevant way. John Crowley, *Aegypt*; Gabriel Garcia Marquez, just about anything. John Crowley has a sequel about how the Earth is moving from magical underpinnings to scientific understanding. Lenny didn't appreciate my joke: "If I say, 'The Magic Goes Away,' you wouldn't know I was joking, would you?" He didn't.

Friday I pick up my badge from Denys Howard (registration guru) and wait with much tension for the Writer's Workshop to begin. Yes, I've volunteered to be eviscerated by both David D. Levine and L. Timmel Duchamp, plus four newbie writers. I am an idiot. Or perhaps a masochist, because I like it. And I'll do it again.

Potlatch has but one track of programming and Friday's track moves swimmingly without me present to vet it.

Saturday's first panel, scheduled for 10 a.m., starts late. G. David Nordley and David Bratman are here, and Bluejack is trying to get the microphone working. Linda Deneroff has not shown up yet, but since there's no coffee in the con suite I'm really not surprised; perhaps more surprised that anyone IS here. The room is largish with the silent auction items along the back walls.

The best conversational tidbit ran like

this:

If it has robots and spaceships, it's SciFi, if it has elves and wizards, it's Fantasy.

However, once you stand by this definition, those darned writers go about constructing elves and wizards into SciFi stories.

Nature (and writers) abhor a category.

During a transit of the dealers' room (which in past years has been exclusively books, but this year a jewelry dealer was allowed entrance, and gosh she had pretty stuff) I acquired four issues of *Talebones* from Patrick Swenson. Patrick and his wife Honna edit *Talebones*, a biannual print mag of slightly darker fiction. They also run Fairwood Press, and published James Van Pelt's *Last of the O-Forms*, a collection of short stories that is garnering lots of deserved praise.

During my later prowl through the dealers' room I bought a nice thick novel, Keith Brooke's *Genetopia*, and *The James Tiptree Award Anthology 2*. Egads. Stop me before I read again! No, that's not it. Purchase? Yeah, purchase! Stop me before I buy again, though my paltry contributions help keep these small press sellers in business. Um. Maybe I need to rethink this.

The Dyke ABCs, huh? Developed at WisCon and a fannish standard, so you're

all probably rolling your eyes and saying, well of course, but this is my first exposure: Elise Mathesen (the jewelry dealer) and Amy Thomson singing these delightful lyrics in the hallway at registration, effectively stopping traffic with a not-quite-in-sync rendition. I'll have to look this song up. V for vagina, okay.

Imagine if you will: four writers, tuckered out from Potlatching, hungry for something substantial to eat (despite an excellent con suite). They walk into the restaurant across the hall and Do they sit together? you ask. No! They each find a separate booth, they each open the same book, and read. Alone together.

Potlatch is slightly different from other conventions in that it has a "Book of Honor." This year the so-honored book was *The Avram Davidson Treasury*. AD wrote charming, fascinating stories regarding specific motifs of ethnic assimilation. AD was Jewish, but so what? So are Robert Silverburg and Charles Brown (editor of *Locus*). However Avram was irascibly, competitively Jewish. Until he wasn't any longer. When he died, Harlan Ellison volunteered to pay for his funeral. "No need," said his executor. "He's being cremated."

I'm not sure I care about the writer's religion; I do care about his breadth of

knowledge and the esoterica he plants in each story. These are gems, some I've read before, some I haven't. The Golem, for example, is about a robot who meets an elderly Jewish couple. Guess who wins the encounter?

Onward.

The auction was conducted mostly by Ellen Klages, a short intense woman with style. She managed to gouge over \$2,000 from the audience for the benefit of the Clarion West group. Most memorable moment: Tom Whitmore modeled the feathered and beaded helmet/mask and someone yelled, "Show us your tits!"

He did.

I still have my eyesight, I don't know why.

Sunday the graduates of Clarion West 2005 (last year's class) held a reading. Staged in the teensy little bar. The reading was surprisingly well-attended and the stories themselves surprisingly good.

Followed posthaste by the banquet, also a Potlatch tradition. I sat with Bluejack (aka Blunt Jackson, editor of IROSF) and several members of the Clarion West 2005 alum group. We exchanged information and witticisms and had a marvelous meal and prepared to enjoy the excellent post-prandial entertainment when we got the bad news.

