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Editorial

By Jean Martin
Editor-in-Chief

With September almost over and Halloween and fall almost here, I’m looking back at the year so far, which has already been full of fannish activities and events. And so many more to go in these last few months of 2013! September and October, other than May, seem to be the busiest months for me. I do a yearly photobook for myself and those two “ber” months always have the most number of events, and ergo, photos and pages in my photobook.

October makes sense as there are lots of activities involving Halloween such as parties and balls, not only on the day itself, but throughout the month. While we fannish folk don’t really need Halloween to indulge in our creative endeavors, there just seem to be more in October in addition to the mainstream celebration of October 31 itself.

This October marks my 10th year in fandom. Hurrah! What a long strange trip it’s been as they say. But it’s been an amazing decade full of creativity, imagination, friends, community, and of course, a husband. I’ve been privileged to meet a lot of “celebrities” and professionals in the field of science fiction and fantasy and have even been luckier to get to know fellow fans in the Bay Area, many of whom have become my friends. I’m constantly amazed at how talented, intelligent, resourceful, creative, productive, collaborative, fun, friendly, giving… and yes, busy… people in fandom are.

As I’ve recounted many times before, my entrée into fandom has been through the Bay Area English Regency Society (BAERS), i.e., Regency dancing and costuming. As I’m writing this, this weekend Christopher and I are going to the BAERS Sanditon Ball based on the unfinished novel of the same name by Jane Austen. I haven’t been to a BAERS ball in two years due various reasons, and I don’t want to miss this one. The Greater Bay Area Costumers Guild (GBACG) is also doing a Regency Tall Ship Adventure in October where we will be going on the Hawaiian Chieftain or the Lady Washington for a mock sea battle. We also have plans on going to the Jane Austen Festival in Bath next year. And so, just as I did 10 years ago, I’ve been refreshing my Regency wardrobe.

I tried on some Regency costumes from the BBC miniseries “War and Peace” with Anthony Hopkins that Sally Norton brought especially for me to the GBACG Bazaar last month. They were worn by the actress who portrayed Natasha Rostova, who I’ve played in a high school play as well as the recent BAERS War and Peace Ball. I was heartbroken as they were too small for me and someone else wound up buying them. I did purchase a later-Regency dress from Sally, which she said was from an unidentified BBC show.

Anyway, in this issue, we have coverage from all over the Bay Area and beyond. We welcome back our founder and
Editor Emeritus Jack Avery for a report on the Wunderkammer hand car races in Santa Rosa. There’s more about cars in Christopher Erickson’s article about the Antique Autos in History Park event in San Jose as well as the Blackhawk Automotive Museum. Our compositor, Tom Becker, has a Worldcon report. And we go to Sacramento with coverage of Sac Anime by Robbie Pleasant.

In this issue, I’m catching up on my four interviews from the Nebula Awards last May with the second one, an interview with Hugo Award-winning author and fellow Regency enthusiast Mary Robinette Kowal. I’ve also finally finished my travelogue on my fairy tale trip to Southern Germany (just in time for Oktoberfest) with lots of wonderful photos of castles, storybook towns and elegant cities.

I hope you enjoy this issue. And happy autumn everyone!

Join our crew!
We are looking for writers to cover local events, conventions, fan groups and the fannish scene in general.
Contact Jean Martin at SFinSF@gmail.com
Wunderkammer Festival

By Jack Avery
Editor Emeritus

It was time once again, ladies and gentlemen, for Santa Rosa Steampunks to dress up in their finery and go downtown for the handcar races. It was a red velvet couch hurtling down the rail tracks one-on-one against the world’s fastest septic tank that had been converted into a yellow submarine. It was the Boxcar Gang’s “The Getaway” pitted against Applejack Gang’s “The Still.” It was the Brew Choo Express versus M.O.G. (Museum On the Go).

It was Dr. Erasmus P. Kitty’s Wunderkammer featuring the Great Sonoma County Handcar Races that took place August 25 with roots music, vendors, food, lots of people in Steampunk attire, and of course, a bunch of crazy people hurtling down the railroad tracks on improvised handcars.

This annual North Bay tradition began in 2008 with the Great Handcar Regatta when a handful of quirky locals built makeshift handcars and raced them on the disused tracks running through the Railroad Square section of downtown. It quickly grew into a popular local event, growing in size each year, but was discontinued after the 2011 races because of construction on the new SMART commuter rail line.

With the original partnership dissolved, promoter Ty Jones teamed up with Northern California Pirate Festival producer Praetorian USA to bring a similar event back to the area. I can see that this partnership has brought an enhanced level of professionalism to the event. It’s made it more family friendly.
It’s much safer. There certainly were a lot more event security guards present.

I did enjoy the day out wandering around the event, but I do really miss the sense of spontaneous insanity and danger.
that the original Regatta possessed. I understand exactly why they made the changes they did, somebody was going to lose a limb sooner or later if they didn’t, but the sanitized nature did take away some of the fun.
The old Regatta took place with the tracks in the center of the event. In between races, the spectators could freely cross the tracks, walk up to the machines and talk to the makers about them. Half the event took place in a weed-strewn dirt lot across the tracks from the depot. The Wunderkammer had the raceway fenced off and the audience was on only allowed on
one side of the tracks. The new SMART station platform blocked the view of the far track so the audience could only see half of each heat. It’s not much of a race if one can only see half of the competition. Both the start line and the finish line of the race were fenced off and beyond the area where the spectators were allowed.

If the main attraction is the races, these races were not nearly as much fun to watch as in past years. The handcars were safer. (I’m thinking in particular of the giant backwards...

"The Getaway" by Jack Avery

"Trio 2" by Jack Avery
Western Couple
by Jack Avery

Western Couple
by Jack Avery
hamster wheel that was a broken neck waiting to happen.) There were fewer of them and without being able to get close to the action and see both halves of the race, it was a bit anticlimactic. Next year, Jones says he is going to have the Wunderkammer event again in Railroad Square, but move the races 15 miles north to the city of Healdsburg. To me, that seems like it would remove the whole point of the thing.

The Regatta also had a large “Burner” contingent, with art cars, artwork and other Burning Man features. But the Wunderkammer was held the day before this year’s Burning Man event, so the participation by Burners was very light and only one art car showed up. The Roots of Motive Power steam engine enthusiasts were also missing this year.

I think that’s the real difference between the two events, the Regatta was a bunch of crazy creative types who got together to do their thing on a dirt lot and abandoned railroad tracks, and the Wunderkammer was a professional event with hired performers inside a fenced-off event area. The Wunderkammer drew a bit more than half of the 12,000 attendees the last Regatta claimed. The event was notably less crowded than the 2011 one.

While the main attraction is the races, the event shut down a number of streets near the tracks for food booths, jugglers and acrobats, a couple of live music areas, a kids area and a number of vendors selling Steampunk merchandise, art, clothing and accessories.

There was a strong emphasis on the family entertainment with a Punch and Judy show, an educational magic show about the wonders of recycling and solar power, bounce houses and exhibits by the local discovery museum.
All of this sanitized entertainment didn’t stop the locals from coming out in their Steampunk finery. Seeing all of the inventive costumes was the best part of the day.

The default milieu of Steampunk may be Victorian Britain, but the old West is quickly becoming a common setting for exploring the genre. As Santa Rosa has both a rich Western history and a large “maker” population, it’s no surprise that the city has become home to one of the more Western-themed Steampunk events in the Bay Area. While there were quite a few European explorer types, many of the attendees chose to take a more Western approach.

There were a number of Steampunk lawmen and blue-collar Western workingmen and cowboys and the Steampunk saloon gal look was quite common. One couple had automaton mechanical birds on their shoulders. I was also happy to see a Steampunk Arabian Nights outfit.

For more information on the Wunderkammer Festival, go to: www.wunderkammerfestival.com.
By Jean Martin
Editor-in-Chief

Editor’s Note: I got the chance to interview Hugo Award-winning author Mary Robinette Kowal at the Nebula Awards last May 18. She won in 2011 for her short story entitled “For Want of a Nail.” She also has a popular series of Jane Austen-inspired fantasy novels called the “Glamourist Histories.” Mary Robinette is also a professional voice actor and puppeteer and was previously the vice-president of the Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers of America (SFWA) who put on the Nebula Awards. She is always gracious and lovely and we talked about her influences, her work and her future plans.

This is the second of four author interviews I did at the Nebulas. If you missed my article about the Nebulas, you can find it at: www.efanzines.com/SFSF/SFSF143.pdf. The first interview was with author and screenwriter Nick Sagan, which you can find at: www.efanzines.com/SFSF/SFSF144.pdf. Special thanks to Christopher Erickson for transcribing this interview from my recording.

Jean: Was “Shades of Milk and Honey” your first published novel?

Mary Robinette: “Shades of Milk and Honey” was the first one.

Jean: What was your inspiration for writing that novel?

Mary Robinette: I have been a long time science fiction and fantasy reader. That’s where my heart lies, but I also have a fondness for Jane Austen. I just finished reading a giant epic
fantasy and then as a kind of a palate cleanser did a re-read of Jane Austen’s “Persuasion,” which I’ve read multiple times. I just got to the proposal scene and was just bawling AGAIN. I thought “What is she doing here that is provoking such a strong emotional reaction when the only thing at stake is do these two hook up?” There is no evil overlord, the fate of the world is not at stake, no one’s life is a risk, nothing except are these two going to get married? That’s it. The giant epic fantasy didn’t have that emotional impact on me and sometimes they do. What is it that she is doing and can I make fantasy do that? So for the first book I tried to adhere to a Jane Austen plot mold. There’s a lot of Jane Austen in-jokes, but I took fantasy and tried to fit it into that plot mold to see if it would work or if it would stop being fantasy. It is still fantasy but the instinct to put the evil overlord in was incredibly strong so I let him come in the second book when I bring Napoleon out.

Jean: What kind of writing where you doing prior to writing the novel?

Mary Robinette: For my short fiction I write all over the map. I had written two novels prior to that, so that happened to be the first one that sold. I write a lot of science fiction and then everything from urban fantasy, historical fantasy, secondary world fantasy, generation ships, science fiction murder mysteries, a little bit of horror. I like stories and I like watching how people react to situations and I like speculative fiction because it gives me a lot of interesting situations to put people into. I am not a genre purist about which one I am going to stick to all the time.

Jean: What kind of characters are you drawn to write about?

Mary Robinette: I tend to prefer people who are in the everyman category. People that are like Jane, the main character in “Shades of Milk and Honey” and are in that series. She from a family of middle income, she’s talented, but she’s not in other ways exceptional. She’s quite plain. What it’s like when you take someone who is relatively normal, relatively ordinary, relatively like any one of us, and present them with something extraordinary, because I think that shows us a little bit how we would react in that situation and that to me is interesting.

Jean: So going back to Jane Austen, how did you balance the Jane Austen aspect and the fantasy? It was very subtle.

Mary Robinette: Thank you. Any time you are doing world building, you have to think about the consequences of magic, of any technology that you introduce, any social customs, any of that. With this, what I wanted to do was try not break the Regency period, not break the historical period, and to do the Jane Austen plot mold, which meant that had certain constraints. It meant that my main character had to be a young lady of quality. If I wanted her to work magic, which I wanted her to be a magic user because it’s a fantasy, not that fantasy characters have to be magic users but I wanted magic to be a significant part of the thing, so I wanted her to be a magic user, which meant that within the social constraints of historic period magic could not be a profession, it had to be something decorative. I decided that it was going to be a womanly art and it would be considered in this period much like music and painting and dancing and that meant that I had to keep stripping things out of it to make it less practical, which was really interesting. I kept having to go “No, you can’t have it do this” and during the process of doing that
what I realized was by making the magic conform to the woman’s world, it was becoming a metaphor for what women were going through in that period, which is something to beautify the home. Yet, at the period, and before and after as well and it continues all the way up to today in a lot of things. Music and dancing and painting and glamour are all considered womanly arts and in the historic period, the people who did that professionally are the dancing master, the interior designer you bring in to do your home, the painter, all of those people were men. It’s one of those things that you start paying attention to when there are all of these different art forms aren’t taken seriously until a man does it. I decided to have that happen as well. It was that kind of back and forth between catering to the needs of the period and making sure that magic could do enough that it made sense in the plot and actually added something.

Jean: I’ve just read the first so far and it looked like when I was checking out the two other books that follow, the first book is more of a typical Jane Austen novel in the family and the general vicinity, so how did you come up with the ideas to move it out into the world?

Mary Robinette: Well, Jane Austen didn’t write sequels and I don’t think this is much of a spoiler: in the Jane Austen plot mold people get married at the end of the book. Jane Austen also did not write about married couples. As soon as I have a married couple I am no longer writing a Jane Austen book. I was like “Let me take these people who were born in a Jane Austen drawing room and the thing that is happening historically in that period; the second book is set in 1815, the year that Napoleon escapes from exile in Elba and we begin the Hundred Days and the march up to Waterloo, so let me bring in my evil overlord.” Let’s see what happens when you take this magic system and people born in a Jane Austen drawing room and you confront them with an evil overlord. I sent them on their honeymoon on the Continent and wanted to see what the larger world was like. My sneaky thing is that the second book is really a spy novel and I tried to write them as a standalone so that you could step into the series at any point and go back and read the other ones as prequels. The third one is secretly a political thriller. The fourth one, which comes out next year, we pitched as Jane Austen writes “Ocean’s Eleven.”

Jean: The third one was set in The Year Without a Summer. What was your inspiration for picking that particular event?

Mary Robinette: I had been doing them chronologically. The first one was 1814 because that one was the end of the Napoleonic Wars; then 1815 seemed natural. I looked at 1816 and I think I already knew about The Year Without a Summer, but I forgot that it was 1816 until I looked to see what was happening. The Year Without a Summer is such an interesting period; it’s not something people have really done a lot with. It’s coming right after Waterloo, so you’ve already got a period of great social change and you’ve got all these soldiers coming home from Waterloo and this volcano that drops the climate of the Earth to the point where we had snow in Washington, D.C., in July, massive crop failures, soaring food prices because of that and the pressure of the returning soldiers, lots of unemployment, the Luddites, all of this really interesting stuff going on in one year. I decided what I wanted to do was send Jane and Vince to London where I could have all of those different elements onstage and really start to look
at some of the class issues that were really highlighted by all of this social unrest that was going on.

Jean: I can’t wait to read the next two and just wanted to make a really positive comment: the artwork for these two books is fabulous.

Mary Robinette: That’s Larry Ronstadt. He does wonderful work. The UK edition of “Shades of Milk and Honey,” which is actually two chapters longer than the US version, they’ve got Larry Ronstadt’s for the UK edition and it’s beautiful.

Jean: You said you are working on the fourth novel. Is there a working title?

Mary Robinette: It’s called “Valor and Vanity.” I’ve just gotten the revisions from my editor and I have just turned those back in. That is due to come out in 2014 in April again, I think.

Jean: And that is set in…?

Mary Robinette: Venice in 1816. The great thing about historical Venice in 1816 is that Lord Byron is there, so it’s a heist novel with Lord Byron.

Jean: Are you working on any short stories?

Mary Robinette: I just finished a novella for Audible and it’s called “Forest Memory”. It will be the third book in the “Metatropolis” series. This one is edited by Jay Lakin Kinskolz, so that is science fiction, far future. I say far future but it is about a hundred years in the future. Then I’ve got another science fiction story. I guess all of the shorts I am working on are science fiction. That one is about a woman who they call a “rider,” so you have animals that you can plug into their nervous system and control them remotely and you can use them for jobs that you can’t send a human into and have them make more intelligent choices. When you need a police dog to do tracking, instead of sending it out with the handler and hope that you can interpret the dog’s signals externally, a trained rider will be able to get all of the olfactory senses of the dog and interpret it with the intelligence of a human.

Jean: Do you have a science background or what got you into writing science fiction and fantasy?

Mary Robinette: I read it.

Jean: What were your influences?

