Science Fiction/San Francisco

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September 2014

Xena
Potlatch
Theatre
Space Cowboys
Pirates
Evolution
J-Pop
Stockton
WW I
Westercon
...and more!
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By Jean Martin
Editor-in-Chief

So the first two-thirds of 2014 has come and gone and we only have the four “ber” months left. I haven’t been able to write as much so far this year due to some changes in my career as well as going to a lot of events not only in the Bay Area but out of town as well. Being too busy with events doesn’t leave much time for writing about them! I’ve finally caught up on pictures, which is the first stage of my writing process. I take photos instead of notes as it’s quicker, easier to remember and also more fun and sociable.

Luckily, we seem to have been having a good run of receiving articles from our regular contributors as well as new ones who’ve joined the SF/SF family. Christopher has also been prolific of late as he’s been going to even more events than I have.

Anyway, in this issue I’ve written about two conventions I went to way back in February. The Xena Convention and Potlatch both of which I’d never previously been to. I’ve also written a piece with theatre reviews. I’ve gone to nine so far this year, which is an unusually high number. But I just had to see Baryshnikov at the Berkeley Rep, my friend Cordelia Willis was in two productions (“Spamalot” and “Mikado”), there was a “Star Trek” and “Doctor Who”-themed Gilbert and Sullivan opera, Stanford had the “War of the Worlds” radio drama, Lamplighters was playing my favorite G&S show “Pirates of Penzance,” there was a Speakeasy interactive theatre I was curious about, and I got to go to New York City to see Kenneth Branagh in “Macbeth” and Neil Patrick Harris in “Hedwig and the Angry Inch.” And I already have two tickets for plays in London and two more here in the Bay Area later this year.

The one new event so far that I chose to miss due to being overbooked but really wanted to go was Evolution Expo. Fortunately, we have someone covering that in this issue. I missed BayCon and Clockwork Alchemy last Memorial Day weekend too. Chris has articles on Pirate Fest, which I always seem to miss, and the PEERS Space Cowboys Ball, which is always a lot of fun. Lots of friends went to Loncon in England and Shamrokon in Ireland recently, and I’ve been living vicariously through them from their Facebook posts. I’m hoping we can get some coverage of Loncon in the next issue.

I’m in the process of writing a more comprehensive piece about my New York trip as well as a roundup of six events from the first half of the year that haven’t been covered yet. But these will be in the October issue.

There were some events that are fannish that I won’t be writing about but I think are worth mentioning here. I went to a friend’s intimate Time Traveler’s Tea with tea, of course, and dancing. A bigger event was the Queen + Adam Lambert concert, which was great especially since I’d never seen Queen before and I do like Adam Lambert. Something Chris
and I did as a couple recently was going for tea at Tyme for Tea in Fremont, a block away from the Silent Film Museum, which we finally were able to tour.

There’s been a lot of “Doctor Who” in my life lately with my friends and I doing a “Doctor Who” masquerade entry at Comic-Con. Then we were part of a “Doctor Who” music video shoot for Kat Robichaud who was a contestant in “The Voice.” For the premiere of Season 8, Peter Capaldi’s debut, Christopher and I went to Ireland’s 32 in San Francisco to see it with the Doctor Whovians in the Bay Area Meetup group. We also saw it two days later on the big screen at the San Mateo Century 12 wearing our the Comic-Con masquerade costumes.

As far as the Twelfth Doctor, no spoilers here, I thought he was great. But I’ve been a fan of Peter Capaldi since seeing him in “Lair of the White Worm” in 1988 and in “Neverwhere” in 1996. I even saw him on Broadway in 1998 in “The Judas Kiss.” More recently, he’s been fantastic in “World War Z” and “The Musketeers.” However, I had three major issues with the script, which I thought in one place was mean, in another was cliche-ridden and in another manipulative. Still, I love the more dramatic and cinematic look and feel of the show and am hopeful that the rest of the season will improve. In fact, I found the episode a whole lot better the second time around on the big screen with no commercials.