Octavia Estelle Butler was a Seattle native, talented writer (with a new novel, *Fledgling*, on the shelves), and just all-around nice lady. Always hard to get this kind of information but worse when it's your homies hearing it after a weekend of partying. The convention pretty much broke up on a sad note, subdued spirits, and very little of the joyousness that she'd

probably have preferred.

After the convention sputtered to an end, I walked over to the Science Fiction Museum. She has a display there. So do almost all the greats of science fiction.

Attend Potlatch for the elbows you can rub. Go to Seattle for the genre around every corner.

The End. Until Portland, next year.

Letters Of Comment

Dear Jack, Jean, and Chris,

Congratulations on another good issue. The coverage of the cosplay at WonderCon was very detailed.

Unfortunately, I have a few disagreements with some of the facts stated in Andy Trembley's article "A Call to Arms for the 'Brownscarves.'" First, he stated that *Doctor Who* will take over *Battlestar Galactica's* timeslot. This isn't the case. According to the SciFi channel's schedule on their website, *Doctor Who* will move into *Stargate Atlantis'* slot, with that show moving into *Battlestar's* time. Then, Mr. Trembley had an issue with the lack of promotion for *Doctor Who*. Well, I can only speak for myself here, but I mainly watch the channel on Friday nights, and

I thought that there were plenty of ads pushing *Who*. Keep in mind, that this is SciFi's biggest ratings night, so that seems to be some good promotion to me. SciFi also has a webpage up for *Who* and an active bulletin board devoted to the show. I know that Mr. Trembley based much of his information on a Lee Whiteside article, but I think perhaps he jumped the gun a bit in thinking that the SciFi channel wasn't taking *Who* very seriously. One thing I did agree with was that *Doctor Who* fans should watch! I personally am looking forward to seeing this new series.

Keep up the good work and I'm looking forward to the next issue!

Rich Berman

BASFA Minutes: meeting 815

March 6, 2006

Trey Haddad, President
Chris Garcia, Vice-President
Dave Gallaher, Treasurer
Galen Tripp, Sargent at Arms
Barbara Johnson-Haddad, Secretary

Began 8:00 [by group consensus]
20 people attended.

Secretary's report: the minutes of meeting 814 were accepted as 'nominated as best original minutes'.

The Treasurer as late and somehow we forgot to get a treasurer's report from him when he did arrive.

No VP, no VP report.

The President reported: this is food - and we established a party jar, then he thanked David Friedman for visiting us - and mentioned that the Miyazaki films will start being shown on Cartoon Network on March 17 or 18.

We said 'hi' to David Friedman - who has a new book, 'Harald' out [Baen Books], his first fiction book ['it started out as an

insomnia cure'].

The BASFA/Hollister in '08 hoax Worldcon bid committee is now operative & registration forms are available. Kevin S called upon the BASFA hordes to support this bid.

The Sports Committee reported he has done nothing this past week.

Announcements

Kevin R announced that BunBun is back, worship the comic - follow-on'd with a 'poing'; & announced that March 10 is the deadline for Hugo nominations

Kevin S announced that he has fanzines for us to peruse & had 2 copies of 'Emerald City' to hand out [& then reminded us that generous contributions help keep it alive].

[then there were comments about semi-fanzines & what Chris Garcia would make of that <'an entire issue of 'Drink Tank' was the most popular theory>.]

Reviews:

Dave G reviewed 'Roving Mars' on the IMAX in Dublin as well worth the \$10.00 [with a \$2.00 coupon] & reviewed the hoax

bid as 'starting down a slippery slope'

Harold reviewed the 25th anniversary 'Cats' as the stage in SF was too small, but there were nice costumes, good singing, he had good seats & it was worth full price.

Andy reviewed a birthday celebration as fun & a pub in Alameda called the New Zealander as the food there was well worth full price if doing lunch & you want pub fare. Then he reviewed St George's Spirits at the Naval Air Station in Alameda as there were many different types of beverages [many were described], including real-Wasabi-infused vodka [which caused numerous shuddering] - and thought it well worth full price. [then various wasabi neeps followed].

Joanie reviewed Continental as the seats are too short for tall people & too narrow for wide people, but there is free [inadvertent] entertainment & rated it as worth full price, if it's going where they fly.