Mary Robinette: Early influences were Heinlein and Asimov, of course. Steven Brust on my fantasy side is one of my favorite authors ever. Gabriel Kay, Nancy Kress, Connie Willis, Ursula Le Guin. These books just owned me. I was one of those kids who wanted to do everything. There was a period where I was thinking I wanted to be a veterinarian. I was reading layman’s books and magazines, Discover Magazine and Nature, stuff like that. I don’t really have a science background, though. It’s enthusiastic amateur interest.

Jean: I’ve never heard that proverb “For want of a nail.” Is that a fairly common proverb?

Mary Robinette: I thought it was but I wonder if it is like a regional thing. “For want of a nail, the horse is lost.”

Jean: How did you come up with that idea?

Mary Robinette: I don’t remember why I decided to use that title other than it just seemed to fit with the story. This story had a weird genesis. I took a workshop and they told us to write a story in which we were the main character and then we were given a couple of trickier things. The story that I wrote we had to write overnight and with some of the restrictions that they placed on it, the story that I came up with was a mess, just an absolute mess. It had this opening scene
that I really liked which was of the main character trying to insert a plug into an AI and having trouble reaching it. That was actually out of my puppetry background where we are reaching into tiny, tiny spaces and having to do stuff that is completely on feel. Sheila Williams had been one of the guest instructors at this workshop. A year after it she had asked me if I had done anything with that story because she kept thinking about that scene. I was like, “Why, yes I did,” which was completely not true at the time. I did a complete rewrite of the story and junked everything except that scene. I think the characters don’t even have the same names. The only characters that I kept were the main character and the AI, put them in a completely different setting: that one had been in space in an exploration ship and they were circling a black hole and this one used the generation ship. I have been interested for a long time in the idea of memory and that memory is a very significant part of who we are and around that time one of my uncles was in the final stages of Alzheimer’s, so watching memories drop away is very much what I was thinking and using the AI as a way to explore that. That’s why I keep going back to speculative fiction. It allows you to take situations we deal with all the time and turn them slightly to the side so you can look at them from a different angle.

Jean: I wanted to let you know that I read your novel through an audiobook and your British accent is very lovely, very soothing. It’s very convincing.

Mary Robinette: Thank you.

Jean: So I guess you do a lot of voice acting as well.

Mary Robinette: Yes, I do. It was very interesting. The two books after that, when we recorded, we decided not to do the British accent. McMillan Audio asked me to do the first book and asked me to do the British accent. I have a fairly solid Received Pronunciation British accent but sustaining it over the course of a whole book is very hard. We had a dialect coach who sat in the room through the entire recording and I recorded at half the speed I would normally record. The other books, books two and three, which I recorded with my normal speaking and just used the British accent for the characters was two-and-a-half days to record and that first one took me a week and it is the shortest of the three books. It was really hard. So, thank you so much. I am glad you liked it.

Jean: Your regular speaking voice is very nice, but I was impressed. I did get to see your Regency puppetry show at an SFinSF reading. How did you find out about that? I know you are into puppetry in general, but that particular time period and the shadow puppets.

Mary Robinette: That particular play, “The Broken Bridge,” which is in chapter 10 of the book, I first saw an Australian puppeteer, Richard Bradshaw, do and he is a phenomenal shadow puppeteer. Just amazing, amazing work. He’s got some things on YouTube. He had run across it at some point and decided to do a revival of this show, which in its original form had run for 60 years. When I was writing the novel and really wanted to have some puppetry in it, I thought “Let me use something from the period and I think that one might be” so I went and looked it up, and that was when I found out, and I think he had talked about how popular it was, but it was when I looked for it that I found out the Seraphim, the man who created the original, handed it down to his son and it ran for sixty years and it was hugely, hugely popular that there were probably knockoffs playing in England. There
is a fair chance that Jane Austen would have seen this because it would have still been running at this point. As far as the puppetry itself, knowing what those shadow puppets would have been constructed like, a lot of that is from having spent so much time working in puppetry because at this point I had a 20-year career. I know that I researched shadow puppets at some point but I don’t remember what project it was for.

Jean: You said that you were the vice-president of SFWA for a while. How did you get into the organizational aspect of that?

Mary Robinette: SFWA is a volunteer-run organization. Coming up through the arts, I have spent a lot of time with non-profits and volunteer-run organizations. I had been the vice-president of Unima USA, which is the American branch of the International Puppetry Organization, so I had experience doing that kind of thing. But I also know that an organization is only as good as the volunteers and if you don’t have people volunteering and pitching in that nothing gets done. There were things that I wanted to see it doing. There were things I knew it had done in the past. It can do so much. I decided I could complain about things it wasn’t doing or I could step up to the plate. I have always firmly believed that you should step up to the plate in a situation like this so I ran for secretary and won. I spent two years as secretary and then I ran for vice-president and did two terms as vice-president. I also believe, firmly, that in order for an organization to stay vital, you need a constant influx of new blood. I felt like four years on the board, and partly because I needed a break but also it was for the good of the organization, that is was important to have new people coming in so that new ideas and fresh thoughts and people that are excited and invigorated, so that is why I decided not to run again. Normally the vice-president runs for president at some point, but that is why I decided to put it off. You can go ahead and plan for my campaign in 2017 [laughs].

Jean: What’s up next for you other than the sci-fi short stories and the novel? Are you doing any puppetry?

Mary Robinette: I am going to the National Puppetry Festival this summer, which I am really looking forward to. It is only in odd-numbered years and the last two festivals we have been moving and I have missed them, so I feel very much out of the loop. We’ve recently moved to Chicago, so I don’t have a client base established there and that is one of the downsides to puppetry, that you need clients. I have to take some time in Chicago and start trotting the portfolio around. There is a webseries that I am in the process of trying to make happen that I was going to do this year, but I actually had to spend some of the time that I was going to do some organization for that helping SFWA with, so I am going to put it off and do it in the early part of next year.

Jean: You seem pretty busy.

Mary Robinette: I like being busy. There are so many interesting things to do in the world.
By Christopher Erickson
Managing Editor

Antique Autos in History Park

History Park in San Jose was home once again to a gathering of horseless carriages, bringing out pieces of Americana and history with Antique Autos in History Park on September 8. All sorts of cars were on display for everyone to enjoy.

A number of different eras of automobiles were on display from the early experiments through the streamlined cars of the...
1940s. The cars were lined up all around the street for people to enjoy and take pictures with as well as a few trucks as well.

There was plenty of entertainment, with the Swing Cats Dance Group performing, the Toot Sweet Jazz Band serenading the crowd and a strolling barber shop quartet called the Memory Lane Quartet singing for the entertainment of all.

There was also a presentation on the production of Rolls-Royce automobiles manufactured in Massachusetts and the difficulties of recreating the fine luxury cars made in the United Kingdom when the main manufacturing plant required the use of high-quality parts that were only available from British suppliers. The presentation covered the history of American Rolls-Royce Production from 1921 to 1931.

Another presentation was “The Longest Race Tour Re-Done,” which was a tribute staged during the centennial of the 1908 New York to Paris race. The 1908 race was a test for the new technology of the horseless carriage to see how they would perform. It was set to go from Times Square in New York around the world through America, Japan, Siberia, Russia and into Europe ending in Paris. The race participants were from Germany (the Protos car), Italy (Zust), France (De Dion-Bouton, Motobloc, and Sizaire-Naudin) and America (Thomas Flyer). The route was very treacherous, with cars driving in the winter with most of the teams exposed, almost no roads in existence, harsh weather conditions, frequent encounters with mud causing the cars to get stuck, and
Beer Truck by Christopher Erickson

Cars Along Main Street by Christopher Erickson

Blacksmith Demonstration by Christopher Erickson

Barber Shop Quartet by Christopher Erickson
potentially devastating mechanical problems. Only two cars finished the race, the German Protos car and the American Thomas Flyer, with the American team lead by George Schuster winning the whole race.

The centennial auto race was to be staged, but permits fell through for part of the overseas leg in China. The race was continued as a private event called the Longest Auto Race World Tour put on by Luke Rizzuto (who was the presenter) where people could participate as much as they like. Luke Rizzuto drove in a 1928 Plymouth Q car on the entire leg from New York to San Francisco, with many people driving cars from different eras such as a 1970s Pantera, a 1962 Corvair, a 1918 Chevy V8, a 1930 Chrysler 70 Series, and a 1940s era
Packard. The group included the great grandson of George Schuster, Jeff Mahl, and were treated to events in different towns along the route including Springville, New York, birthplace of George Schuster. The car Luke Rizzuto drove was also on display outside. Information on the Longest Auto Race World Tour can be found at www.larworldtour.com.

Among other things to do was a ride on the remodeled street car that went from just outside History Park and made stops outside of the Japanese Friendship Garden and Happy Hollow Zoo, firefighting games for children, displays of antique fans and glass bottles, blacksmithing demonstrations, early steam engines used on farms, and a number of the buildings open for exploration including the printing shop, the Chinese Temple, and some of the Victorian-era houses.

Of course, the real draw was all of the automobiles. Seeing all the different cars lined up along the streets of the park and even driving along the street as they were exiting with their horns honking was impressive. There were a number of Ford Model Ts along with several other makes of cars, a handful of early bicycles and a couple of fire engines. People were strolling around looking at the cars, taking pictures and admiring the design and craftsmanship of these pieces of engineering achievement.
Copper Kettle Rolls-Royce  
by Christopher Erickson

Gulf No. 14 Car at Blackhawk Auto Museum  
by Christopher Erickson

Gas Pump at Blackhawk Auto Museum  
by Christopher Erickson
**Blackhawk Automotive Museum**

Another great destination for seeing motor vehicles is the Blackhawk Automotive Museum. The museum features cars from both Europe and America from the 1900s to the 1960s. The cars exhibited range from luxury automobiles to race cars and concept cars with limited production. Most of the cars are on loan from other museums from around the world. All of the vehicles exhibited also have information about the design of the cars, some of the history of the production model and company, and the significance to the overall advancement of automotive technology.

The vehicles on display come from Italy, France, Germany, the United Kingdom and America. Most of the cars are from companies that no longer exist. A number of the early cars were actually purchased from foreign manufacturers and then shipped to the United States as a luxury item.

The museum also had a number of restored gas pumps from the early era of gas stations, car-related art and model cars on display throughout the building. There was also a display of Lionel electric train toys and a gallery featuring jukeboxes.

There was also a gallery of cultural artifacts and an exhibit about museum founder and philanthropist Ken Behring, who was also co-owner of the Seattle Seahawks.

More information on the museum can be found at [www.blackhawkmuseum.org](http://www.blackhawkmuseum.org).
My Storybook Adventure
in Southern Germany

By Jean Martin
Editor-in-Chief

When I was a kid, my family took a few trips to western Europe (eastern and central Europe still largely inaccessible behind the Iron Curtain) and I remember Frankfurt being dark and dingy but enjoying the medieval town of Rothenburg and cruise along the Rhine (where my dad mislaid our passports but luckily got them back). After that, I never really had any desire to go back to Germany. As an avid Anglophile, my priority these past couple of decades has been traveling to the U.K.

When Christopher told me he was going to Germany for work, I initially didn’t plan on going with him. But when he told me the town he was going to be staying at, I changed my mind. He was going to be staying in the town of Ulm, where Albert Einstein was born. Further research revealed that Ulm is fairly close to Munich, which I’ve heard a lot of great things about, as well as Baden Baden, a favorite destination of travel guru Rick Steves. The clincher was that Mad King Ludwig’s Neuschwanstein Castle, the one that Walt Disney copied for Disneyland, was a short drive away.

Neuschwanstein is on my bucket list but I didn’t think I’d ever have the chance to go there because I thought it was so remote. Also, there wasn’t anything else in Germany I wanted to see and making a trip to a country with just one destination in mind doesn’t seem to be worth it. So I took this opportunity and was excited to plan this last-minute trip even though we
were going to miss Clockwork Alchemy, BayCon and Fanime.

I was anxious for an entire month because the logistics of seeing Neuschwanstein seemed a bit complicated based on the timed tickets and approximate walking and waiting times according to the official web site. We opted for the three-attraction package, which included the newer Neuschwanstein, the older Hohenschwangau Castle and the Museum of Bavarian Kings. I had no idea what to expect and I was surprised to find that a relative and several friends have already been there and reassured me that everything was going to be fine.

**Wednesday: The outbound journey**

I had to leave later than Christopher due to work and so I flew to Germany on my own. There was no direct flight to Munich, which was the closest airport to Ulm, so I chose to take a connecting flight from Frankfurt to Munich instead of trying to figure out how to take the train from Frankfurt to Ulm and then renting a car once I got there. Christopher did the latter and it worked out for him. I found that getting a car in Munich and driving to Ulm cut down on some travel time and I got to see the beautiful and modern Munich Airport. There was some hassle at the car rental agency, which I really didn’t need after delays and not getting any sleep for almost a day, but that got sorted out and I was on my way in my upgraded automatic American car with GPS. Automatics are hard to come by even though I made a reservation and also more expensive. I also had to pay extra for the GPS but it was so worth it as I drove around a lot in a foreign country to places I’d never been.

It was pouring rain for several hours on the way to Ulm but it was a fairly nice drive. I was driving on the famed Autobahn! There were mostly only two lanes: a slow one and a fast one. I drove pretty fast but had to make way for even faster cars. There wasn’t much traffic even during rush hours, signs were plentiful, the roads were straight and the scenery was lovely. I have to say that it was a pleasure driving in Germany. It was less stressful, getting around was easy and they sure made the freeways beautiful with hanging gardens on the sides of hills and architectural designs on bridges and overpasses.

Going back to the rain, unfortunately, it rained pretty much for the entire week I was there except for one sunny day. I saw on the news that this was the wettest May they’ve had in ages. Sort of like when Christopher and I went on our honeymoon in the U.K. last September and they had the worst storm they’d had in 30 years. Similarly, however, it mostly stopped raining when I was walking around and rained when I was indoors or in the car.

I had to rent my own car as Christopher had to use his to go to work and back. He missed out on a few places I went to by myself, but he was able to explore Ulm in the evenings (and was able to show me the sights when I arrived) and got to go to the important places with me (Neuschwanstein and Munich).

**Thursday: Welcome to Germany (Ulm)**

I got there on a Thursday and our hotel was a budget chain but surprisingly clean, comfortable and huge. It felt like a home away from home. We had a delicious dinner in a German restaurant where the servers spoke very little English.
I wasn’t prepared for this as we only planned this trip a month in advance and I expected people in Germany to speak English. I had a lot of European friends in graduate school and also worked with a few Germans at other jobs and they all spoke English and several other languages besides. But I guess that wasn’t the case outside of the big cities. Also, there seemed to be a lot of eastern European workers in Germany and they weren’t as fluent in English.

As we were eating dinner, I had a strange feeling of unreality and displacement. Like I was in a place that didn’t seem that foreign but was. Like I didn’t really travel that far but I was in another world. I’m used to the U.K. in that it looks quite modern everywhere and the scenery is similar to the East Coast of the U.S. And while the U.K. has a lot of older towns and historical buildings, Germany is even older. I drove past little hamlets with churches that have onion domes. The forests also seemed darker green and more primeval. The feeling of being transported in a storybook land pretty much stayed with me the entire time I was there.

One thing I was surprised to see is that there was a lot of road construction on the Autobahn. I thought Europe was pretty much still going through a recession but Germany seems to be doing a lot better and was still upgrading its infrastructure.

Oh, and their pillows are square and they don’t have sheets under their duvets. But they have showers now! In the early 1970s, showers were quite unheard of in European hotels.

Friday: Exploring westward (Weil der Stadt, Baden Baden, Stuttgart)

I was so surprised that the breakfast buffet at the hotel was enormous with a lot of variety and the breakfast room was sunny and cheerful. They had pastries, pretzels, breads, cold cuts, fresh fruits and veggies, jams, chutneys, eggs, bacon, sausages, cereals, different kinds of tea, coffee, etc. Needless to say, I ate very well in the mornings, which really helps to start out a full day of touring.