With Comic-Con now behind me, I have a little bit of time before we head off the U.K. for the Jane Austen Festival. So I’m writing up a storm. We will have a couple of Comic-Con reviews from me and Christopher as well as on off-Comic-Con report from Peter Lee in our next issue. What I’d like to say right now, though, is after considering all the preparation, sewing, issues, long lines, etc., my return to Comic-Con after nine years was an amazing experience. The con itself was fun, but performing in the masquerade, and our “Doctor Who” group unexpectedly winning Judge’s Choice (second place), was a total high point in my life.

That’s pretty much what I’ve been doing recently, is going after bucket list-type experiences. With several people I know passing away, including a childhood friend, and some folks in fandom, I’ve been feeling like I have to take advantage of opportunities as they come my way. Next on our list is Dragon Con, which neither of us has gone to. And with my 50th looming on the horizon, I have some initial, albeit overly optimistic, plans to go with friends to the Carnivale in Venice.

However, I think next year we’ll take it easy a bit. To recover my energy and start saving up again as we don’t want to run out of money for retirement either! The Jane Austen Festival in Bath, a major item on my bucket list, does not come cheap. Unfortunately, our plan to go see the Doctor Who Experience in Cardiff, only an hour away, has been derailed by the exhibit being closed while we’re in Bath. In fact, it’ll be closed the entire month of September for renovations to update it for the new Doctor. While I’m super happy about Peter Capaldi taking over Matt Smith (who I really only liked in his very first episode), I’m very disappointed that we won’t get to see it this time. We’ll have to go back for it for sure, but that’s another big expense we were hoping to avoid.

Being an active fan is an expensive hobby, but so worth it! Carpe diem! And I hope your two-thirds of the year has been great and that the remaining months will be even more so.
Lloyd Penney writes:

Many thanks for issue 154 of SF/SF, just as the busiest time of the year is on its way. Summer seems to be the time when fandom around here slows down a little bit, but looks like you bunch speed up! More comments follow...

Christopher writes:

This is the time when most people will actually venture outside since it is not raining or miserable. Since places get snow, it is easier to keep the costumes cleaner/drier I think. Clockwork Alchemy sounds very good, and with the numbers it got, it looks to have a bright future. I'd be there just for the tea. I have suggested to the local anime convention (Anime North) that perhaps they could sponsor a steampunk convention, the way Fanime does, but they are unfamiliar with steampunk, and the NOs seem to be automatic. I just want a steampunk convention to go to, and we might be going to the annual one in Michigan, Steamtopia, next year, just to have the experience.

My mother has been to a few in Milwaukee. That might be something you could make as well. Clockwork Alchemy grew out of a few panels that they had one year at Fanime dedicated to anime examples of steampunk. That could be a way to go.

I have taken the train to conventions before, and it is the most comfortable way of travelling, especially for the driver in the family, which in my case is Yvonne. We've gone to cons in Ottawa, Montreal, Rochester and Detroit by train, and we're looking into doing more of that in the future. VIA Rail doesn't seem to care what you bring aboard, for each car has a luggage area you can half-fill if you wish.

Taking the train sounds like fun. It would definitely be convenient to bring all the luggage that is needed since a couple of costumes and props can take up a whole suitcase by itself. We will be doing that when we go to the Jane Austen Festival in Bath, England, in September.

Coming up for us … this coming weekend is a fannish pool party, usually at the end of the year, but this year fairly early in the season, and we will happily take it, and enjoy.

I am imagining swimsuit versions of characters. Marvel did a few issues of a Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue-type magazine with their characters.

In just over a week, we're off to the city of Hamilton for a single-day membership at ConBravo!, an annual con we've never been to before. Now that we know the people who run it, we thought to see if it's a con we might like to go to regularly, and maybe see what it's like to be a vendor there. That is actually how I went to my first convention back in 2007. I just went for a day.

August sees the Coldwater Steampunk Festival in Coldwater, Ontario, and Suburban Steam, another steampunk bazaar. In September, it's the Grand Canadian Steampunk Exposition in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, just across the river from Youngstown, New York. We can only afford a
single-day membership, so we will go there, but will sadly miss out on Abney Park, Steam-Powered Giraffe, Jardín Mécanique and Professor Elemental. If this event happens a second time, perhaps we will go for the full weekend.