We adjourned at 8:55 pm.

And the rumor of the week was that 'Chris Garcia will start publishing a daily semi-fanzine'.

BASFA Minutes: meeting 816

Began 8:03 [with a defense of unnatural acts] 20 people attended

Secretary's report: the minutes of meeting 815 were accepted as 'a quarter past 8'.

No Treasurer.

The VP reported he is suffering from sleep deprivation and there's a new 'Drink Tank' on the internet & he met celebrities.

The President reported he had nothing fannish to report.

The Hollister in '08 bid committee reported 'pre-support often' – and then he did math.

Announcements: Kevin R announced that 'Surge of Power' will have a theatrical release next month. Julie announced this weekend is the 'Contact' conference at NASA/Ames & announced PEERs will hold its monthly dance the 1st Saturday in April.

Adrienne announced she has her flyer done for the LACon 4 Worldcon's Writer's Workshop & some are on the back table.

Kevin S announced that Peter Tamarkin had died. Cheryl announced she is wearing polarized lenses & that Terry Bisson will start a series of readings, the first being on March 28 – more details on her blog

Dave C announced the SciFi channel has started to advertise 'Dr Who' & KPIG has started to broadcast [and then there were comments made about 'Dr Who'].

Chris announced the Sonoma Film Festival

will be the 2nd week in April & that he has been named ringmaster [one ring to rule them all and with a fanzine bind them]. Art announced the Miyazaki film festival begins on the Cartoon network on March 18. Mike announced the Nickelodeon in Santa Cruz will doing a 'Firefly' marathon starting around 11:55 pm April 1st. And Andy announced that Hugo nominations are over.

Reviews: Kevin R reviewed Coronation 35 as being over [Andy chimed in with 'God - drag queens can drink!'] & Kevin stated it was very fabulous and that in 4 1/2 weeks he will be free.

Chris reviewed his 12 days of Cinequest as his true love brought to him . . . a lot of booze, a good reaction to his movie, that he had a great time & all the shorts were wonderful & 'Thank you for Smoking' was brilliant. There were follow-on's ['Norweigia?'] - some of them coherent.

Fred reviewed the Hollister in '08 bid with a math/money story [$\$1.00 + (2) \$2.00 + (5) \$5.00 = \30.00 and a bid-com membership.

Ken reviewed the colorized & remastered 'Plan 9 from Outer Space' [seen in the Castro] as color did not improve it.

Dave C reviewed the Disneyland 'Monster's Inc' ride as a fun little ride & thought the Santa Barbara winery was the most

convenient he had ever seen, with a good tasting room - and worth full price

Cheryl reviewed England as cold and un-wet & less than 1/3 of the average rainfall has fallen & she -would- review the weekend's cricket 'but no one would believe me'; cricket chirps follow-on'd.

Kevin reviewed an LACon committee meeting as the Anaheim Hilton looks the same but the Anaheim convention center has been remodelled . . . again; that plans seem to be going well & kudos to Chaz Baden for putting on a marvellous hospitality suite. Adrienne follow-on'd that the ConCom is still looking for panel ideas.

Julie reviewed 'Just Like Heaven' as a sweet, romantic comedy, but with amateurish production values; formulaic but cute & worth being put on your Netflix queue. Chris follow-on'd that he liked it & Cheryl said it was shown on a plane she was on but was not worth putting the sound on for. Carole reviewed a Cinequest flick 'Walk Out' as excellent; then Chris follow-on'd that he didn't care for it much 'it was preachy'.

We auctioned off books for \$1.00; \$6.00 [in anti-bidding]; \$3.00; \$0.50; \$5.00 & \$2.75.

We adjourned at 9:37 p.m.

And the rumor of the week was = that 'Trey will disincentivise certain things'.

Bay Area Science Fiction Calendar

While some effort (OK, OK, damn little effort) is made to verify event listings, please check before attending as events are sometimes cancelled or times and locations changed.

New listings are in red.

Through March 24

Stephanie Pui-Mun Law exhibit

Variety's Preview Room

The Hobart Building

582 Market Street at Montgomery

San Francisco

Free

Exhibit of artwork by science fiction and fantasy illustrator Stephanie Pui-Mun Law.