For my first day of traveling, I drove west to explore Baden-Württemberg (Ulm is on the western side of the Danube, which marks the border between Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria). My first stop was the little town of Weil der Stadt where astronomer Johannes Kepler was born. The town square had a monument to him, and the house he was born in, right off the square, was a museum dedicated to his life and work. The one guide there that day was busy lecturing a big
group of tourists. He was speaking in German so I didn’t understand what he was saying. But the exhibits had English translation and there was a lot to see in such a small place. It was just a thrill to be in the house that Kepler lived.

The town itself was small with the requisite church, Rathaus (town hall) and Ratskeller (bar/tavern/restaurant) as well as some bakeries (with pretzels!), shops, pharmacies and banks. It was around lunch time when I was done at the museum and I had a hard time finding something to eat as no one spoke English and I’m mostly vegan. I went to a café and gave up trying to explain what I was looking for. The lady said she was going to make me a sandwich with no cheese and it was going to be delicious. I have no idea what meat she put in the sandwich but it was indeed delicious. I pretty much ate mystery meats the rest of the trip. Hey, I was on vacation and experiencing the local culture. I could go back to veggies back home.

After Weil der Stadt, I drove to Baden Baden at the foothills of the Black Forest. I didn’t have time to go through the Black Forest but I wanted to see this famous spa town that Rick Steves recommends highly. I’m also a big fan of spa towns like Bath in England and Calistoga north of the Bay Area. Unfortunately, I didn’t have time to use the baths myself but I enjoyed the town itself. It was surprisingly a large and very touristy town that reminded me of a cross between Paris and Monte Carlo. The buildings were very Belle Epoque as well as the tree-lined, wide avenues with a stream that ran alongside the main road.

I tried to park as close as I could to the main square and found a modern parking lot underneath the Kurhaus Casino. I walked up the stairs and was in a grand entrance hall of
marble, red carpet and gold chandeliers. I’m not much into gambling but I walked into some of the rooms that were open to the public. Afterwards, I walked out into a nice plaza with an outdoor theatre and somewhat kept to Rick Steves Baden Baden walking tour. That’s what I love about European towns, you can just walk around lots of pedestrian-only streets. There were high-end shops, gelaterias, beer gardens, cafes, restaurants, etc. And everyone was also just walking around and enjoying the brief rainless spells.

Some of the highlights of my walking tour included the Trinkhalle (pump house), which was also the tourist information center and had a not-working-at-the-time mineral water drinking fountain. The main attraction, though, were classical-style frescoes all along the column-lined arcade.

Next stop was the modern but Roman-inspired Caracalla Spa with its pristine white columns and domes and all-glass windows. I went inside to the lobby and it was pleasantly warm and humid. I had trouble finding the more traditional Friedrichsbad (Roman-Irish Bath) and didn’t realize it was this impressive neoclassical building that I walked past a couple of times. It looked more like a museum or government building from the outside. I walked in and was very tempted to do the full three-hour bath, but that wouldn’t have left me time to see anything else and drive home at a decent hour. Rick Steves did say that there was a hall with Roman bath artifacts upstairs.
that was open to non-bathers. I went to the Renaissance Hall and it was mostly a couple of function rooms and it just dawned on me that people actually live here and have events at this place. The more impressive collection of Roman artifacts was at the Roman Bath Ruins Museum at the basement, right next to a parking garage. If you don’t know it’s there, you’ll completely miss it. It was small but reminded me of the Roman Baths in Bath, England.

I walked around the town a bit more and saw a church, a cathedral in front of a nice square with fountains, a beautiful Victorian hotel, and mostly locals enjoying their numerous vacation days. Europeans really know how to live a more relaxed and less fast-paced lifestyle.

I left the best for last, the Konig Café, which was a pretty and very classy café known for its Black Forest Cake according to Rick Steves. Unfortunately, it was late in the day and they were completely out of it. Not much English spoken there either. I guess Baden Baden doesn’t get very many American tourists and I didn’t see any Asians either. They did have another cake that had Black Forest in the name and I got that instead. It had some liqueur in it, which I don’t normally partake of and I was going to drive soon, but it was delicious and worth it. I felt like a Victorian lady sipping my chamomile
tea and eating cake. Finding non-caffeinated teas in Germany was actually a lot easier than here in the U.S. Everywhere they had rooibos and other herbal teas in various flavors.

So I started driving back when I was sure that little bit of alcohol didn’t affect me and on the way home I saw signs to Stuttgart. My first car was a Mercedes Benz and I’ve always like their cars and I knew there was a Mercedes Benz museum somewhere in Stuttgart. I knew the museum was probably closed for the day, but on a whim, I decided to find it. However, the GPS showed several Mercedes Strasses and Stuttgart was a lot larger than I expected. It was a very industrial city with lots of buildings and factories. I wound up using my iPhone to find the museum, which cost me a lot in data usage, but was better than being lost and failing to find the place.

I’m glad I made the effort as not only did I find the museum, which was a gleaming silver-colored architectural marvel, but also the main showroom, office buildings and stadium. Actually, if I didn’t panic, I could have just kept going on the road I picked and would have wound up there. It was hard to miss all of these!

I walked up to the museum entrance, after taking a picture of a Mercedes Benz sports car parked outside, and the friendly security guard let me into the lobby where I took pictures of
the interesting ceiling, walls and entrances to the exhibit rooms with some cars visible.

It was past dinner time at this point and I knew there was really nowhere to eat near our hotel and I was too tired to go looking around in Ulm for a place to eat. So I wound up at a rest stop where they had a delicious buffet for a very reasonable price. That’s one great thing in Germany (and the U.K.). Their rest stops are big, clean, comfortable, reasonable and actually have good food!

I got home around 9:00 p.m., thank goodness for the long days as the sun was just setting on the drive back. I had to go to bed early as the next day was the big day to Hohenschwangau for Neuschwanstein Castle.

**Saturday: Fairytale land (Hohenschwangau, Neuschwanstein and Füssen)**

Saturday we were off early and drove south to the southern end of Bavaria, and well, Germany as the town of
Hohenschwangau was in the Alps bordering Austria. In fact, we missed our exit and wound up suddenly in this little alpine town called Vils with a huge vertical rock formation jutting out right in front of us. I didn’t find out until later that Vils is in Austria and we actually crossed the border accidentally!

After we double-backed and found the right exit (it was the last exit before Austria), we followed a long road on a flat plain until we could see Neuschwanstein nestled in a mountain. It looked magical perched among trees and surrounded by fog. As we drove through the town of quaint, traditional-looking alpine buildings, I felt like we were in Disneyland. But this was for real! Well, most of the buildings were restaurants, hotels and souvenir shops, but still, this was the original. I was nervous as I didn’t want anything to go wrong with the strict timing of the tickets and I had very high expectations of the place built up to mythical proportions over the years. This was one of those once-in-a-lifetime places that I didn’t want to be disappointed with and wanted to come home with a lot of good photos.

We parked at the back lot away from most of the tourist buses. And yes, here there were a lot of American and Japanese tourists. The lines for tickets were long but we already purchased ours online so we only had to pick them up. We got there early so we had time to scope out the place. I had multiple scenarios already rehearsed in my mind as to what to do to make the most of the time before, in between and after the two castles and the museum. But I didn’t realize there were so many other things to see! Most tour buses and even Rick Steves said to allow for four hours. It took us pretty much the whole day to see everything. Well, most of our time was taking pictures or waiting for the hordes of people to thin out

Jean at the courtyard of Neuschwanstein Castle courtesy of Jean Martin
so we could take photos. It took a lot of patience but someone told me later when I showed her my photobook that she was surprised that there were few tourists there. Little did she know!

Walking up to the older Hohenschwangau Castle was a breeze. And the view of Neuschwanstein and the town from there was gorgeous. The castle itself was a sunny yellow and looked like something from a fairytale with its turrets and crenellated parapets. It reminded me of the Pena Palace in Sintra, Portugal, which is also in the romantic-style. Inside Hohenschwangau, where King Ludwig II grew up and where composer Richard Wagner stayed at, were beautiful rooms decorated tastefully. The walls had frescoes depicting Bavarian heroes, kings, princesses and legends including the swan knight Lohengrin. The Bavarian royal family lived there during the summer. Although now a museum, the palace had a cozy, lived-in feel to it.

Then it was time for the main event, Neuschwantein, which involved a trek up the mountain. Since it was raining on and off, and the climb looked very steep, we opted to use the shuttle bus. Rick Steves wrote that the horse-drawn carriage was just too slow. A friend of mine told me that while the line for the bus was long, it went fairly quickly. We were able to get on the bus, barely. There were no timetables for the bus and we had less than an hour for our entrance time at Neuschwanstein. And the castle was still a 15-minute walk from the bus stop. We were packed in like sardines but we made it. The walk down through the woods and to the castle was lovely and then you get to see your first view of the castle for a great photo opp. We were so excited to go to the castle (well, I was) that we forgot to get a photo of both of us with the castle in the background. That was probably the only disappointing part of the day as that would have made a great photo for posterity. Oh, that and the pink Bavarian hat I bought and wore was wool (which I’m allergic to) and my face was red after a few hours. The rest of it went swimmingly well.

Neuschwanstein, while it was newer and was never finished, looked darker and more gothic on the inside than the light and airy Hohenschwangau interiors. The Mad King had a flair for drama and everything was done to excess. There were gold, jewels, paintings, etc. everywhere. So it was quite impressive and beautiful but not as homey as the earlier castle. We couldn’t take photos inside either castle so I wound up
having to buy a book and postcards at one of the many gift shops in the castle.

After we were done with the tour, both tours are timed to finish in about half an hour, I was ready to relax and we had some tea and dessert at the castle’s café. This time I was able to get a Black Forest cake even though we weren’t really anywhere near the Black Forest.

We walked to the lake toward the Museum of the Bavarian Kings and found a wedding party getting their photos taken. It seemed like the bride or groom (or both) was American as they were speaking with American accents. What an amazing place to have a wedding!

The Museum was great but it was a bit stuffy and I was tired and so I rushed through it. The history of the Wittelsbach family is quite fascinating. They’ve gone through so much upheaval and change. Apparently, the head of the family is now known as the Duke of Bavaria.

I had a hard time leaving the place and we stayed there until they closed for the day. At the parking lot, I stared at the two castles for the longest time to commit them to memory. As we drove away, I kept them in my sights as long as I could.

We went to the nearby town of Füssen for dinner and ate at a German restaurant recommended by Rick Steves. The town was mostly pedestrian-only but it was hard to tell what was what and we wound up driving into streets that were narrow and couldn’t find our way back to the real roads. The town had a picturesque main walkway lined with stores selling colorful Bavarian costumes. I was told sometime during our trip that what we Americans think of as “German” costume, food and culture is really Bavarian. I don’t remember seeing any of these when I was farther north when I was a kid so this is

Maypole in Munich Viktualienmarkt by Jean Martin
Sunday: German culture and beer (Munich)

A lot of people have told me that Munich is a wonderful city and I was looking forward to seeing it. Unfortunately, the day we went was cold and stormy and I was miserable and also had a very hard time taking photos. We did manage to see a lot using the walking tour that Rick Steves recommended. Unfortunately, it didn’t work as well in Munich as it did in Baden Baden because the descriptions of the attractions were separate from the map and didn’t coordinate quite as well. So we got lost a lot.

Before we went into the center of the city, though, we drove to the official Oktoberfest grounds at Theresienwiese. It looked like a big parking lot. Apparently, the night before there was a big screen showing a football game with the Bavarian team (they won) and we could see some broken bottles lying around. Still, it was pretty impressive to see the site completely cleared out early the next day.

In the Old Town of Munich, where all the main attractions were, we parked underneath Max-Joseph-Platz, which was surrounded by the Residenz, several buildings of different architectural styles (Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo and Neoclassical) that used to be the royal palace of the Bavarian monarchs. Now they house a museum, treasury, gardens, theatre and concert hall. They all looked very elegant and

probably true.

Driving back to our hotel, I was happy to cross one thing off my travel bucket list. I’m glad Christopher was able to go there with me so he could see it too as this was a place not to be missed.
ostentatious. I wish we had time to see the museum but we didn’t.

We walked right away to Marienplatz and the New Town Hall was a huge romantic, neo-Gothic building with a colorful Glockenspiel. But first, I wanted to see the Old Town Hall, which was a bit hard to distinguish from all the other imposing buildings and shops. It was small but no less impressive. At this time I was very hungry and we couldn’t find a place to eat. So we wound up at McDonald’s of all places. I was pleasantly surprised to find that they serve veggie burgers (it was delicious!) as well as curry sauce, which was so good on top of my fries.

Then it was back to sightseeing and fighting the elements to take photos. It kept getting rain on my camera lens but Christopher and I were determined and managed to take photos anyway.

We walked behind the Marienplatz to the open-air Viktualienmarkt, the oldest farmers market in Munich, which had a tall Maypole with various designs depicting Bavarian life. We saw a lot of churches, seriously, you couldn’t walk a few feet without running into another one. They all looked different and the most iconic one is the Frauenkirche with its two onion domes. Unfortunately, the front of the church was being renovated and with the narrow streets, it was impossible to get a good photo of it.

We then walked inside the New Town Hall and found a courtyard that was also decorated in the neo-Gothic style. It felt like I was inside Hogwarts. There were different entrances to different parts of the building and we walked into the Rathskeller restaurant, which was wonderfully medieval and very Bavarian.
When we walked outside, we noticed lots of people standing around facing the New Town Hall. I looked at my watch and it was 5 o’clock. I thought the Glockenspiel worked every hour but apparently it was only at 11 a.m. year round plus at noon and 5:00 p.m. in the summer. So we really lucked out. The Glockenspiel was delightful as the bells chimed and the top half depicted the wedding of Duke Wilhelm V (who founded the famous Hofbräuhaus) and then the bottom half showed dancing coopers.

Speaking of the Hofbräuhaus, that is where we went for dinner. It was packed with tourists as well as locals. We first went to the top floor as Rick Steves said there was an exhibit there. What we found was an enormous banqueting hall with long tables of tour groups entertained by an oom-pah band in Bavarian attire. We tried to get seats but were told they were all booked. The exhibit was in a loft above the band and it was small but informative.

Then we went to the ground floor and found the general seating area, which was chaotic to say the least. Especially since there were several groups of several Bavarian football fans celebrating. There was an oom-pah band there as well. With the chanting of the fans, the Bavarian music and a few locals in their native costume walking around, we sure got a full experience of Bavarian culture, both old and new.
We found space to sit near the door, which was cold and smoky, but we were glad we even found seats. Surprisingly, the wait staff was attentive and we soon ordered a couple of Bavarian dishes while Christopher had a non-alcoholic beer as he was driving. He was bummed that he couldn’t have real beer at the original Hofbräuhaus but as far as I’m concerned it was a beer as it does have some alcohol in it, it tasted like beer and it had the Hofbräuhaus brand on it. We bought some souvenirs at their gift shop and then we walked back to the parking garage.

I was curious as to what was beyond the garage and we found the historic Feldherrnhalle, which is famous for the first march of the Nazis and resulted in the arrest of Hitler. There are reminders of Hitler and World War II all over Bavaria, and it’s sad as well as a hopefully a deterrent from this tragedy ever happening again.

We pretty much spent the entire day in Munich and still we didn’t get to see numerous things we wanted to see. There was the Residenz museum, of course, as well as the English Garden (although what’s so great about an English garden with Asian and Greek follies is beyond me), the Baroque Asam Church, the Victory gate arch (which looks like the Arc de Triomphe) and Nymphenburg Palace (outside the city proper).

Munich reminded me of Paris as well. Which made me realize that Europe is a small place and the influence of French culture in the 17th and 18th centuries as well as the Austro-Hungarian Empire after that made for similarities in architectural styles, decorative items and fashionable clothing. However, it was nice to see Bavarian culture still thriving and incorporated into it all.
Monday: A relaxing day in a big, small town (Ulm)

After three days of long drives and intense sightseeing, I decided to take a break and tour Ulm, where we were staying. Our hotel was actually in a suburb outside of the main city, and so I had to drive a few minutes to get there. I parked right under the Rathaus. It was quite amazing that I kept parking under very old tourist attractions.