That is a nice array of steampunk events in your area. There is one in San Diego and another in Seattle, with a couple in the deserts of Reno and Salt Lake City. I got the chance to see Abney Park at Steamstock a couple of years back and Professor Elemental at the Edwardian Fair. I missed Steam-Powered Giraffe when they were at Clockwork Alchemy last year as I was out of the country for work. I have not had the chance to hear Jardín Mécanique.

Anyway, I think I am done and caught up with you once again. I keep finding little bit of time here and there to write letters … the jobs are challenging, shall we say, but at least they’ve saved us from financial disaster. Many thanks for your continuing good works on this fine fanzine, and I will continue to look for more of the same.

Lloyd Penney writes:
First of all, happy second anniversary to you both! (Good thing Facebook tells me these things…)

Christopher writes:
Thank you.

Second of all, thank you for Science Fiction/San Francisco 153, and third of all, here are some comments on said issue…

I understand how you feel about conventions. We still enjoy them, and our financial problems (now being solved, with both of us working again) kept us from travelling afield to conventions in Montréal or Buffalo or Rochester, but now, we are going for the Saturday only, and eliminating the hotel costs altogether. This gives us more time for other activities and responsibilities. Just because you’ve now got the money, doesn’t mean you have to spend it. We’re now at the age where we are considering retirement, and seeing how feasible it is.

It is hard sometimes, but you might be able to volunteer or something like that where you can get in for free or reduced cost. Just going for a day if you can afford it works as well.

Coming up in Toronto is a huge fan-run steampunk event in Niagara-on-the-Lake on the border this coming August with Steam-Powered Giraffe, Abney Park and Professor Elemental, plus a new Cirque du Soleil show called Kurios, which is very steampunk-oriented. This past Saturday was another Steam on Queen, the best one yet, and other events are coming up, too. This makes it easier to set aside the SF cons to enjoy the varied steampunk events.

We will be going to see Kurios as well. The shows sound great. I have seen all of the bands except Steam-Powered Giraffe and have heard that they are amazing.

Oh, we’ve seen all the Harry Potter movies in their initial runs in the theatres. Yvonne had all the movies on DVD, but I bought her the big Wizard’s Box, with all the movies on DVD and BluRay, plus lots of extra DVDs and other collectibles. We’d like to revisit the Potter movies the same way we revisited the Babylon 5 DVDs, but it’s now summer, and time in the summer sun is precious.

Just like the One Ring.

Cursive writing … I still think it is important, even though its uses are going away. My own handwriting is pretty bad; maybe I should have been a doctor … I agree with Milt on
typing. When I was in Grade 13, I could have taken my ease with only six credit courses, but I also took a Grade 9 typing class. I learned to type, and it’s been of great value to me ever since.

**Personally, I can’t read cursive writing because people make fancy flourishes sometimes. I think the print writing is quicker. I can write my name faster than I can sign it.**

I remember watching episodes of “The Prisoner,” being confused by the whole thing as most other people were, but I also remember watching “Danger Man/Secret Agent.” Some say that “The Prisoner” was a sequel or even a carry-through series, “The Prisoner” carrying on the McGoohan character timeline. I also remember the Hotel Portmeirion being fed up with Prisoner fans, and banning them from coming to the hotel. Good to see that’s changed; money changes minds.

(Oops…it was Gene Roddenberry who created Star Trek, not George.)

Toronto has a Maker Faire coming up this year. It had one a couple of years ago, but admission was so expensive, most people gave up on it, including us. This year, it’s at the reference library downtown, and I think admission will be nominal, if not free.

**It has really expanded to be worldwide.**

Indeed, Andy and Kevin were at CostumeCon in Toronto, and we all had a great time there. CC returns in three years, and it should be huge, now that local costumers have three years’ notice.