Wednesday, March 22

Christopher Moore

Copperfield's Montgomery Village

2316 Montgomery Drive

Santa Rosa

7 p.m.

Free

Friday, March 24

Legion of Rassilon

Doctor Who fan group

Carl's Junior

2551 N. First Street

San Jose

7:30 p.m.

Free

Shows episodes of Doctor Who, news, discussion of recent movies and a raffle.

Friday and Saturday, March 24 and 25

Goonies

Clay Theater

2261 Filmore Street

San Francisco

Midnight

Part of a midnight movie series.

Monday, March 27

Bay Area Science Fiction Association

The Original Hick'ry Pit

980 E. Campbell Ave.

Campbell

8 p.m.

Free

www.basfa.org

Friday-Saturday, March 31 and April 1

A Clockwork Orange

Act 1 and 2

2128 Center Street

Berkeley

Midnight

Local band The Holy Kiss will perform before the Stanley Kubrick classic. Saturday night will have a giveaway hosted by the Space Ape and the Midnight Ninja.

Saturday, April 1, 2006

The Toon Town Hop

PEERS Event

Masonic Lodge of San Mateo

Doors Open: 7 p.m.

Dance lesson: 7:15 p.m.

Dancing begins: 8:00 p.m.

Tickets: \$15.00 in advance (by March 25)

At the door: \$20.00

From their website:

"As any cartoon aficionado can tell you, some of the best film music actually appears in cartoons. In celebration of the classic age of cartoons, we invite you to the Toon Town Hop, a vintage dance ball inspired by the best cartoon music of the

20th century.

“Suggested costume is vintage or modern evening dress (Mouse ears optional!). Guests may also attend as their favorite cartoon character (vintage or modern!).

“The dazzlingly versatile Divertimento Dance Orchestra will play a multi-period program of beautiful and energetic dance music from both classic and modern cartoons. Dance classic waltzes and polkas, ragtime teens and 20’s dances, 30’s and 40’s Swing and fox trot, stirring marches, and a variety of other ballroom and set dances at this wildly varied event. For us diehard dancers, there will be DJ dance music of some truly off-the-wall but extremely danceable cartoon music during the intermissions.

“There will be a light buffet of T.V. snacks – everything your mother said was bad for you (and she was probably right) and complimentary non-alcoholic drinks. Contributions to the buffet are, as always, very welcome. Intermission entertainment includes vintage dance performances by the Peers Flying CirCUS and a cartoon music sing-along.”

Saturday, April 1

Rocky Horror Picture Show
www.picturepubpizza.com
Parkway Speakeasy Theater
1834 Park Blvd.
Oakland
\$6
Midnight

Barely Legal Productions presents the classic midnight movie every Saturday night. No one under 17 admitted.

Sunday, April 2

Bad Movie Night
Mesa of Lost Women
The Dark Room Theater
2263 Mission Street
San Francisco
darkroomsf.com
8 p.m.
\$5

Monday, April 3

Cal Animage Alpha Meeting and Showing
Location TBA
UC Berkeley Campus
Berkeley
www.ocf.Berkeley.edu/~animage/
7:30 p.m.
Free

The oldest of the Bay Area’s university anime clubs hosts a showing every Monday night when school is in session. Every week this semester they are showing episodes of *Paradise Kiss* and *2x2 Shinobuden*, plus this week’s featured show: *Noein*.

Monday, April 3

Bay Area Science Fiction Association
The Original Hick’ry Pit
980 E. Campbell Ave.
Campbell
8 p.m.
Free
www.basfa.org.

April 6-9

ConQuest Sac
Avalonconventions.com/conquestsac/
Red Lion Hotel
Sacramento
\$35-\$45

Gaming and sf convention.

More Events Next Page

Saturday-Sunday, April 8-9

Alternative Press Expo

www.comic-con.org/ape/

Concourse Exhibition Center

620 7th Street

San Francisco

Admission fee to be announced

Exposition for alternative and self-published comics.

Saturday, April 8

No Name Anime

www.nnanime.com

Saratoga Library

13650 Saratoga Ave.

Saratoga

12:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. or so

Free

Monday, April 10

Cal Animage Alpha Meeting and Showing

Location TBA

UC Berkeley Campus

Berkeley

www.ocf.Berkeley.edu/~animage/

7:30 p.m.