The Rathaus was a beautiful gold building with colorful frescoes and a medieval astronomical/astrological clock. From there I could already see the spire of Ulm Munster. I walked toward it and found myself in a wide, open square with the Gothic cathedral plopped right there surrounded by modern buildings, mainly shops. There were lots of people shopping, eating at the outdoor cafes and just generally walking around. It seemed like they were mostly locals and there were very few tourists. I wondered if these people worked! It was a Monday after all. But then summers in Europe usually means people are all on vacation.

The Ulm Munster has the tallest spire in the world and it was truly breathtaking. I went inside and took photos, especially of the stained glass window near the front entrance that commemorated Albert Einstein, who was born in Ulm. My walking tour of Ulm was pretty much geared toward finding all of the Einstein-related attractions. I’m glad Christopher found that window previously and told me exactly where to look as it was hard to find.

Next I walked to the other end of Ulm to find the Einstein Monument, granite pillars on top of where Einstein’s babyhood home once stood. Then it was on to the other end of Ulm for the Einsteinhouse, which has an exhibit of photos arranged according to the timeline of his life, and the Einstein
Fountain, which has a rocket with a goofy face of Einstein on it. There was also a white stone with Einstein’s signature underneath it on the wall of the Zeghaus adjacent to the fountain.

The town of Ulm itself was very interesting. It is modern but still has traces of traditional influences. It is a small town, but is pretty big. And it felt like I was really experiencing what the folks who live there experience on a daily basis. It is a real town, not a tourist town. It reminded me a lot of York in England, like Munich reminded me of Edinburgh in Scotland.

I walked on the medieval walls next to the Danube and found a leaning tower called Metzgerturm. Across the Danube was the very modern town of Neu Ulm.

I met up with Christopher after he was done with work and we walked around a bit and took photos of each other at the Ulm Munster. After dinner, I headed back to the hotel as I had another big touring day the next day. It was nice that I got to relax a little bit for one day in Ulm.

**Tuesday: Back in Rothenburg ob der Tauber**

For my last touring day, I was torn between going to Heidelberg (three hours away) and Rothenburg ob der Tauber (an hour and a half away). I’d already been to Rothenburg in 1975 and I remembered it as a magical medieval town. On the other hand, Rick Steves thinks Heidelberg is too Americanized (due to its proximity to an army base) and doesn’t even cover it in his tour book. Distance and nostalgia won out in the end and I decided to drive to Rothenburg, which was pretty much a straight shot north from Ulm, and is on the Romantic Road.

I parked outside the city wall and when I walked through, it was like I stepped into another world. The entire town is pretty much intact as it would have looked in the Middle Ages. And
unlike Disneyland, this is all real. First thing I noticed is that it was a lot cleaner and not as dark as I remembered. Second was that I didn’t know that people actually live there and there are even hotels for tourists.

I walked through numerous houses until I found the main Church, St. Jakob’s. I didn’t go inside until later on my way out as I wanted to see the Main Square first. I found the Main Square and it didn’t look anything like I could recall (well, I was a child then). There was the Rathaus and Clocktower as well as a lovely fountain. The Rathaus was being renovated and had some scaffolding on the front. The Clocktower was completely covered by cloth, which ingenuously had the image of the Clocktower printed on it and so it was like you were looking at the actual thing.

I signed up for the day walking tour, which Rick Steves recommended. Our guide, Harald, was entertaining but the tour mostly took us through the less traveled areas of Rothenburg. I guess to get to see the less touristy aspects of the town and get a feel of the history of the place. He did show us the walls, which I walked on, and a tower, which he called Rapunzel’s tower as there was only one window and was where prisoners were kept.

After the tour, I went to Kathe Wohlfahrt’s two Christmas shops, which are right in front of each other. I don’t think these were here in 1975. The bigger one was impressive. My pictures don’t do it justice. You walk into these labyrinthine rooms with so many different kinds of Christmas ornaments and then you wind up in the middle, which is a two-story room with an enormous Christmas tree festooned with lights and decorations. It was surrounded by even more displays, traditional and modern. It looked like you were in a Christmas
village with a tree in the middle (or at Dickens Fair). I was so overwhelmed with the selections that I didn’t buy anything there. I paid extra for the Christmas Museum, which displayed German Christmas ornaments from olden times as well as a history of Christmas traditions. Her store next door was less chaotic and so I purchased a couple of souvenir ornaments that said Rothenburg on them.

I also went to Annaliese Friese’s souvenir shop, which was more reasonably priced. Annaliese is a friend of Rick Steves and her son Bernie was very friendly and helpful. Bernie gave me a free souvenir map and a discount for being a Rick Steves fan. I bought a wooden desktop Christmas tree, a couple of Nutcrackers, a cow bell and a mini cuckoo clock.

There were so many shops in Rothenburg. I had a fabulous time just walking around and seeing everything. There was a Teddy Bear shop with history-inspired teddy bear displays. There was a shop with medieval armor, weapons and costumes. And another with imaginative toys in a tree-lit indoor forest.

I ate at one of the restaurants on the main square and I have to say I was disappointed in the quality of the food. Why are touristy places so bad? I should have gone with one of the ones Rick Steves recommended or went to a more out of the way place. These are usually better. I did try the schneeball, a ball of dough covered in sugar, and it was terrible. But I guess it’s part of the tourist experience.

There are two iconic landmarks in Rothenburg that you see in postcards. One is in front of a yellow house in the middle of two streets that fork out from one main one. And the other is of a clock tower on top of an archway. The first one I remember from my earlier trip as I have a photo of me with my dad and my sister at that location. So I had to have my photo taken there again. The second one was a bit harder to find. I had to ask Harald for its location. But find it I did.

I also asked him about the Doll and Toy Museum. I wasn’t really that interested but it was there so I went to see it. I was suitably impressed. There were well-preserved dolls and toys from the 19th century there. Lots of them were in amazing period costumes. There were also numerous doll houses. My favorite of which was as big as a large table and two stories high. From the front you can see the façade and numerous dolls in Regency-era attire. From the back you can see the inside of the fully furnished rooms. Most of the toys looked like they were enjoyed by adults as well like puppet theatres.
Jean at one of the iconic views of Rothenburg

courtesy of Jean Martin
I’m glad I went as it was worth the admission price.

Rothenburg gets quiet after the tour buses leave. So the afternoon was less crowded and I was able to enjoy things more. I spent pretty much the whole day there whereas most tourists only come from a few hours. There was so much to see and I’m glad I got to experience the place again. Extra bonus for it being a warm and sunny day so my pictures came out good.

Wednesday: The flight home

I wish I stayed another day in Germany. Christopher had one more work day and I could have easily stayed and gone to Heidelberg as well. But I didn’t expect I would enjoy it so much and I originally didn’t want to spend more vacation days than I needed to. But it was just as well as I was completely wiped out by that point and I don’t think I would have had the energy to drive to Heidelberg after everything I’ve already done.

After enjoying my last breakfast buffet at the hotel, I drove back to Munich airport, which surprisingly didn’t show up as a selection on my car’s GPS. So I just drove in the general direction of Munich and hoped there would be signs pointing the way. Luckily, as I neared Munich, there was a sign with an airplane on it. I kept my fingers crossed that it was for the correct airport as it was several miles away from Munich. It was the right one and I dropped my car off and was on the plane to Frankfurt. The Munich to Frankfurt plane, by the way, had these really scary see-through, wicker-like seats that I’ve never seen before. They weren’t very comfortable so I’m glad it was a short flight.

From Frankfurt, I boarded my plane to SFO, and I saw the Main River, which snaked through the city just like the Thames does in London. As my plane took off, I took one last look at Germany and had tears in my eyes. I had such a wonderful, fairy-tale like trip and I hope to visit again someday.
Sac Anime

By Robbie Pleasant
Contributing Writer

Sac Anime has long been a staple convention for anime fans in the Sacramento area, with two conventions a year, one in the summer and one in the winter. Recently, Sac Anime moved from the Woodlake Hotel to the Sacramento Convention Center, in order to better accommodate the crowds it brings in, making for a new convention experience for attendees of all ages.

The convention center is located directly across from the Sheraton Hotel, where registration for the convention took place. Also located in the hotel were anime screening rooms, tabletop gaming rooms, and the ballrooms used for the swap meet and karaoke.

In the convention center, one could find the dealer’s hall, where a nice variety of vendors stocked their wares of anime...
goods, figurines, manga, and so on. The artist alley was attached to it, showcasing talented creators whose own works were available for purchase.

Upstairs from that, the panel and gaming rooms awaited. The game rooms had a very impressive variety of systems and games, including an arcade for those with quarters to spare.

There were a nice variety of panels to visit, from industry experts, guests, and fans alike.

Those who registered early were given free VIP passes or upgrades, allowing them early entry to events such as panels and the masquerade. Don’t expect these to help with autograph lines, though, as those lines stretched throughout the hallways, making some attendees wait upwards of two hours to meet the guests they came for.

Given the quality of the guests, it’s no surprise that many were willing to make the wait for them. Not only were there favorites such as Nolan North and Troy Baker but there was also one of the biggest draws this year, Charles Martinet, best known for providing the voice of Nintendo’s plumber mascot, Mario.
This year, Sac Anime was held at the same time and place as a Greek food festival. Fortunately, the two managed to coexist peacefully. The Sac Anime attendees were allowed entrance to the food festival, where they could purchase food that was just as tasty but healthier than the usual convention diet of Pocky, soda and microwaved ramen. Apparently some guests of each event didn’t approve or appreciate the other’s presence, but for the most part, the two went on without interfering with the other.

Given the food available in the area, many found the festival to be a godsend. One could walk a few blocks to find somewhat expensive restaurants, but the local delis and Subway did not remain open for dinner, making the options somewhat limited. There are some places to get food built into the convention center, though many found it more convenient to walk a bit and get pizza from a nearby location.

Of course, with the size of the convention, crowding was a problem. Aside from the long lines to see guests, those with bulky or delicate costumes had to wander with care. Getting in and out of an elevator could be a lengthy wait and crowded experience, but those located above the fifth floor found it necessary.

Speaking of costumes, there were some excellent cosplayers around the convention, not only from anime and manga series, but from video games, television shows, and webcomics. There were a few organized gatherings, held on the outside deck and upstairs floor of the convention center, though that tended to be for the more popular series.

Naturally, there were some issues. Honestly, I have always felt unnerved by some of the staff members at the convention, who could be too “in your face” at some times. The wristbands they made attendees wear all day were frustrating too, but they insisted we had them visible at all times, even when wearing a costume; many a photo has been ruined by the wristband. While the convention was organized better this year than in previous ones, the crowds and lines still need some dealing with.

That said, Sac Anime is a good convention for meeting friends, seeing some great cosplayers, and (if you can stand the wait) seeing some great guests. There’s never a lack for things to do, whether it’s seeing a panel, concert, friends, or just hanging out and getting some goods from the dealers. It may still need some finetuning, but it’s enough to keep dedicated attendees year after year.
By Tom Becker  
*SF/SF Compositor*

So many things happen at the World Science Fiction Convention and so many people are there, this can only be a personal account of the small slice that I saw. This year the Worldcon was in San Antonio, Texas, USA. There was a wealth of programming related to Texas science fiction. I made a point of going to as much as I could. I missed much more than I saw, but what I saw was excellent. I also had a good time hanging out with fannish friends from Texas and from all over the world.

San Antonio is a good city for conventions. The Riverwalk runs through town below the street level. It is lushly planted and filled with interesting sculptures and art installations. And it is the core of the city’s nightlife, with dozens of restaurants and bars right on the river or overlooking it. It is a delightful combination of public park, café district, and a cool shady shortcut away from the streets and the traffic. In this picture from the Hyatt Riverwalk Hotel, you can see part of the Henry B. Gonzalez convention center on the left, and a branch of the Riverwalk heading towards downtown. On the right is part of the Rivercenter Mall. The main con hotel, the Hyatt Rivercenter, is out of view to the right.

The pedestrian crossings near the convention center and the hotels are accessible, with audible crossing signals. A loud male voice says “WAIT... WAIT... WAIT...” until it is time to cross. I’m glad the city put them in, because they really help people with limited vision, but personally I’d rather go down to the Riverwalk and cross under the streets without having to WAIT.

I had been in San Antonio once before, for LoneStarCon 2. That time, my main view of the con was the interior of the room where we produced the newszine. Granted, I was in there with some of my best friends in fandom, and I was very happy with how the zine came out, but this time I wanted to see more of the con and of San Antonio. Before the con I got an email from Peggie Rae asking me to volunteer. The idea of helping out on different things that I could choose, when and
where I wanted, was attractive. Besides, I have never been able to say “no” to Peggy Rae.

Wednesday night Spike and I had a romantic dinner at the Fig Tree Restaurant. It is in La Villita, an area of historic buildings, a short distance away along the Riverwalk.

Thursday, while Spike went on the Robert E. Howard tour to Cross Plains, I helped set up the art show. When I got there the panels had already been put together. My first task was to remove unnecessary light bulbs from fixtures at the ends of each row. The basic process for lighting an art show seems to be this: (1) Screw light bulbs in the fixtures because that’s easy to do first. (2) Attach the fixtures to the frames. (3) Connect the cords. (4) Tie down the cords. (5) Realize the fixtures at the ends do not need bulbs in them. (6) Find some tall people. (7) Remove the extra bulbs. (8) Realize that the fixtures were attached too low. (9) Unbolt the fixtures and move them up. (10) Find that some fixtures can’t be moved up because the cords are tied down. (11) Cut off the cable ties. (12) Move the fixtures up, finally. (13) Tie down the cords again. (14) Step back and admire a job well done.

I was fortunate to be able to assist with hanging the art for Darrell K. Sweet, the Artist Guest of Honor (www.lonestarcon3.org/guests/sweet.shtml). Sadly, Mr. Sweet passed away in 2011. His son, Darrell R. Sweet, came to the con with his family. It was really nice to meet them. Darrell was very friendly, appreciative, and helpful. He brought a huge number of Darrell K. Sweet paintings, sculptures, and other objects. My role in hanging them was very minor, as in
“two inches to the left, please,” while the experts discussed where each piece should go and which ones went best together. This took a while, because of the sheer size of the exhibit, and also because of the range of genres, including fantasy, science fiction, westerns, landscapes, and a cheerful abstract floral. I was glad I spent so much time looking at them up close. I was particularly impressed by the beautiful and detailed foliage in many of his paintings. There was a large portrait of a wizard, recognizably Darrell K. Sweet but with a much grander beard, and the wizard’s staff was adorned with all kinds of flowers and plants. He obviously loved the natural world and looked closely at it.

On Thursday a lot of exhibits were already set up. There was a 50th Anniversary of Dr. Who exhibit with a TARDIS exterior and control panel, K-9, and a bunch of Daleks. Occasionally a Dalek would get loose and blare “EXTERMINATE!” at fans on their way to the dealers room. There was a replica of the bridge of the Starship Enterprise as in the original Star Trek series, built in 1982 in Houston. There was a photo booth where cosplaying fans could get high quality portraits taken.

Librarians from Texas A&M University (cushing.library.tamu.edu/collections/browse-major-collections/the-science-fiction-collection) were staffing a table with examples of ancient books in the library and art from their “Deeper Than Swords” event (cushing.library.tamu.edu/exhibits/deeperthanswords) celebrating the work of George R. R. Martin. The San Antonio Public Library table publicized...
Chris Garcia and the robot bull

by Tom Becker
the programs they were doing in conjunction with LoneStarCon.

TEXLUG, the Texas Lego Users Group, had a Lego play area.

And there was a mechanical bull ride. I watched a Chinese woman ride the robo-bull. Amazingly she was not thrown off. I was told that she was an editor for Science Fiction World, the largest circulation science fiction magazine in the world. Only at a Worldcon. As she got off, laughing non-stop, I wondered who else would be crazy enough to ride the thing. Next up was our very own Christopher J. Garcia. He didn’t last very long, maybe because he was not as slender or flexible as the previous rider. But it was a good ride while it lasted.
In the dealers room the Fan Guest of Honor, Willie Siros, had set up the tables for his bookstore and was hanging out with his brother, Charles, who was manning the FACT (Fandom Association of Central Texas) table. I bought a copy of the new anthology, “Rayguns Over Texas,” from Charles.