**We haven’t had it back in the Bay Area for a long time. I had friends who had mixed feelings about it since it ran more towards the historical costuming and less the fantasy and science fiction costuming.**

Made the page! Many thanks for this issue, and with my weird hours at work, I am doing this in the morning, you’ll be getting it in the middle of the night, and I now have to get ready to go to the office. See you next issue.

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**Join our crew!**

We are always looking for writers to cover local events, conventions, fan groups and the fannish scene in general. Contact Jean Martin at SFinSF@gmail.com
Four-Plus Years and One Night of PEERS

By Christopher Erickson
Managing Editor

PEERS, the Period Events and Entertainments Re-Creation Society, has been around since 1987 and has brought lots of joy to people over the years. I was told about it one day during Dickens Fair in 2009 by my good friend Miss Agnes Wickfield. I decided to attend the 12th Night Ball and had a good amount of fun getting a small bit of the Dickens Fair in one night with music hall sing-alongs, dancing and interactive theater.

I never made the return trip until over a year later in 2010 when Jean and I went to the Unseelie Fairy Court Ball in May. It was a great time as I was there for the entire ball and got to meet people that I had known in character at the different ren faires and at Dickens on a more personal level.

The next ball was the 50th birthday party of Mr. Fezzywig. I got to see the effort to put on the show with practices that go on before the dance and how quickly everything coalesces for a show that is mostly improvisational theater, but is sometimes done with a specific script in mind.

I also got to enjoy some outdoor dancing at the picnic in Alameda that year, as it had a “Sense and Sensibility” theme. It gave me the opportunity to read classic literature that I wouldn’t have normally considered. I eventually read all of the published novels of Jane Austen.

I eventually got my chance to be “onstage” later when I was a Dr. Horrible groupie at the Evil League of Evil ball that night. Since I had been a French ambassador to the court of Queen Mary Stuart of Scotland for the St. Giles Scottish guild, I liked being able to interact with people in character, something I also did at conventions while in costume. It was the first of many times that I got to play a role and entertain people, which is something that I enjoy. I eventually participated in many of the other balls including being able to do the Ninth Doctor at The Doctor Dances ball.

Throughout the years I have been able to enjoy a hobby with my lovely wife, make new friends and continue friendships I made before. PEERS has been a joy in my life and has been one of the things I look forward to every month.
By Jean Martin
Editor-in-Chief

The only conventions I had time to go to during the first half of 2014 was the Xena Convention in Burbank and Potlatch in San Jose, which were both in February. It was my first time for both of these conventions so I’m glad I got to go to them.

Xena Convention XIX
Burbank Marriott Convention Center
Burbank, Calif.
Feb. 7-9

With Xena being off the air for so long and with each Xena convention being touted as the last, I thought I’d go to it this year just in case. “Xena” is one of my all-time favorite TV shows and I love both Lucy Lawless who plays Xena and Renee O’Connor who plays Gabrielle. It’s rare to see shows with two strong female characters with a great bond of friendship. “Xena” also had a lot of historical and mythical references, which I loved.

Lawless and O’Connor were also set to appear at the convention and they very rarely do that. There was a photo op with both of them together but I thought it was too expensive so I only opted for Lawless. I was so happy to finally meet her, even for a few seconds. She was nice and funny. But in hindsight, I should have gotten a photo with both of them. I did purchase an autograph with O’Connor and she was so sweet. Both of them are still so beautiful. They were also hilarious on stage together and apart. They just have a good chemistry together even though they are so different from each other.

One of the highlights of them on stage was them singing. A family from the U.K. (who were in amazing costumes all weekend) went up on stage as their son was dressed as Xena’s son Solan. Lawless then sang a bit of Solan’s song. The two of
them also answered questions from the audience.

I also got to see Hudson Leick, who portrayed Xena’s nemesis Callisto, on stage. She is still svelte and a bit crazy and intense but very entertaining. She writhed on stage and among the audience in her slinky silver dress and high heels. During the cabaret, she came out in a burlesque outfit while reading an essay out loud and then took her clothes off and put on a plain T-shirt and jeans. I think she was making a statement about beauty or something.