Free

Hosts a showing every Monday night when school is in session. Every week this semester they are showing episodes of *Paradise Kiss* and *2x2 Shinobuden*, plus this week's featured show: *Akazukin Cha Cha*.

Monday, April 10

Bay Area Science Fiction Association

The Original Hick'ry Pit

980 E. Campbell Ave.

Campbell

8 p.m.

Free

www.basfa.org.

Tuesday, April 11

Stanford NewType Anime Club Showing

Room 60-61H

Building 60

Stanford Campus

Palo Alto

8-10:30 p.m.

Free

Thursday, April 13

Thrillville's Ninth Anniversary Show

Forbidden Planet

www.thrillville.net

www.picturepubpizza.com

Parkway Speakeasy Cinema

1834 Park Blvd.

Oakland

9:15 p.m.

\$7

It's Thrillville's ninth anniversary show featuring the all-time science fiction favorite *Forbidden Planet* and spaced out therein lounge band Project Pimento live on stage.

Friday and Saturday, March 24 and 25

Star Trek: The Wrath of Kahn

Clay Theater

2261 Filmore Street

San Francisco

Midnight

The best Star Trek movie ever. Part of an ongoing midnight movie series.

Friday, April 14

Yuri's Night Celebration

Chabot Space & Science Center

10000 Skyline Blvd

Oakland

www.chabotspace.org

Sunday, April 16

Science Fiction Book Club

Borderlands Books

www.borderlands-books.com

866 Valencia St.

San Francisco

6 p.m.

Free

This month's book is *Dark Beyond The Stars* by local author Frank Robinson. Author will visit. Please contact Jude at jfeldman@borderlands-books.com for more information.

Monday, April 17

Cal Animage Alpha Meeting and Showing

Location TBA

UC Berkeley Campus

Berkeley

www.ocf.Berkeley.edu/~animage/

7:30 p.m.

Free

The oldest of the Bay Area's university anime clubs hosts a showing every Monday night when school is in session. Every week this semester they are showing episodes of *Paradise Kiss* and *2x2 Shinobuden*, plus this week's featured show: *Magikano*.

Monday, April 17

Bay Area Science Fiction Association

The Original Hick'ry Pit

980 E. Campbell Ave.

Campbell

8 p.m.

Free

www.basfa.org.

Friday, April 21

Middle Earth Festival

Forum on the Themes of Tolkien

Downtown Vacaville

www.middleearthfestival.com

Free (or at least they don't have an admission fee listed)

The second annual Middle Earth Festival opens in Vacaville with a symposium.

For more events, see April 22-23 listing.

Friday and Saturday, March 24 and 25

Princess Bride

Clay Theater

2261 Filmore Street

San Francisco

Midnight

Have fun storming the castle! Part of an ongoing midnight movie series.

Saturday and Sunday, April 22-23

Middle Earth Festival

Downtown Vacaville

www.middleearthfestival.com

Free

Second annual festival to celebrate Tolkien's work, both the books and the movies adapted from them. Vendors, food booths, staged and walkabout entertainment, games for kids, trivia contest, Gollum Impersonation Contest. On Saturday will be a Long Expected Party and on Sunday there will be a fun run.

Send your items for inclusion in our calendar section to:
SFinSF@gmail.com

Sunday, April 23*Cherry Blossom Festival**8th Annual Anime Costume Parade*

Sponsored by Japan Video

1737 Post Street

San Francisco

Noon check in for participants

1 p.m. parade starts in front of City Hall

Pre-registration deadline April 17

Free

Costume contest with prizes, contestants and other cosplayers will march in the annual parade ending at San Francisco's Japantown. The Cherry Blossom Festival, which runs this weekend and the previous weekend in San Francisco's Japantown, also hosts many other Japanese cultural events, usually including an anime room.

Costume contest participants need to register in advance at Japan Video, limited slots are available so sign up soon.

Monday, April 24*Cal Animage Alpha Meeting and Showing*

Location TBA

UC Berkeley Campus

Berkeley

www.ocf.Berkeley.edu/~animage/

7:30 p.m.