That night was the “Rayguns Over Texas” launch event at the San Antonio Main Public Library. I was told that it was too far to walk and I should take a cab, so first I walked downtown to the Market Square and got a quick bite to eat, and then I walked to the library. Charles and Willie were there selling copies of the book, and there was a panel discussion and book signing with the editor and 12 of the 21 contributors. One of the stories was first published in 1865. After the signing some of my friends from Armadillocon decided to go
out for barbecue. I didn’t want to be the fourth person cramming in a cab, and I was enjoying walking along the Riverwalk so I said I would meet them at the restaurant. I walked a long way and was thinking maybe I’d gotten turned around and gone the wrong direction, when I got to the San Antonio Museum of Art, which is definitely not downtown. I hurried back and made it to the restaurant just in time to get a drink and cool off before our party was seated. I walked about three times farther than I intended, but it was beautiful, and it was a good workout, which I kind of needed, considering it was on the way to my second dinner that evening.

Friday my friend Andrew drove down from Austin with his bride Jackie for their first Worldcon ever. We went to panels together. Catherynne Valente read from her upcoming
Hollywood noir space opera. The prose hit me as hard as a slug of the cheap imitation whiskey they serve in the decrepit dives in the bad part of the spaceport on Titan. It was colder outside than an agent’s heart. As I stepped through the slushy methane, I couldn’t get the flickering images of her out of my mind. Oops, reading over; buy the novel when it comes out next year.

On to the Martha Wells reading which was already in progress next door. We caught the end of Martha’s reading from one of the new Raksura novellas she is writing. (See SF/SF #137 for my review of The Books of the Raksura.) The new novella is quite an adventure and I am eagerly looking forward to its publication. Martha read from her new novel, “Emilie and the Hollow World” (www.marthawells.com/
emilie.htm). Emilie, running away from home, tries to stow away on a ferry, but is apprehended by a watchman. Jumping into the bay to avoid pursuit, she swims along the docks and finds another ship anchored offshore. She has no idea what ship it is or where it is going, but she has no choices left so she climbs aboard. Then shots ring out. The ship is being attacked. At this point Martha’s reading ended. I bought the book from Willie and I can tell you that it gets much more exciting as it goes on.

Next we went to “Two-Gun Bob: The Somewhat True Tales of Robert E. Howard.” This was a panel of Robert E. Howard experts talking about the life of Robert E. Howard, and how so much has been learned since the early and very flawed biography by L. Sprague de Camp. Biographical research of Robert E. Howard is difficult because Bob was a story teller and liked to embellish his stories to make a point or make them more entertaining. Even so, much has been learned by doing the simple hard work of scholarship: going through government records, carefully analyzing his letters (especially his many letters to H. P. Lovecraft), and simply going to his home town and talking to people who had known him. The upshot is that Robert E. Howard deserves more respect, both as a writer and as a human being. It was a fascinating and lively discussion.

Joe Lansdale was scheduled to talk about adapting his story “Bubba Ho-tep” for film. My Austin friends knew him well from Armadillocon and it was like “Okay, we’re going to see Joe next, right? Right.” Joe is a great story-teller, in person as
well as in print. It was a fun talk. Joe told us some stories about “Bubba Ho-tep”, and also about his new self-produced movie “Christmas with the Dead.” Then my friends stayed on to see a showing of the movie, and I went over to the SF in Japan panel.

The SF in Japan panel was amazing. There were two main topics. The first was a demonstration of Japanese Augmented Reality Poetry. The term “AR Poetry” was very apt for an app that displays poems in the air. Then Takayuki Tatsumi led a discussion of the Second International Science Fiction Symposium. The first International Science Fiction Symposium was in 1970 with Brian Aldiss, Arthur C. Clarke, Frederick Pohl, and Judith Merril, so you can see how big a deal it was to have a Second International Symposium, only 43 years later. ISFS2 was held in Hiroshima, Osaka, Nagoya, and Tokyo Japan. It was organized by the Science Fiction Writers of Japan (SFWJ), celebrating the 50th anniversary of SFWJ (sfwj50.jp/en/news). Overseas guest writers included Pat Murphy and Paolo Bacigalupi (USA), Yan Wu (China), and Denis Taillandier (France). Pat and Paolo were at the Worldcon panel and spoke about their experiences. The final symposium in Tokyo was streamed on the internet. While Pat was speaking in San Antonio the screen next to her showed her speaking two months previously in Tokyo. It was a very science-fictional experience.
The “Truly Alien” panel featured Karen Burnham moderating, with David D. Levine, Patricia MacEwen and Jack McDevitt. The panel precis was a tough one, because we just don’t know very much about non-carbon life forms, and there’s no way we can until we meet some. But the panelists were great, as I expected. David made a good mix of smart, wise and funny comments, Pat had an endless supply of spectacularly weird examples of terrestrial life forms, and Jack was modest and understated about the many big ideas which have featured in his writing.

“Revivifying the US Space Program” had more great panelists with author and former NASA flight controller Marianne Dyson moderating, along with filker and rocket scientist Jordin Kare, author and former astronautical engineer Gerry Nordley, and author and astrophysicist Catherine Asaro. It was a good discussion but as a space enthusiast it was all pretty familiar to me. The coolest thing was Marianne and Catherine talking about how there are more women in space (finally!).

Friday night we had a nice dinner at Boudro’s with our friend A.T. from Austin and his wife Carol. One of the highlights I remember from LSC2 was dinner on a Riverwalk cruise boat with A.T. and his first wife Laurie. A few years later, Laurie died after a brave battle with cancer. I still miss her. It was good to see A.T. married again and happy.

In a pattern to be repeated, I didn’t make it up to the party floor until midnight. The Helsinki in 2015 party was serving vanilla ice cream with tar syrup. I had some tar liquor at the
Finnish party at Interaction. It had a very intense flavor, like nothing else, so I had to taste the syrup. It was actually quite nice, with a light tar flavor and a refreshing pine taste. Not that it is displacing chocolate in my book, but I could see how people might consider it a special treat.

Saturday morning I rendezvoused with Jack Bell from Seattle. He’s not from Texas and I see him fairly often, but we had a lot to catch up on. We went out for a Mexican breakfast on the Riverwalk, then came back to the con and checked out the exhibits and the dealers room. I ran around, voted in site selection, said “hi” to John Purcell in the fanzine lounge, and said “hi” to the fans at the LonCon 3, Shamrokon, and the Nippon in 2017 tables. I bought a copy of “Emilie and the Hollow World” from Willie Siros and a copy of “The Best of Joe R. Lansdale” from Joe himself. Then Andrew and his bride Jackie got in from Austin. We toured the art show and did panels.

The can’t miss panel on Saturday was “The Howard and George Show,” featuring Texas’ own living cultural treasure Howard Waldrop. He brought along his oldest and best friend George, who is a longtime fan and is pretty popular. George apparently has written some books and has a show on cable somewhere, but he didn’t talk about that, sticking to more important things like comics and the first con where he and Howard actually met in person, after 10 years of being pen pals.

Saturday night I volunteered as a masquerade ninja. The masquerade went smoothly. The quality of the entries was
very high, which I’m sure made things tougher for the judges, but it was a great show. It was neat to have a backstage view. “Saucer Country” was by BASFA’s own Kevin Roche, Andrew Trembley, Julie Zetterberg, Greg Sardo, Jerry Majors Patterson, Ken Patterson, Chuck Serface, and Nova Mellow as “Daisy.” The title had to be based on the comic book series which was written by Master of Ceremonies Paul Cornell. But where the comic is a sinister story about aliens taking over the country, the masquerade entry had countryfied Martians wearing black and green cowboy hats with glowing tentacles, and saucer-shaped skirts with long tassels. They picked up awards for Close Encounters of the Texas Kind and Best in Class, Master Division. Former Bay Area fan Janice Gelb was in the Most Humorous Master Class entry. Janice lives in Melbourne now. Rebecca Hewett, Kevin Hewett, Serge Mailloux, and Janice appeared as redshirts and sang an adaptation of the “Dumb Ways to Die” public service announcement from the Melbourne Metro Trains. The singing (recorded by Rebecca) was excellent, and they were super funny.

There were too many wonderful costumes for me to describe them all here, but I got a good picture of Wendy Snyder as “Stinza Nickerson, Half-Horse,” and she won a Workmanship award for Best Engineering and the Judge’s Choice Presentation Award, both really well deserved.
The half-time performance by Leslie Fish was great. She was followed by magician Drew Heyen, who towered amiably in his steampunkish brown suit and top hat. After some technical difficulties with the microphones, Drew got going. His magic tricks were simple, and I could always predict what was going to happen, but I still couldn’t see how he did it, even from my vantage point to the side of the stage. Not bad.

Working the masquerade kept me there until 11 p.m. and I didn’t make it to the party floor until midnight. The LonCon 3 party was still going strong. The decorations featured a tube map on the walls, as in Karen Schaffer’s original concept, but with the stations named after places and ships in Iain Banks’ stories. It was a nice way to honor Banks and well done.

Sunday morning I got a call from Scott Bobo asking if I’d like a free breakfast. I’ve known Scott since 1992 when we worked on the MagiCon newszine together. That makes me a relative newcomer. I went over to the Hilton where Scott was rooming with Ed Scarborough and Terry Floyd. They go way back. Scott and Terry roomed together when they were going to college in Texas. Terry lives in the Bay Area but I don’t get to see enough of him. He’s a fanzine fan, a computer expert, and an all-around good guy. We had a nice breakfast at an outdoor table right on the Riverwalk.
Jay Lake was very active at the con. A film crew from Austin was presenting a documentary about him, he was presenting the Campbell (Not a Hugo) Tiara at the Hugos, and he was on the program. I contributed to the Kickstarter for the documentary and I will get the DVD, so I figured I did not need to get up extra early to see it in San Antonio, but I did want to see Jay. The “Cutting Edge Cancer Research” panel was maybe not the best title, but it was a good talk. Jay and Janet Freeman-Daily are both alive due to advanced treatments that seem to be working, at least for now, against the odds. They both have had to become experts in their disease. I’m not at all happy about the prospect of losing such bright and good people. I hope their treatments keep working for them, that there will be better treatments in time for them to make it to remission and full health. One thing I should note is that the audience was awesome. There were fans who were there because friends or family members who were dealing with cancer, or they were themselves. And there were fans from San Antonio and Houston who were working in medical research and could fill us in on the latest science.

Sunday night was the Hugo Awards. I was attending as a stunt acceptor for Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer, editors of “Banana Wings” which was nominated for Best Fanzine. Should they win, I would have to go up on stage and give a speech. Mark and Claire have been through this before, and
were not expecting to win. But I thought anything could happen, especially with “Banana Wings” which really is an excellent fanzine. I wanted to be prepared. So I spent some time writing a speech and sent it to Mark and Claire for their approval. Mark got back to me that they liked it, so I was all set. Technically they still hadn’t sent me a prepared speech, only approving one that I sent to them.

I took the Hugo awards very seriously this year. If I was going to be there as an acceptor, I should vote, and if I was going to vote, I should read all the nominated works. I managed to get through all the nominees in the fiction and fan categories before I ran out of time, so I voted only in those categories. It was a good experience. The overall quality of the nominees was very good. I made some happy discoveries which probably are not new to you, considering they were nominated for a Hugo, but I’m glad I read them. Of course, some were better than others, and I had my hopes that they would win. In particular, among the nominees for Best Fanzine, “The Drink Tank” had great fan writing, and “Journey Planet” had a really great concept and the best layout, but “Banana Wings” was excellent across the board,
with the best editing, great fan writing, art and layout. It totally deserved to win.

I dressed up in my best jacket and my tie with the rockets on it, and went off to the awards. The Hugo Awards does not have a formal dress code, but people like to dress up, and they were looking good. Takayuki Tatsumi and Mari Kotani were going to be presenting Seiun Award. They were resplendent in tuxedo and kimono. Chris Garcia was looking very sharp in what must be a new sports coat. James Bacon was looking even sharper in black tie and dangerously waxed mustachios. And Chuck Serface was back in the same room where he had been the previous night, only this time wearing a suit and tie instead of a saucer-shaped skirt and a LED-tentacled cowboy hat. All too soon, it was time for us to file in to the main hall.

Paul Cornell is no stranger to the Hugo Awards, having previously been a nominee, acceptor, and a presenter. He did a great job as Toastmaster. He moved things along, he knew when to be serious and when to be funny, and when he was funny, he was very funny. He had some great lines. One running gag was about the John W. Campbell (“Not a Hugo”) Award. Another was the fact that “smof” is a four-letter word, which can be handy when one needs to say a four-letter word in a polite context where some four-letter words might not be acceptable. I heard later that some smofs felt offended by the joke, but anyone who calls themselves a SMOF should be aware that the term “Secret Masters Of Fandom” has always been a silly joke from the beginning, and they should not take it, or themselves, too seriously.
A very nice touch by LoneStarCon 3 was to bring out Leslie Fish to sing “Hope Eyrie” (a.k.a. “The Eagle Has Landed”) for the Memoriam. I had already seen her sing it the night before at the Masquerade half-time, but I didn’t mind. It still gave me goosebumps.

It was nice to see Takayuki Tatsumi and Mari Kotani presenting the Seiun Award. I’m not sure why Glenn Glazer was up there with them. If it was because he wanted to show support for including the Seiun Award in the Hugo ceremony, good for him.

The Hugo base design by Vincent Villafranca was cast in bronze, with a globe in the center and astronauts and aliens and robots sitting around it reading books. The design was introduced with a stunning video by filmmaker John Davis (vimeo.com/74017386), much worth seeing.

All too soon the award for Best Fanzine came up, and the winner was ... SF Signal! I was not so much disappointed as baffled. I could understand losing to one of the many tentacles of Garcia-Bacon & Co., but aside from an awesome guest post by Kate Elliot, there was hardly anything in SF Signal that even resembled fan writing. At least it was nice to see how ecstatic the editors of SF Signal were to receive the award. The feelings of depression and despair that I was experiencing were only because I had gotten worked up with unrealistic expectations, just in case I might have been called to go up on stage.

In spite of the mostly disappointing results, there were some wonderful moments. When John Picacio won for Best Professional Artist, in his acceptance speech he made a stand as a Texan strongly for women’s rights. Robert Silverberg’s
performance as the presenter for Best Graphic Story was classic. And everyone was thrilled to see Pat Cadigan win Best Novelette for “The Girl-Thing Who Went Out for Sushi.”

After the awards it was announced that the main elevators were closed, nominees and acceptors should go to the freight elevators to get to the Hugo Loser’s Party, and everyone else should go down the escalators to the lobby and wait. In a group, the nominees and acceptors headed towards where the freight elevators might be. It wasn’t clear exactly where they were. Randall Shepherd, the LoneStarCon 3 chair, ran ahead to find them. Eventually they were found, and we lined up and waited. And waited. And waited. It turned out that none of them would come to our floor, because the hotel staff was using them for moving laundry, and laundry had priority. The con staff started negotiating with the hotel and we got an elevator. But first it needed to be used to take people with mobility issues down to the lobby. Because the main elevators were closed, there was no other way they could get off the third floor. This included the LoneStarCon 3 Guest of Honor, Norman Spinrad. I hope this is a vivid and permanent lesson to other cons, to never shut down all the elevators after a major event. Eventually we got up to the Hugo Loser’s Party, which was very nice, with the walls covered with white paper decorated to make it look like a space station, and with a NASA astronaut and NASA engineers talking to everyone.

“Arouse is Not the Past Tense of Arise” was a panel on grammar with Scott Edelman, Teresa Nielsen Hayden, and Janice Gelb. It was both very funny and packed with useful tips on grammar. I should have recorded the whole thing.
I made a last round of the exhibits and the dealers room. Mark Finn was tearing down the Robert E. Howard exhibit, although he seemed to be spending more time answering question from kids and pulling out rare books for them to see. I asked if I could get his picture. Mark and the other Robert E. Howard scholars did a ton of work for LoneStarCon 3 and it enriched the convention for many fans, definitely including me.