Ted Raimi, who played Joxer and who’s the brother of director Sam Raimi, was a quite serious on stage. Which is a far cry from his comic role on Xena. One funny thing he said, though, is that us fans remember things more than he does
because he didn’t really get to see all the episodes and it’s really just a job for the actors and they’re on to the next one.

I really enjoyed the panel with actor Michael Hurst, who played Iolaus on both “Xena” and “Hercules,” and his wife Jennifer Ward-Lealand, who was Boadicea on “Xena.” Both of them are from New Zealand and they recounted all the work they’ve done in recent years … mostly TV and theatre. Hurst has been pretty busy as an actor, director and producer and they’re both pretty big fish were they come from. When asked why he didn’t pursue a career in Hollywood after “Hercules,” he said that he was already in his 40s and married with kids then and it wasn’t something he was in a place in his life to do at that point. Sacrificing your life for a chance in Hollywood is something better suited for those starting out in their 20s. My hotel room was right next to theirs and I kept running into Hurst in the hallway, in the elevator, in the lobby and in the hotel restaurant that I was worried that he’d think I was stalking him. But he was pretty nice and I got to talk to him a bit a couple of times. I got his and his wife’s autographs during one of the autograph sessions, and those of other actors who were there as well.

Some of the autographs were “free” as they were included in the silver package I bought, which also guaranteed me a seat in the ballroom where pretty much everything happened. That’s what’s great about the Creation conventions is that you are pretty much guaranteed a seat and autographs and photos, and you don’t have to wait in lines for very long. There is also only one track of panels so it was a bit more relaxing.

Ted Raimi

by Jean Martin

Jennifer Ward-Lealand and Michael Hurst

by Jean Martin
The vendor room, though, seemed like an afterthought. It was in a side hallway and there weren’t that many booths. There weren’t that many collectibles either and I wound up not buying anything. I was hoping to find some “Xena” memorabilia as I don’t really have any. When I told my seatmate about this, she gave me a Xena sword letter opener. I luckily was able to bring it back with me in my carryon without any problems. My other seatmate was Holly Tidwell, the person in charge of the Xena Movie Petition, and I had several great conversations with her. (See efanzines.com/SFSF/SFSF152.pdf for more information from her about the petition.)

Another great thing about this convention is the costuming. For a show that’s been gone for a long time, there were some amazing costumes at the convention. Especially during the masquerade. The masquerade was informal, with the emcee just calling people in line to the stage one by one, but everyone was entertaining and there was quite a variety from serious to funny. There were several Xena costumes from different episodes other than her iconic leather and metal armor, there were several Gabrielle’s, some Joxers, some Callistos and some Areses. The winners were voted in by audience applause by group and then the finalists were brought back on stage. The winning entry was by a woman who did the Hindu monkey god Hanuman. It was a pretty impressive full-body costume.

Everyone was very friendly and the convention had a very peaceful and warm vibe, which I attribute to most of the attendees being women. There is a big lesbian presence at the convention, which is understandable given some of the lesbian undercurrents in the show, but I think women just generally gravitate toward “Xena” because of the wonderful, multi-dimensional female characters in it that you don’t see in most other TV shows or movies.

There was a party in one of the function rooms on the last evening of the convention organized by one of the fan-run “Xena” groups and it was pretty much all women. It was so comfortable and freeing to just be ourselves in a sort of sisterhood, without the defensiveness or need to impress
women oftentimes adopt when men are around. There was a cake in the shape of Gabrielle’s bodice and also a raffle. There were a lot of prizes so almost everyone won something. The big prize was a Xena chakram, which I didn’t win. I did win a Xena in Rome action figure, which was my next choice. Whatever was left was a free for all for those who didn’t win a prize.

It was definitely a different convention and I enjoyed it very much. I’m not sure if I’ll go back again, though, because I pretty much experienced everything I was hoping to. It seems like next year is really going to be the last one. The only thing I’ll regret if I don’t go back again is seeing the women I made friends with from other parts of the U.S. and even from the U.K. But that’s what Facebook is for … to keep in touch with like-minded people from everywhere.
Potlatch 23
Sainte Claire Hotel
San Jose, Calif.
February 22

I’ve been curious about Potlatch and finally got to the chance to go last February. A major part of why I went this time was because Tom Becker was the chair running it, and also it was convenient because it was in San Jose and at a hotel that I like. It also happened that I was reading “The City & the City” by China Mieville when I found out that it was going to be the Book of Honor for the convention.