Free

The oldest of the Bay Area's university anime clubs hosts a showing every Monday night when school is in session. Every week this semester they are showing episodes of *Paradise Kiss* and *2x2 Shinobuden*, plus this week's featured show which will be announced later.

Monday, April 24*Bay Area Science Fiction Association*

The Original Hick'ry Pit

980 E. Campbell Ave.

Campbell

8 p.m.

Free

www.basfa.org.**Friday, April 28***Legion of Rassilon**Doctor Who fan group*

Carl's Junior

2551 N. First Street

San Jose

7:30 p.m.

Free

Shows episodes of Doctor Who, news, discussion of recent movies and a raffle.

Saturday, May 6*The Fairy Tale Masquerade Ball*

Masonic Lodge of San Mateo

Doors Open: 7:00 p.m.

Dance lesson: 7:15 p.m.

Dancing begins: 8:00 p.m.

Tickets: \$15.00 in advance (by April 29, 2006)

At the door: \$20.00

Sunday, May 7*Bad Movie Night**Battlefield Earth*

The Dark Room Theater

2263 Mission Street

San Francisco

darkroomsf.com

8 p.m.

\$5

More Events Next Page

May 11-14

World Horror Con 2006

Gateway Holiday Inn

www.whc2006.org

The world horror con comes to the bay area.

Thursday, May 11

Thrillville's Mad Mexican Monster Mash

Night of the Bloody Apes

www.thrillville.net

www.picturepubpizza.com

Parkway Speakeasy Cinema

1834 Park Blvd.

Oakland

9:15 p.m.

\$7

It's a mad Mexican Monster Mash featuring the lurid South of the Border clas-sick *Night of the Bloody Apes*, with masked female wrestlers vs a rampaging rapist apeman and his evil mad scientist creator. Live opening act.

Sunday, May 14

Bay Area Games Day

davekohr.best.vwh.net/gamesday

Los Altos Library

Los Altos

Free

Regular event featuring German-style strategy boardgames like Settlers of Catan, Avalon Hill-type multiplayer games, lots of cardgames, and historical board wargames.

Friday and Saturday, March 24 and 25

Kung Fu Hustle

Clay Theater

2261 Filmore Street

San Francisco

Midnight

Part of an ongoing midnight movie series.

May 21, 2006

Science Fiction Book Club

Borderlands Books

www.borderlands-books.com

866 Valencia St.

San Francisco

6 p.m.

Free

This month's book is the graphic novel *Watchmen* by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons. Please contact Jude at jfeldman@borderlands-books.com for more information.

Friday, May 26

Legion of Rassilon

Doctor Who fan group

Carl's Junior

2551 N. First Street

San Jose

7:30 p.m.

Free

Shows episodes of Doctor Who, news, discussion of recent movies and a raffle.

More Events Next Page

May 26-29, 2006

Fanime Con

San Jose Convention Center

San Jose

www.fanime.com

The largest annual anime convention in the Bay Area. Dealer's room, panels, costume contest, multiple tracks of anime, Asian films, J-pop concert, much more.

May 26-29, 2006

Baycon

San Jose Doubletree Inn

San Jose

www.baycon.org

\$45 until August 31

The largest annual general SF convention in the Bay area. Dealer's room, panels, costume contest, anime room, much more.

May 26-29 2006

Kublacon

Burlingame Hyatt Regency

1333 Bayshore Highway

Burlingame

Guests: TBA.

Memberships: TBA.

Gaming convention.

Sunday, June 11

Sac Con

Scottish Rite Center

6151 H Street

Sacramento

10-4 p.m.

\$5

Comic, toy and anime show, usually has an anime costume contest.

Friday, June 23

Legion of Rassilon

Doctor Who fan group

Carl's Junior

2551 N. First Street

San Jose

7:30 p.m.

Free

Shows episodes of Doctor Who, news, discussion of recent movies and a raffle.

Saturday, July 15

Sac-Anime

Sacramento area

Details to be announced, the previous July shows have been held at the Sunrise Mall.

Friday, July 28

Legion of Rassilon

Doctor Who fan group

Carl's Junior

2551 N. First Street

San Jose

7:30 p.m.

Free

Shows episodes of Doctor Who, news, discussion of recent movies and a raffle.

August 4-6 2006

Anime Overdose 2006

www.animeod.com

San Francisco

\$30 to ?, \$45 at door

Anime convention.