A Dalek was going down the main aisle blaring “WAIT!... WAIT!... WAIT!...” at passers-by.

Then it was time to tear down the art show. There were plenty of volunteers and it went very quickly and smoothly. The union workers at the loading dock were very helpful too. After the art show was torn down, I helped Charles Siros and a bunch of young fans take down the exhibits. Many of the exhibits used panels borrowed from ArmadilloCon and they needed to go in Willie’s rental truck back to Austin. After that, there wasn’t much left to do. I took my time sheet back to the volunteers office and they gave me a t-shirt. Usually when I volunteer I don’t log enough hours to get a t-shirt, which is no big deal, but this time I was pleasantly surprised. The shirt has a Darrell K. Sweet painting on the front. I can’t really describe it, but it has dinosaurs with rayguns and a riverboat and a fighter jet and a guy playing the trumpet and what looks like Mr. Sweet himself working at a computerized drafting table. There’s a lot going on, just like there was at LoneStarCon 3.
Lloyd Penney writes:

Looks like I lost track of time, and missed the deadline, so now I’ve got two issues to catch up with. Here’s some comments on issues 143 and 144 of SF/SF.

So many conventions, so little money. We’re definitely in that situation. Coming up for us a big scholarly SF gathering in Hamilton, just down the highway, a big “Doctor Who” event just north of Toronto, and Smofcon is in Toronto this year, and we can’t get to any of them. We’re already committed to go to SFContario 4 in November, but that will be our only convention for this fall/winter. Fingers crossed on Loncon 3.

Christopher responds:

There seem to be more events here in the Bay Area then before. It is sometimes nice to have decisions to make instead of wondering what you are going to be doing or only having a few chances to go to events per year. We have the Northern California Renaissance Faire for the next few weeks as well as Convolution in November and the Dickens Fair over the Christmas season. Unfortunately, there is no big “Doctor Who” event planned other than the PEERS dance back in June.

Westercon 66 proves you should be careful what you ask for, even in jest, because you might just get it. Even hoax Worldcon bids have come fairly close to winning … anyone remember I95 in ’95, or perhaps the Bermuda Triangle bid? Too close for many. You’re right in that the average age of those attending the conventions we like is getting higher and higher. When will we have no conventions to go to because we’re all too old to competently run them?

I think that there will be those who will come into the fold. There are events that have been around for more than 20 years. A lot of people grow up around those things and then become part of a family of sorts. I am optimistic that most of these conventions will be around in some form or other.

I’ve never been to a Nebula weekend, and I still don’t know how to go about bidding for a Nebula weekend in case I wanted to host it. Still, it seems like it could be a most enjoyable weekend. Perhaps one day…

Knowing a number of people who have put on conventions, be prepared for a lot of work. Everyone seems to have fun doing it, though.

Arrrr, there be pirates here!, and that gives me the chance to tell you that former Toronto fan, and current Vancouver fan and pirate Christina Carr, under the name of Captain Charity Ann Rackham, was one of 25 pirates admitted to the Order of Leviathan, the greatest honour pirate crews can bestow upon their peers.

Please be sure to forward our congratulations to her. Having been part of a guild, it is nice to get recognized for the hard work that many people put in to make things enjoyable for others.

Ah, once again, Worldcon is on, and I’m not there. I’d like to see John Purcell’s fanzine lounge and the displays and
programming within. As much as I said in my last letter that we planned to go to the upcoming Maker Faire, the admission prices have become prohibitive for us, so that $50 total we can find other uses for. The Murdoch Mysteries experience was a great time, I received a pocket watch as a prize for best male costume (check my Facebook page!) and we now have lots of new friends who came over for the event from Great Britain, France and Belgium. The job hunt still continues, but the resumes continue to flow out.

Congratulations on the win! We would love to go to Worldcon, but the travel just takes up a good bit of time and money. Hopefully in the next few years. Keep going on the job hunt, you will get something soon.

Minutes … yes, there is a move to eliminate all fan Hugos, mostly because many people in the older fan community want fanzine fans and editors and readers to win, and not those people who write for blogs, vlogs or other electronic communications. They want the rockets for their older community, as they always were in the past. Unfortunately for them, this is the present, and many of the older fans do not attend Worldcon any more, for one reason or another, which means their work is largely invisible to the Worldcon audience, and attendees will nominate and vote on what they do see. I doubt this will ever happen, and the older fans will feel pushed out, but time will march on, blogs will replace fanzines, and they will have to feel honoured by the FAAn Awards.

Eliminating the fan Hugos would be counter to the whole point of Worldcon, since it is essentially for the fans, rather than a group of industry people giving out the awards. Eliminating the awards congratulating the fans who support the whole industry would be sending the wrong message (you can vote for your favorite shows/movies/books, but you can’t vote for all of the things that give us lots of advertising.)

144 … There may be only a limited number of truly fresh ideas, so we need those ideas to generate related ideas that we can use. Even though I have on purpose kept my interests limited, to make sure I don’t spend too much money, some ideas have truly caught my eye, and I pay attention to it, even though I may not be involved in it. I think the similarities of DS9 and B5 were entirely coincidental, and as much of a Trek fan I may be, I prefer B5, and recently purchased the complete set of B5 DVDs.

The idea of original ideas/material is almost pointless since there are previous archetypes going back centuries (the first Superman, King Arthur and Hercules was Gilgamesh, for example). Neither the Justice League nor Marvel’s Avengers were original ideas since the first superhero team was the Justice Society of America back in the 1940s. There is always a lot of speculation when two similar entertainments come out at the same time that there is plagiarism or “stealing” someone’s idea, but most times it is purely coincidental. Both Marvel and DC Comics came out with similar concepts at the same time, such as the superhero teams (Justice League and Avengers) and a team of social outcasts (DC’s Doom Patrol and Marvel’s Uncanny X-Men), but they both had their first issues out on the stands within a couple of months of each other. Given the amount of planning for writing, art and distribution with a limited number of issues at the time, it was purely coincidental. There are examples of stolen ideas happening (“Lost In Space” being made by CBS after they questioned Gene Roddenberry about how to make a show like “Star Trek” while not picking it up being the prime example).
More pirates! A beachside picnic sounds like great fun; Yvonne and I have a lakeside picnic planned for tomorrow as this long weekend begins. And, another Steampunk event. Gala events are planned for both London and Ottawa in the new year, but unfortunately, they’re on the same time as Ad Astra in Toronto. There are hints of another big event in Toronto in 2014 or 2015, hints are all there is, but if it comes from the organizer of the Canadian National Steampunk Exhibition from a couple of years ago, it could be big fun. With that, I could reasonably expect to see the return of Professor Elemental.

**Sounds like Canada has some wonderful things going on besides hockey. Professor Elemental was at the Edwardian Ball a couple of years back. He was amazing.**

This weekend is the Milton Steam-Era Fair just down the highway in Milton, Ontario, and I believe there may be a Steampunk or two in the crowd, we do intend to go on Sunday, in our casual everydays, and enjoy what might be the only dry day of the weekend. The rest of the weekend will be a creative weekend for us, as we now have lots of raw materials to get started making earrings and jewelry, and other handicrafts for our dealers’ tables for the next six to nine months.

*Sometimes going to an event as a mundane is a great way to enjoy it since you can just sit back and be more involved in the patron experience. Hope you have fun.*

All done! And a nice big letter for you. Have yourselves a great Labour Day weekend, and we will, too. I will try my best to be more timely for the next issue.
Meeting 1204

August 26, 2013

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 at 8:00 - with pie and a side of Affleck
19 people attended
A party jar was established
The minutes of meeting 1202 were accepted as “the world’s finest”
There was no Treasurer
There was no Vice President
The President reported [redacted; due to move made and passed]

Announcements
Carole announced that she will have art in the Worldcon art show
Beth announced that her kidlet will be performing
Ric announced that a new fanboy planet podcast is out

Dave C announced a Lonestar con rumor - that Andy expanded upon
Adrienne announced that the Lonestar ghost walk has one open slot yet - it starts at the Alamo, meet there at 8:30
JC announced that Nerdvana Podcast has been very busy & welcomed back Stacy
Andy announced that they can only hand-carry in ballots, if you have them

Reviews
Yochanan reviewed the Asian Art museum exhibit as good and worth the price of admission & reviewed the new Percy Jackson film as awesome and worth seeing
Ric reviewed “World’s End” as very good & the soundtrack rocked [he’d bought it already] & thought the movie was worth full price, Adrienne followed and say it was worth matinee & Mo liked the character growth but thought it was a little paced, but a helluva lot of fun; then Ric reviewed “The Newsroom” as an enjoyable TV show
Mo reviewed the UK season finale of “Being Human” as ambiguous and worth watching
JC reviewed “Kickass 2” as they’ll go see it again - worth full price & reviewed “True Blood” as full of cliff-hangers & recommended
Adrienne reviewed the 5th season of “Being Human” as worth watching
Dave C reviewed “World’s End” as fun & worth full price
Carole reviewed health issues as sucking
Then we did auctions
We adjourned at 8:51 pm
And the rumor of the week was: “you only think this is being written down”

Meeting 1205
September 2, 2013
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 at 8:05 - with spawn
8 people attended
A party jar was established
The minutes of meeting 1204 were accepted as “skeleton crew”
There was no Treasurer
There was no Vice President
The President had nothing fannish to report - but did say “hi” to Kaitlyn [aka “Special K”] & Dara [aka “Mittle Miss Mad Hatter”] - JC & Beth’s kids
Announcements
Fred announced that Frederick Pohl had died today
JC announced that Nerdyana Podcast will post part 3 of their anniversary special on Wednesday & episode 17 will be about the Hugos
Reviews
Diane reviewed “Kushiel’s Dart” as fascinating and worth “BASFA price” & reviewed “Pathfinder” as a con freebie but it sucked her into it and was well-written & she’ll buy the next one
JC reviewed “The Wolverine” as he & Beth loved it, the plot was well-written & engrossing & worth full price - stay for the cookie
Dara reviewed an episode from “Clash of the Gods” about Perseus and Medusa as recommended & also advised avoiding “Who’s Next” based on its trailers
Diane reviewed “The Phone” - a japanese horror movie - as well done horror
Then we did auctions
We adjourned at 8:47 pm
And the rumor of the week was: “invasion of the knuckleheads”

BASFA Meeting 1205.2
2 September 2013
Trey Haddad, President
Chris Garcia, Vice President
Dave Gallaher, Treasurer
Galen Tripp, Sergeant at Arms
Barbara Johnson-Haddad, Secretary
Held at the Marriott San Antonio Rivercenter, outside the LoneStarCon 3 dead dog party
President and Secretary presiding at Sunnyvale meeting
Vice President absent
Treasurer presiding
Adrienne Foster, acting minute taker
Began around 8:19 p.m., waiting for people to straggle in
34 people attended
A party jar was established
Treasurer said we have money.
Norman Cates, our New Zealand ambassador, said the state of BASFA affairs in his home country are just fine.
Sports committee said the performance of the San Francisco Giants has been improving, but they’re still at the bottom of their division.

Announcements
Harrold II said that LSC3 still had a lot of water bottles to unload and they were available in dead dog party room.
Someone said that rumors about Icelandic bids were all lies.
John O. said the Worldcon he worked at was way too much fun.

Kevin R. said that the Best Buck in the Bay Area Rodeo will be happening in three weeks and he and Andy will be working at it.

Glenn announced that Spokane won the bid for Worldcon in 2015 and the Detroit bid will be hosting the NASFiC in 2014. On a sadder note, he also said that Frederick Pohl died that day.

Dave C. asked that the rep from Prime Books to please report the Tachyon table to pick up all the books they had left behind. He also noted that Andy Porter made a drive-by visit at our meeting.

Carole was happy to report that she sold most of her scarves at LSC3.

Mo lost her hat.

Reviews
I reviewed “World’s End” and was disappointed in the script. Mo followed on that she enjoyed it regardless.

Dave C. said that the restaurant, the County Line, which is located along the Riverwalk, is worth full price for its barbecue portions. I liked their homemade bread. Lynn liked the margueritas there. Glenn said herded the 26 peops of his LSC3 division there and said it was worth it. Bill, Carole, and Mo also gave it high praises.

Dave also said Maria Mia was horrible. Avoid it all costs.

Linda D. said Tony Roma’s was disappointing. Luciano’s was very good.

Lisa Harrigan said that Denny’s was not worth it.

Lynn said that Café del Sol made Maria Mia’s look good. She added that Saltgrass was great.

Blackfeather said Original Mexican Restaurant is open 24/7 and is decent.

Chris O. said Esquire Tavern is well stocked with knowledgeable staff. Dave G. concurred.

Kevin S. said his wife, Lisa, appears to have allergies to junipers, which means she couldn’t enjoy Riverwalk.

Glenn said this was an exceptionally busy Worldcon for him and was very proud of his staff. He is now vice chair for Sasquan, the 73rd World Science Fiction Convention.

Carole said she went to Fogo da Chao, a Brazilian steakhouse located at the street level by the Marriott Rivercenter, as pricey but very good. She also thought the LSC3 art show was good.

Bill Wright, this year’s DUFF delegate, has been enjoying his progress of the U.S. and American hospitality. Glenn followed on that the TAFF delegate, Jim Mowatt, left earlier and was also happy with his tour of the U.S.

We didn’t do auctions this time, so no new Worldcon bids were announced.

Rumor of the Week
“The San Antonio Police Department is considering using Daleks for crosswalk enforcement.”

We adjourned 9:09 p.m.
Meeting 1206

September 9, 2013

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 at 8 pm - with pie
29 people attended
A party jar was established
The minutes of meeting 1205 were accepted as “rejected” & the minutes of meeting 1205.2 were accepted as “wait ... wait ... wait”

The Treasurer reported that last week we took in $1.50 in the regular jar & $2.00 in the party jar
The Vice President reported that a new episode of “5 Cons” has been posted & another episode will be up “soon” - plus that there is no new “Drink Tank” out yet
The President had nothing fannish to report - but did say “hi” to Steve DeWinter who “found us randomly on the internet”

Announcements
Ken announced that the Legion of Rasselon meeting will be at the IHOP on Steven’s Creek near Lawrence on Friday Sept. 27

[evil] Kevin announced that Best Buck in the Bay will be Sept 21-22, with rodeo school on Sept 20 - check www.bayarearodeo.org
JC announced that Nerdyana Podcast will post part 1 of their worldcon episode this Wednesday
Ric announced that fanboy planet podcast, episode 324 is available now & announced that there’s a Kickstarter for Unwoman that ends in 15 hours
Dave G announced that Vinticon is still taking memberships and people died this week

Reviews
Lonestar was reviewed a lot and sounded like fun
Ric reviewed “The Sandman” by Gaiman as excellent, beautiful and worth buying it
Adrienne reviewed staying in San Antonio extra time with Mo as wonderful, even if she didn’t see any ghosts; Bill followed, advising to stay out of the heat of the day & that he enjoyed the riverwalk
Mo reviewed the heat in Texas as horrible & that perch were dying in the river - but she really loved the Alamo
Bill reviewed “The Wolverine” as having a very twisty plot & worth between matinee & full price - stay for the cookie
Yochanan reviewed “World’s End” as he liked it; reviewed “City of Bones” as very pretty & reviewed the Asian Art Museum as “go see it”
Brad reviewed Spinrad as he just finished reading some of his books and that they haven’t dated, then reviewed visiting the Johnson presidential library as worth it - but prepare ahead of time by calling them and letting them know what you want to look at
Dave C reviewed a trilogy of Ringo’s books, starting with “Ghost” as not very impressive. Josh reviewed Baxter & Pratchett’s “The Long Earth” as excellent except “for the last half of the last page” & reviewed the Ritz Carlton in Half Moon Bay as he is now forever spoiled for any other hotel as it was amazing. Ken reviewed a Campbell restaurant in Campbell that is now Sorelle as an Italian bistro that’s worth full price. Spike reviewed San Antonio as the food they visited was very good & that the 3-hour-each-way Robert E Howard bus tour was heroically worth it. Diane reviewed “the end of summer party” as superb and worth double full price. Then we did auctions. We adjourned at 10 pm. And the rumor of the week was: “wait ... wait ... wait”