The convention was for the entire weekend from Friday through Sunday, but I only went on Saturday as most of the panels I was interested in where on that day anyway. There’s only one track, which worked for me as it sometimes gets a bit too hectic when there are too many things to do and too many things to choose from and have to miss as a consequence.

I did miss the first panel of the day, which I wanted to see, on purpose. But not being a morning person and having to drive to San Jose, it just wasn’t feasible. It was about Crime & Fantasy: When Genres Collide.

The main panel of the convention was next, which was for the Book of Honor. Laura Majerus was the moderator for the panel and it went really well. It was pretty much a conversation among the audience members facilitated by Majerus. It was amazing to see the different opinions and interpretations of the same book by different people. There were different takes on the ending as well. The consensus was pretty much half who liked the book and half who didn’t. But it was unanimous that the premise of the novel that there are two cities sharing the same space was interesting.
I myself thought the premise was interesting, and I really like murder mysteries. But I didn’t like the book as whole because it seemed like the plot was simple while the worldbuilding too overwrought. The explanation of the two cities was repetitive and seemed like it was being hammered over and over again throughout.

I personally like the fact that the convention had a more literary bent, as there aren’t that many of these around anymore, and especially because I was just at a media-related convention. But reading to me is more of a solitary pleasure that I enjoy internally. I don’t particularly enjoy discussing books with people and stay away from reading clubs.

However, for this one time, I did see the value of talking with people about a book as I learned not only more about how the novel could be perceived but also more about other people in general.

During the lunch break, there was a writer’s workshop, which I thought would be great for when I finally get the time and the confidence to write fiction again. But I also really wanted to get some food and went to a Jamaican place nearby.

After lunch, Fred Moulton moderated the panel on Books of Honorable Mention where some of the people who nominated some of the books talked about why that particular book was worthy of nomination. The rest where discussed by

Laura Majerus by Jean Martin

Fred Moulton by Jean Martin
whoever had read the book. It was interesting to see what the process was like on how the Book of Honor was chosen, and I also got to find out about books and authors that I might be interested in checking out.

Then there was a mid-afternoon break for Algonquins (which were spontaneous, informal discussion groups), readings and the Tiptree Bake Sale. A group of people planned on heading out the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library and I went with them. Our guide David Bratman showed us all the interesting sections of the huge and modern library as well as various art at each floor. My favorite was the Center for Beethoven Studies with its collection of historical keyboards. Unfortunately, Beethoven’s lock of hair was on loan to another museum so I didn’t get to see that. There was a hidden shelf in the mystery section, an Alice in Wonderland door in one of the elevators, a vase that formed the silhouette of MLK and a Rosetta Stone that had electronic messages on it.

Back at the hotel, the last panel of the day was about Science Fiction/Science Fact. There were several moderators and the panel got a bit sidetracked by different topics thrown in by the audience, but was interesting nonetheless. It was interesting for me to hear about the processes the writers in the panel go through to research and incorporate science into their stories.
After that was the dinner break and I headed home. There was the Clarion West Auction after dinner but I was too tired for it. The auction, which was MC’ed by auctioneers Ellen Klages and Tom Whitmore, was to raise funds for scholarships to the science fiction, fantasy and horror short fiction workshop in Seattle.
Theatre Reviews

By Jean Martin
Editor-in-Chief

Man in a Case
Berkeley Rep
Roda Theatre, Berkeley
Feb. 15

I was a big fan of Mikhail Baryshnikov when I was a kid and I’ve always wanted to see him perform. I didn’t get to see him do ballet before he retired so I was excited to find out that he was going to be in a play in Berkeley. The play was based on two stories by Anton Chekhov and had the typical melancholic air that Russian literature has. The production, however, was modern with a spare stage and multimedia elements.