Friday, August 25

Legion of Rassilon

Doctor Who fan group

Carl's Junior

2551 N. First Street

San Jose

7:30 p.m.

Free

Shows episodes of Doctor Who, news, discussion of recent movies and a raffle.

More Events Next Page

Saturday, September 2

Captain Morgan's Privateers (We Ain't Pirates No More) Ball

PEERS Event

Masonic Lodge of San Mateo

Doors Open: 7:00 p.m.

Dance Lesson: 7:15 p.m.

Dancing begins: 8:00 p.m.

Tickets: \$15.00 in advance (by August 26, 2006)

Tickets: \$20.00 at the door

Sunday, September 3

Sac Con

Scottish Rite Center

6151 H Street

Sacramento

10-4 p.m.

\$5

Comic, toy and anime show, usually has an anime costume contest.

September 8-10

Creation Salutes Star Trek:

The 40th Anniversary Celebration

Doubletree Hotel

Sacramento

2001 Point West Way

Sacramento

Memberships: Gold Weekend Package: \$399.

Creation brings William Shatner and Leonard Nimoy to Sacramento. And no, that's not a typo on the price. Cheaper packages will be announced later.

Friday, September 22

Legion of Rassilon

Doctor Who fan group

Carl's Junior

2551 N. First Street

San Jose

7:30 p.m.

Free

Shows episodes of Doctor Who, news, discussion of recent movies and a raffle.

October 6-8

SiliCon

www.siliconventions.com

Doubletree Hotel

San Jose

\$35 until August 31

Friday, October 27

Legion of Rassilon

Doctor Who fan group

Carl's Junior

2551 N. First Street

San Jose

7:30 p.m.

Free

Shows episodes of Doctor Who, news, discussion of recent movies and a raffle.

November 4

Le Bal des Vampires

PEERS

Venue: TBD

No information as yet for this vampire-theme ball event.

Friday, November 24

Legion of Rassilon

Doctor Who fan group

Carl's Junior

2551 N. First Street

San Jose

7:30 p.m.

Free

Shows episodes of Doctor Who, news, discussion of recent movies and a raffle.

Sunday, December 10

Sac Con

Scottish Rite Center

6151 H Street

Sacramento

10-4 p.m.

\$5

Comic, toy and anime show, usually has an anime costume contest.

July 6-9, 2007

Westcon 60: Gnomeward Bound

DoubleTree Hotel

San Jose

Ongoing:

Daily

San Francisco Ghost Hunt

Walking Tour

www.sfgghosthunt.com

Begins: Queen Ann Hotel

1590 Sutter at Octavia

San Francisco

7 p.m. – 10 p.m.

\$20

Ongoing Fridays-Mondays

Haunted Haight Walking Tour

www.hauntedhaight.com

Meets at PlanetWeavers Treasure Store

1573 Haight Street (at Clayton)

7 p.m. – 9 p.m.

Reservations required

\$20

Ongoing Fridays and Saturdays

Vampire Walking Tour

www.sfvampiretour.com

Meets corner of California and Taylor

San Francisco

8 p.m.

\$20

Led by Mina Harker. Tour is cancelled if there is heavy rain.

Mondays

Bay Area Science Fiction Association

The Original Hick'ry Pit

980 E. Campbell Ave.

Campbell

Mondays at 8 p.m.

Free

www.basfa.org

Legion of Rassilon

Doctor Who fan group

www.legionofrassilon.org/

Carl's Junior

2551 N. First Street

San Jose

Meets every fourth Friday at 7:30 p.m.

(No December meeting)

Free

Showing episodes of the new Dr. Who series, news, discussion of recent movies and a raffle.

Bay Area Role-Playing Society

www.BayRPS.com

Go-Getter's Pizza

1489 Beach Park Boulevard

Foster City

Wednesdays from 6pm to 10pm

Hosts a weekly game night. For club and game night details send email to: GM@BayRPS.com.

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SF Games

vax.hanford.org/dk/games

Muddy's Coffeehouse

1304 Valencia Street near 24th

San Francisco

7:00 p.m. to midnight

Free

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 cards night on Tuesdays at Café Macondo, 3159 16th Street between Guerrero and Valencia.