Meeting 1207

September 16, 2013

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 at 8 pm - with a side of snide
26 people attended
A Nippon 2007 jar was established
The minutes of meeting 1206 were accepted as “walk sign is on - finally”
The Treasurer reported that last week we took in $4.75 in the regular jar & $18.76 in the party jar
The Vice President reported that there is a new “Drink Tank” out - but “you just can’t see it” - and “there are no things and I have 2 brains” - plus “Exhibition Hall” has a deadline this Saturday, so send him stuff - and “Beth cheats”
The President had nothing fannish to report

Announcements
Ken reminded that the Legion of Rasselon meeting will be at the IHOP on Steven’s Creek near Lawrence on Friday Sept 27
JC announced that Nerdvana Podcast will post part 2 of their Worldcon episode AND a young adult podcast this Wednesday

Aatheus announced that Sept 28 at DeAnza college will be National Plug-in Day

Dave C announced that Oct 15 is the amazon release of “The Case of the Time-Capsule Bandit - Randi Rhodes, Ninja Detective” by Octavia Spencer

[tall] Kevin announced that long-time fan Bobbie DuFault died over the weekend

Michael announced that Baycon’s charity has been selected and that Baycon needs staff - lots and lots of staff

[evil] Kevin announced that Best Buck in the Bay will be this weekend, Sept 21-22, with rodeo school on Sept 20 - check www.bayarearodeo.org - and also announced that there will be barbot this fall - at Oddfellows Hall on Oct 25-26 at a kick-off for Bay Area Science Fest - check barbot.us

Bradley announced that he got another positive review for his book from the “Journal of the Fantastic and the Arts” - and that today is National Guacamole day

Reviews

[tall] Kevin reviewed that Lisa is allergic to Worldcon [& cedar pollen] - & reviewed BASFA as an antidote to the “nattering nabobs of negativity in fandom” & reviewed driving back the 1800 miles as worth the trip - although “The Thing” was not worth the dollar spent - then several comments were made about traveling

Ric reviewed “The Star Wars” comic one from Dark Horse Comics - is a story based on Lucas’s original notes - it has wonderful art & is interesting & he reviewed “East of West” from Image Comics - as a post-apocolyptic western & he says that Kim Newman’s 4th in the “Anno Dracula” series is out

Howeird comments that it was NOT “Megapython versus Gatorade”

Then we did auctions

We adjourned at 9:24 pm

And the rumor of the week was: “for Worldcon to live - Facebook must die”
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: @sfscalendar

New listings are highlighted in red. Ongoing events are toward the back.

Weekends, September 14-October 13
Northern California Renaissance Faire
Casa de Fruta
10031 Pacheco Pass Hwy 152, Hollister, CA
norcalrenfaire.com
The annual Elizabethan faire.

$25

Thursdays-Saturdays, September 26-November 23
Shocktoberfest 14: Jack The Ripper
The Hypnodrome
575 10th Street, San Francisco
thrilpeddlers.com
Thrillpeddlers are pleased to announce our annual Halloween Extravaganza “Shocktoberfest 14: Jack the Ripper” – An Evening of Horror, Madness, Spanking and Song commemorating the 125th Anniversary of the Jack the Ripper murders in London.
8 pm $30-$35

Saturday-Sunday, September 28-29
Sac-Con
Scottish Rite Center
6151 H Street, Sacramento
www.sac-con.com
General Anime Convention $12

Saturday, September 28
History Park San Jose Viejito’s Car Show
History Park
1661 Senter Road, San Jose
historysanjose.org/wp/events
Classic car show with food, music and vendors sponsored by Viejito’s Car Club Silicon Valley Chapter.
10 a.m. - 4 p.m. $5

Saturday, September 28
SF in SF: Nick Mamatas & Michael Marshall Smith
The Variety Preview Room, 1st Floor, Hobart Building
582 Market Street, San Francisco
sfinsf.org
Reading followed by Q&A.
6:30 p.m. $5-10 suggested donation
**Saturday, September 28**

**Superhero Street Fair**  
Waterfront Boardwalk Oasis  
1700 Indiana Street, San Francisco  
superherosf.com  
Music and live acts in superhero-inspired street fair.  
2 p.m. to Midnight  $10-20 suggested donation

**Sunday, September 29**

**Japan Center Malls Anime Festival**  
Japantown Peace Plaza  
123 Post Street (block between Geary, Webster, Post and Laguana Streets), San Francisco  
sfjapantown.org/japan-center-malls-anime-festival  
A wonderful afternoon of Anime fun featuring singing, dancing, a ‘Peoples Choice’ Cosplay Contest, live drawing and more in the Japantown Peace Plaza.  
12 p.m. to 4 p.m.  Free

**Wednesdays-Sundays, October 2-20**

**It’s A Bird...It’s A Plane...It’s Superman presented by 42nd Street Moon**  
Eureka Theater  
215 Jackson Street, San Francisco  
www.theeurekatheatre.com/Home_Page.html  
42ndstreetmoon.org/superman  
The Man of Steel turns 75 this year and to celebrate, we’re opening our season with the daffy 1966 musical by the songwriters of *Bye Bye Birdie, Annie,* and *Applause.* Can Superman save Metropolis from his most devious foes? The out-of-this-world songs include *You’ve Got Possibilities, It’s Superman, You’ve Got What I Need, Baby, Ooh, Do You Love You,* and *Pow! Bam! Zonk!*  
$21-$75

**Fridays-Sundays, October 4-26**

**Firefly (Jaynestown): Live On Stage**  
The Dark Room Theater  
2263 Mission Street, San Francisco  
www.darkroomsf.com  
www.facebook.com/events/119065361601801  
Don’t miss this live rendition of *Firefly!* Come to The Dark Room Theater this October to discover the fate of Canton and its impromptu hero before it’s too late!  
$20

**Friday-Sunday, October 4-6**

**Big Bad Con**  
Hilton Oakland Airport  
One Hegenberger Road, Oakland  
www.bigbadcon.com  
RPG convention.  
$40

**Saturday, October 5**

**PEERS Steampunkoktoberfest Ball**  
Masonic Lodge of San Mateo  
100 N. Ellsworth Avenue, San Mateo  
peersdance.org  
Ball celebrating the Oktoberfest and Steampunk science with guests Charles Babbage and Ada Lovelace. Victorian Era dancing and music by Bangers and Mash.  
8 p.m.  $15 (advanced), $20 (at the door)

**Kraken Con**  
South San Francisco Conference Center  
255 S Airport Blvd, South San Francisco  
www.krakencon.com  
Convention featuring comics, cartoons and anime with a heavy emphasis on whimsy, imagination and the creative process.  
9 a.m. to 6 p.m.  $13 (until October 4), $15 (at the door)
Sunday, October 6
Angel Heart presented by Cal Performances
Hertz Hall
University of California-Berkeley Campus, Berkeley
calperfs.berkeley.edu/performances/2013-14/for-families/angel-heart.php
Angel Heart follows the story of a young girl whose heart has broken into a thousand pieces. She meets a guardian angel, who, during their travels in the night, enlists the help of spirits of the East, North, West, and South on his quest to mend her heart.
5 p.m. $36

Friday, October 11
SF in SF: Litquake, Super Stories of Heroes & Villians
The Variety Preview Room, 1st Floor, Hobart Building
582 Market Street, San Francisco
sfinsf.org
Reading followed by Q&A. Claude Lalumiere and authors TBA
6:30 p.m. $5-10 suggested donation

Saturday, October 12
Author Event with Gail Carriger
San Leandro Public Library
300 Estudillo Avenue, San Leandro
www.sanleandro.org/depts/library/default.asp
www.facebook.com/events/535328903182359
Reading followed by Q&A.
2 p.m. Free

Saturday-Sunday, October 12-13
Alternative Press Expo (APE)
Concourse Exhibition Center
635 8th St., San Francisco
www.comic-con.org/ape
Exposition focusing on independent, alternative and self-published comics and artists.
$15

Saturday-Sunday, October 12-13
Steam Fair and Harvest Festival
Roaring Camp Railroad
5401 Graham Road, Felton, CA
www.roaringcamp.com/events2#harvest_Fair
Kinetic Steam Works and Roaring Camp present The Steam Fair and Harvest Festival. View live steam generated inventions and gadgets that show the creativity and imagination of tinkerers and do-it-yourselfers. Peruse art creations by Scotts Valley Artisans. Participate in Heritage activities from the 1880’s. Child with train ticket can take home a free pumpkin.
Park Admission: Free, Train Ride: Check website for prices

Sunday, October 13
East Bay Mini Maker Faire
Park Day School
360 42nd St., Oakland
ebmakerfaire.wordpress.com
Small scale mini Maker Faire.
10 a.m. $20

Saturday, October 26
Bal-O-Ween Spooktacular
The Bal Theater
14808 East 14th Street, San Leandro
www.baltheatre.com
BAL-O-WEEN SPOOKTACULAR: Double Creature Feature of Films, ABBOTT & COSTELLO MEETS FRANKENSTEIN & The Cult Classic TALES FROM THE CRYPT DEMON KNIGHT, Come in Costume and enter to win our Costume Contest, Raffle of Prizes and so much more.
2 pm and 7 pm $12

Wednesday, October 30
Nerd Nite at Sea II: We’re Going To Need A Bigger Boat
USS Hornet
3 West Hornet Avenue, Alameda
www.bayareascience.org/festival/nerd-nite-at-sea-ii
Nerd Nite at Sea returns! And this year we’ve got a bigger boat: an aircraft carrier! The USS Hornet is an incredible museum of space and military history and technology that we’ll pack from bow to stern with lectures, science demos and activities, and beer!
6 pm to 10 pm $30
Friday-Monday, November 1-3
Convolution 2013
Hyatt Regency SFO
500 Leisure Lane, Burlingame
con-volution.com

Friday-Sunday, November 8-10
The Official Star Trek Convention by Creation Entertainment
Hyatt Regency San Francisco Airport
1333 Bayshore Highway, Burlingame
www.creationent.com/cal/st_sanfrancisco.html
Official Star Trek convention with many celebrities
$75

Thursday, November 14
The Intergalactic Nemesis Book One: Target Earth presented by Cal Performances
Zellerbach Hall
University of California-Berkeley Campus, Berkeley
A science fiction comic book come to life onstage as a vintage-style radio play, *The Intergalactic Nemesis* is a theater production single-handedly defining the new genre of “live-action graphic novel.” The family-friendly show features live actors, hand-drawn comic-book artwork projected two stories high, and fun retro Foley sound effects, with a live keyboard score. The story, packed with pop culture references to cult favorites like *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Star Wars*, pits three heroes against a force of alien sludge monsters set to invade Earth, in a spectacle the *Austinist* describes as “totally nuts and a ton of fun!” 8 p.m.

$100

Friday-Sunday, November 8-10
Conquest Avalon
Sacramento Red Lion Hotel Woodlake Conference Center
500 Leisure Lane, Sacramento
www.conquestsac.com
Tabletop gaming convention.
$50

Saturday, November 2
PEERS Le Bal des Vampires
Alameda Elks Lodge
2255 Santa Clara Ave, Alameda
peersdance.org
The annual vampire-themed event with two floors of dancing featuring Bangers and Mash and Nightfall Club, halftime entertainment skit show and Victorian parlour.
6:30 p.m. $25 (until October 13), $30 (until November 1)

Saturday-Sunday, November 16-17
Sci-Fi X Fest Convention
The Bal Theater
14808 East 14th Street, San Leandro
www.baltheatre.com
The Historic BAL Theatre and Bay Area Film Events presents the new annual Sci-fi X Fest Convention. Harken back to the early days of sci-fi Conventions! Where you could enjoy the dealers, films, panels, speakers, celebrity guests and fun in a more intimate environment! Bay Area Film Events and the Historic BAL Theatre bring you a space-age blast.

$18 and up

Wednesday-Sunday, November 6-10
Basil Twist: Dogugaeshi presented by Cal Performances
Zellerbach Hall
University of California-Berkeley Campus, Berkeley

An artist of wild imagination and singular poetic vision, puppeteer Basil Twist creates absorbing works that connect classic stories with profound music and mesmerizing visuals.

His meditative *Dogugaeshi* explores an ancient Japanese art, where unseen puppeteers deftly manipulate hand-painted screens to reveal marvellous characters and landscapes, accompanied by Yumiko Tanaka on shamisen.

Various times $48 and up

A science fiction comic book come to life onstage as a vintage-style radio play, *The Intergalactic Nemesis* is a theater production single-handedly defining the new genre of “live-action graphic novel.” The family-friendly show features live actors, hand-drawn comic-book artwork projected two stories high, and fun retro Foley sound effects, with a live keyboard score. The story, packed with pop culture references to cult favorites like *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Star Wars*, pits three heroes against a force of alien sludge monsters set to invade Earth, in a spectacle the *Austinist* describes as “totally nuts and a ton of fun!” 8 p.m.

$100
Saturday, November 16
SF in SF: Kim Stanley Robinson & Cecelia Holland
The Variety Preview Room, 1st Floor, Hobart Building
582 Market Street, San Francisco
sfinsf.org
Reading followed by Q&A.
6:30 p.m. $5-10 suggested donation

Saturday, November 16
GBACG Prohibition Speakeasy Crawl
Various, San Francisco
www.gbacg.org/gbacg-calendar.html
Break out the beaded gowns and rolled down stockings. On this chauffeured joy ride through San Francisco, taste some of Prohibition’s finest forbidden delights. Costume: 1920’s.
Check website for price

Weekends, November 23-December 22
The Great Dickens Christmas Fair and Victorian Holiday Party
dickensfair.com
Cow Palace
2600 Geneva Avenue, Daly City
Victorian Christmas Card come to life with Charles Dickens characters come to life in London.

Tickets on Sale in September, check website for prices

Sunday, December 8
Sac-Con
Scottish Rite Center
6151 H St, Sacramento
www.sac-con.com
Comic, toy, and anime show, $10 early bird entry at 9 a.m.
10 a.m. $6

Saturday, December 28
GBACG Holiday Bustle Tea
Palace Hotel
2 New Montgomery Street, San Francisco
www.gbacg.org/gbacg-calendar.html
Back by popular demand! A holiday bustle tea for the most fashionable of New York Society. Once again at the Garden Court in the Palace Hotel in San Francisco. Costume: 1870-1890.
Check website for price

Friday-Sunday, January 3-5, 2014
Sac-Anime
Sacramento Convention Center
1400 J St, Sacramento
www.sacconventions.com
Anime show.
Check website for ticket prices

Friday, January 17, 2014
Edwardian World’s Faire
The Regency Ballroom
1300 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco
edwardianball.com/2014-events
Fair inspired by the artwork of Edward Gorey. 8 p.m. - 2 a.m. see website for pricing (tickets on sale October 31)

Saturday, January 4, 2014
PEERS 12th Night Ball
Alameda Elks Lodge
2255 Santa Clara Avenue, Alameda
peersdance.org
Ball celebrating the end of the Christmas season with guests from Charles Dickens’s novels, a reading by Charles Dickens and Victorian Era dancing and music by Bangers and Mash.
8 p.m. $15 (advanced), $20 (at the door)

Thursday-Monday, January 16-20, 2014
Further Confusion 2014: FurCon Vs. The World
furcon.org/2014
San Jose McEnery Convention Center
150 W. San Carlos Street, San Jose
Anthropomorphic costuming convention
$45 (until June 30), $50 (until December 31)
Saturday, January 18, 2014
Edwardian Vendor Bazaar Daytime Shopping
The Regency Sutter Room
1270 Sutter Street, San Francisco
edwardianball.com/2014-events
12 p.m. - 5 a.m. see website for pricing (tickets on sale October 31)
The Edwardian Ball
The Regency Ballroom
1300 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco
edwardianball.com/2014-events
Ball inspired by the artwork of Edward Gorey.
8 p.m. - 2 a.m. see website for pricing (tickets on sale October 31)

Saturday-Sunday, January 25-26, 2014
Animation on Display
Hyatt Regency San Francisco Airport
1333 Bayshore Highway, Burlingame
www.aodsf.org
Celebrating Japanese animation (anime), video games, recent American cartoons, and their related interests.
$25 (till September 14), $30 (till January 1), $35 (at convention)

Saturday, February 1, 2014
PEERS Middle Earth Ball
Alameda Elks Lodge
2255 Santa Clara Avenue, Alameda
peersdance.org
Ball inspired by “The Hobbit” and “Lord of the Rings” with music by Celtic-fusion rock band Avalon Rising.
8 p.m. $15 (advanced), $20 (at the door)

Saturday, February 8, 2014
GBACG A Venetian Carnival
Location TBD
www.gbacg.org/gbacg-calendar.html
Enjoy an evening of appetizers, desserts and dazzling feats of skill in the glittering atmosphere of the Venetian Carnivale.
Costume: 18th Century, all classes or 18th Century Fancy Dress. Masks required!
8 p.m. $15 (advanced), $20 (at the door)

Friday-Monday, February 14-17, 2014
DunDraCon
San Ramon Marriott
2600 Bishop Drive, San Ramon
www.dundracon.com
Gaming convention
Check website for price

Friday-Monday, February 14-17, 2014
Pantheacon
San Jose Doubletree
2050 Gateway Place, San Jose
pantheacon.com
Pagan convention. This year’s theme is Networks of Community and Diversity, Pleasure & Service.
$55 (Till September 1), $65 (till January 1), $75 (after January 1)

Friday-Sunday, February 21-23, 2014
Potlatch 23
Sainte Claire Hotel
302 South Market Street, San Jose, California
potlatch-sf.org
Literary SF convention supporting Clarion West.
$50

Saturday, March 1, 2014
PEERS Gotham City Black and White Ball
Masonic Lodge of San Mateo
100 N. Ellsworth Avenue, San Mateo
peersdance.org
Ball held at Stately Wayne Manor with familiar guests in black tie featuring Swing Era dancing and music by Sarah and Swingtime.
8 p.m. $15 (advanced), $20 (at the door)

Friday-Sunday, March 7-9, 2014
Consonance 2014
Crowne Plaza San Jose/Silicon Valley
88 Bellew Drive, Milpitas
consonance.bostoncalifornia.com
Filk convention convention. Guests: Margaret Davis, Kristoph Klover, Johathan Turner, Robin Holly, Mark Osier, Rika Koerte
$50 (until February 14)
SF/SF #145 89  October 2013

Friday-Sunday, March 7-9, 2014
FOGcon 2014
Walnut Creek Marriott
2355 North Main Street, Walnut Creek
fogcon.org
Literary SF/F convention. Theme: Secrets.
$65

Friday-Sunday, March 7-9, 2014
Wizard World Sacramento Comic Con
Sacramento Convention Center
1400 J Street, Sacramento
www.wizardworld.com/home-sacramento.html
General comic book and pop culture convention
Advance: $65, Onsite: $75

Friday-Sunday, March 28-30, 2014
Conquest SAC
Sacramento Red Lion Hotel Woodlake Conference Center
500 Leisure Lane, Sacramento
www.conquestssac.com
Tabletop gaming convention.
See website for pricing packages

Saturday-Sunday, March 29-30, 2014
Twisted Terror Convention
Sacramento Doubletree by Hilton
2001 Point West Way, Sacramento
twistetterrorconvention.com
www.facebook.com/TwistedTerrorConvention/info
Horror/Sci-fi convention.
$45

Saturday, April 5, 2014
PEERS Downton Abbey Ball
Alameda Elks Lodge
2255 Santa Clara Avenue, Alameda
peersdance.org
Ball (circa 1910-1920) hosted by the Earl and Countess of Grantham featuring vintage ballroom dance music performed by Bangers and Mash.
8 p.m. $15 (advanced), $20 (at the door)

Saturday-Sunday, May 3-5, 2014
Corflu 31
Holiday Inn Koger Conference Center
1021 Koger Center Boulevard, Richmond, VA
corflu.org
Fanzine fandom convention.
$80

Saturday, May 3, 2014
PEERS Once Upon A Time: A Fairy Tale Masquerade Ball
Masonic Lodge of San Mateo
100 N. Ellsworth Avenue, San Mateo
peersdance.org
Fairy tale and fantasy inspired ball featuring vintage ballroom dance music performed by Bangers and Mash.
8 p.m. $15 (advanced), $20 (at the door)

Friday-Monday, May 23-26, 2014
KublaCon
Hyatt Regency San Francisco Airport
1333 Bayshore Highway, Burlingame
www.kublacon.com
West Coast’s largest gaming convention.
Pricing TBA

Saturday-Sunday, May 17-18, 2014
Big Wow Comicfest
San Jose McEnery Convention Center
150 W. San Carlos Street, San Jose
bigwowcomicfest.com
Comics convention.
Pricing TBA

Friday-Monday, May 23-26, 2014
### Saturday, June 7, 2014
**PEERS Space Cowboy’s Ball**  
Alameda Elks Lodge  
2255 Santa Clara Avenue, Alameda  
peersdance.org  
Browncoat inspired ball featuring vintage ballroom dance music performed by Bangers and Mash.  
8 p.m. $15 (advanced), $20 (at the door)

### Friday-Sunday, June 27-29, 2014
**Evolution Expo 2014**  
Oakland Marriott City Center  
1001 Broadway, Oakland  
[sciencefictionentertainment.com/event-attendees/evolution-expo-overview](sciencefictionentertainment.com/event-attendees/evolution-expo-overview)  
Convention about hard science in science fiction  
$50

### Thursday-Monday, August 14-18, 2014
**LonCon 3**  
International Conference Centre, ExCel, London Docklands  
[www.loncon3.org](www.loncon3.org)  
The 72nd World Science Fiction Convention.  
$170 (until September 30)

### Sundays
**Cloondara Fighter Practice**  
Golden Gate Park  
47th Avenue @ Fulton, San Francisco  
[www.westkingdom.org](www.westkingdom.org)  
The Shire of Cloondara (San Francisco, CA) holds fighter practice Sundays at 12:00 p.m. (if there are no major SCA events and the weather permits)  
12 p.m. Free

### San Francisco Ghost Hunt Walking Tour
**Begins:** Queen Anne Hotel  
1590 Sutter at Octavia, San Francisco  
[www.sfghosthunt.com](www.sfghosthunt.com)  
Closed Mondays & Tuesdays, and on November 21-22 for Thanksgiving.  
7-10 p.m. $20

### Nightly Nerd Show
**KCSF Radio, 90.9 FM**  
[nightlynerdshow.tumblr.com/](nightlynerdshow.tumblr.com/)  
Radio show covering nerdy topics  
5-6 p.m.

### VIZ Cinema
**1746 Post Street, San Francisco**  
[www.newpeopleworld.com/films](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.

### Ongoing
**Cartoon Art Museum**  
655 Mission Street, San Francisco  
[www.cartoonart.org](www.cartoonart.org)  
Current exhibitions: Chuck Jones, Drawing on Imagination (till May 5)  
11-5 p.m. $6 (Closed Mondays)

**The Walt Disney Family Museum**  
104 Montgomery Street, San Francisco  
[www.waltdisney.org/](www.waltdisney.org/)  
Current exhibitions: Alice in Wonderland starts May 1.  
10-6 p.m. $20 (Closed Tuesdays)

### Daily
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**Bad Movie Night**
The Dark Room Theater  
2263 Mission Street, San Francisco  
www.darkroomsf.com  
Featuring bad movies old and new.  
8 p.m.  
$5  

**Sakuramento Anime Society**  
Rancho Cordova Library  
9845 Folsom Boulevard, Rancho Cordova  
www.saclibrary.org  
Meets every Sunday to watch old and new anime and anime music videos, play collectible card games, practice artwork and make AMVs.  
3-6 p.m.  

**East Bay Strategy Games Club**  
EndGame  
921 Washington Street, Oakland  
www.endgameoakland.com/event-calendar  
Various games played throughout the week, check website for times and games.  
Free  

**SF Games**  
Taqueria San Jose, 2830 Mission Street, San Francisco (Fridays, 7 p.m.)  
Zephyr Cafe, 3643 Balboa Street, San Francisco (Sundays, 2 p.m.)  
www.sfgames.org/  
SF Games is a collective name for a bunch of people who get together and play board games and card games every week.  

**Mondays**  

**Bay Area Science Fiction Association**  
Coco’s  
1206 Oakmead Parkway, Sunnyvale  
www.basfa.org  
8 p.m.  
Free  

**Sacramento Science Fiction/Fantasy Book Club**  
Midtown Creperville  
1730 L Street, Sacramento  
www.sacgeeks.com  
A laid-back, friendly social club for people to discuss, recommend, share and trade their favorite SF and fantasy books. NOT a book-of-the-month club.  
6:30 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**  

**Principality of Mists Fighter Practice**  
Twin Creeks Sports Complex  
969 Caribbean Drive, Sunnyvale  
www.westkingdom.org/as46/mar/sunnyvale-fighter-practice  
SCA event. Non-members must remember to fill out a waiver form. In case of rain, call from 3 pm on to determine of the facility will be closed that day.  
7 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.  
Free  

**Wednesdays**  

**Steam Federation - Bay Area Steampunk Society**  
Various - check website or Facebook page for information  
steam-federation.com/%20cal2.html  
www.facebook.com/groups/steamfederation/  
General gathering for craftwork, discussions and general fun.  
Free
Thursdays

**CAS: NightLife**
The California Academy of Sciences
55 Music Concourse Drive, Golden Gate Park,
San Francisco
www.calacademy.org/events/nightlife/
Every Thursday night, the Academy opens its doors for NightLife, a chance for adults to explore the museum in a whole new light. Dance to some of San Francisco’s most popular DJs, enjoy food and cocktails, and mingle while you delve into the Academy’s world-class exhibits and get up close and personal with aquarium critters.
6 p.m. - 10 p.m. $12 (21+)

**Fanboy Planet Podcast**
Cafe Stritch
374 South First Street, San Jose
www.fanboyplanet.com
Live from Cafe Stritch, it’s the Fanboy Planet Podcast with Planeteers, Derek McCaw, Ric Bretschneider and Nate Costa.
7 p.m. Free

**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

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.

**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

**Foothill Anime**
Building 5015, Foothill College
Los Altos Hills
foothill.anime.net
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

**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

**The Bawdy Caste Presents “The 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

**Barely Legal Presents “The Rocky Horror Picture Show”**
Camera 3 Cinema
288 South Second Street, San Jose
barelylegal.rhps.org/
Barely Legal provides the shadow cast for the South Bay for the classic midnight movie every first Saturday of the month in Downtown San Jose.
Midnight

Fridays-Mondays

**Foothill Anime**
Building 5015, Foothill College
Los Altos Hills
foothill.anime.net
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

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<tr>
<th>Event Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time Warp Cartel Presents “The Rocky Horror Picture Show”</td>
<td>The Vine Cinema 1722 First Stree, Livermore, CA</td>
<td><a href="http://www.timewarpcartel.com/">www.timewarpcartel.com/</a> Time Warp Cartel provides the hijinx for the East Bay and Tri-Valley area of the classic midnight movie every first Saturday of the month in Downtown Livermore.</td>
<td>93 October 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>QSF&amp;F Book Club</td>
<td>Borderlands Books 866 Valencia, San Francisco</td>
<td><a href="http://www.borderlands-books.com/about_events.html">www.borderlands-books.com/about_events.html</a> Meets the second Sunday of the month.</td>
<td>5 p.m.</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<td>East Bay Star Wars Club</td>
<td>Central Perk 10086 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito</td>
<td>510-558-7375 <a href="http://www.facebook.com/groups/35116614719/">www.facebook.com/groups/35116614719/</a> Meets the second Friday of every month.</td>
<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fantastic Frontiers</td>
<td><a href="http://www.freewebs.com/fantasticfrontiers/">www.freewebs.com/fantasticfrontiers/</a> Social club for Sacramento County sci fi/fantasy fans usually meets the second Saturday of the month. Check website for meeting times and locations.</td>
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<td>No-Name Anime</td>
<td>Saratoga Library 13650 Saratoga Avenue Saratoga</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nnanime.com">www.nnanime.com</a> Anime screenings usually take place on the second Saturday of the month.</td>
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<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>SF Browncoats</td>
<td>Cafe Murano 1777 Steiner Street, San Francisco</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sfbrowncoats.com">www.sfbrowncoats.com</a> SF Firefly/Serenity fans usually meet up on the second Saturday of the month.</td>
<td>Noon</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<td>Science Fiction and Fantasy Book Club</td>
<td>Borderlands Books 866 Valencia, San Francisco</td>
<td><a href="http://www.borderlands-books.com">www.borderlands-books.com</a> Meets the third Sunday of the month. Please contact Jude at <a href="mailto:jfeldman@borderlands-books.com">jfeldman@borderlands-books.com</a> for more information.</td>
<td>6 p.m.</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>Night of the Living Book Club</td>
<td>Books, Inc.- Mountain View 301 Castro Street, Mountain View</td>
<td><a href="http://www.booksinc.net/night-living-book-club">www.booksinc.net/night-living-book-club</a> Monthly book club discusses classic and contemporary selections from suspense, thriller, and horror fiction genres. Meets every third Sunday of each month.</td>
<td>5 pm</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>USS Defiance</td>
<td>5026 Don Julio Blvd, Sacramento 1566 Howe Ave, Sacramento</td>
<td><a href="http://www.myspace.com/2121978">www.myspace.com/2121978</a> Star Trek fan group meets the third Friday of the month.</td>
<td>7 p.m.</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<td>USS Northern Lights</td>
<td>sites.google.com/site/ussnorthernlights Contact <a href="mailto:firstjedi2000@yahoo.com">firstjedi2000@yahoo.com</a> for specifics. The 'Lights is a chapter of Starfleet International and a swell group of science fiction fans. We do more than Trek. Usually meets the third Friday of the month, with social event TBD.</td>
<td>7 p.m.</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>Micro Gods, Inc.</td>
<td>Berkeley Public Library, West Branch 1125 University Ave, Berkeley</td>
<td>mgisciaf.angelfire.com groups.yahoo.com/group/MGIFamilyClub/ Family Club for fans of Science Fiction, Fantasy, Movie, Anime &amp; Manga. Meets every 3rd Saturday, please check Yahoo group for updates.</td>
<td>1 p.m. - 5 p.m.</td>
<td>Free</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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  

Sci-Fi/Fantasy Book Club  
Inklings Books and Things  
1855 41st Avenue, Capitola  
www.inklingsbooksandthings.com/  
Meets every fourth Tuesday of each month.  
6 pm  
Free  

Sci-Fi Book Group with Kym  
Barnes & Noble  
El Cerrito Plaza, 6050 El Cerrito Plaza, El Cerrito  
store-locator.barnesandnoble.com/store/2113  
Meets the fourth Friday of the month.  
7 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.  
7:00 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  

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  

Queered Science Book Club  
Au Coquelet Restaurant  
2000 University Avenue, Berkeley  
queeredscience.weebly.com  
www.facebook.com/groups/qsbooks/  
Monthly book club that focuses on science fiction, fantasy, and magical realism that includes trans*, queer, genderqueer, and strong female protagonists and themes. Meets the last Saturday of each month.  
4:30 PM  
Free  

Are you up-to-speed on a lot of the wonderful fannish events and activities that go on in the Bay Area? If so, we would very much appreciate your help as our new calendar editor for SF/SF. We do have a list of organizations we cover so you won’t have to start from scratch. But we would also like to build on this list if you know of more events that we can cover going forward. Contact Jean Martin at SFinSF@gmail.com if you’d like to volunteer or if you have any questions.
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<td>BA Role-Playing Soc</td>
<td>CAS: NightLife</td>
<td>SF Games</td>
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<td>Alternative Press Expo</td>
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<td>SF/F Book Club</td>
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<td>Queered Science Book Club</td>
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