Baryshnikov has a very striking stage presence and a pretty good actor. I was worried there wouldn’t be any dancing as halfway through the 75 minute play (with no intermission) there still wasn’t any. But there were some interpretive dance in the latter half and that is when he truly shines. You can tell he is older and can’t do the leaps he was famous for. But he still has an amazing athleticism and command of his body.

I waited outside with some fans in the hopes of meeting him. We were told after a while that he had left. I’m bummed not to have met him but was happy to have seen him perform at last.

Spamalot
Stage 1 Theatre
Newark Memorial High School, Newark
Mar. 15

My friend Cordelia Willis was in this production and it was a really fun one. I was in a Spamalot masquerade entry with Cordelia for BayCon 2006 when we won a Best in Show award, and our group went to Las Vegas to see Spamalot at the Wynn Hotel.

I have to say that I enjoyed Stage 1’s adaptation a lot better. Partly because the Las Vegas one was a shortened version. The full-length version has way more jokes. Stage 1’s performance was also more edgy as opposed to polished. The musical numbers sparkled. The actor who portrayed King Arthur wasn’t as energetic as I would have liked. But the knights, who also played other roles, where quite brilliant. The Lady of the Lake had a commanding voice and she was beautiful.

Cordelia had more than 10 roles and it became a game of spot Cordelia. Her parents Connie and Courtney were in the audience and they told me that even they had a hard time figuring out which ones she was. She played male and female characters. And I finally got to see her tap dance.
Patience
Stanford Savoyards
The Bowl, Stanford University
May 18

I love Gilbert and Sullivan and it would have been enough of an incentive to go see this one for that reason. I also have been meaning to check out the Stanford Savoyards who in the past has done Gilbert and Sullivan productions with “Star Trek: The Next Generation” and “Firefly” themes. This time, they did “Patience” with “Star Trek” and “Doctor Who” characters.

“Patience” has a very interesting plot and the production was set at a “Star Trek” convention in the first half and a “Doctor Who” convention in the second half. The two main male characters were fantastic. The first one played a scheming Spock and the second was a narcissistic Eleventh Doctor. They’re both in love with the same woman and the fans of the first turn into fans of the second.

The costumes were incredible and the entire cast was great. The band was very good as well. It was just a bit hard to hear and see, though, as it was outdoors and we were all on one level on uncomfortable folding chairs.

However, I enjoyed the music, performances and costumes, and look forward to seeing more from the theatre group in the future.

Hedwig and the Angry Inch
Belasco Theatre
Broadway, New York
June 13

I saw the Tony Awards the Sunday before my trip to NYC and was blown away by Neil Patrick Harris’s performance as Hedwig. I then wanted to see him but there was only one night I could have seen him and tickets were already sold out. Some Facebook friends told me not to give up and I wound up buying a ticket online in the cab on the way to me hotel from the airport. There was only one that was made available a few hours before the show and I got it! It was only a few rows away from the stage and was an aisle seat so I had a fantastic view.

Harris was incredible and his performance was funny, poignant, strong and charismatic. It was pretty much a one-man show with a backup band. With Lena Hall Yitzhak the only other role that stood out.

The musical numbers were fantastic, I loved the sets and visual effects, and the story was very interesting. The ending was a bit confusing, though, and I asked a friend who’d also seen it and she said the same thing. I did watch the movie version that came out several years ago with the original actor and writer and the ending made more sense.

I waited outside with several hundred people who were also there to catch a glimpse of Harris and maybe even get his autograph. I’d never seen a crowd this big after a Broadway show. We were all behind barricades on both sides of the stage door and there were even people on the other side of the street. It was about an hour, I think, before he finally showed up and only signed said hello a few people and signed some
autographs before he was whisked away in a limo. I was lucky enough that someone up front was willing to take my program and have Neil sign it. I’m so glad I got to see the show and see Neil afterwards too!

**Macbeth**  
Park Avenue Armory  
New York City, New York  
June 14

The whole reason I went to NYC for the weekend was to see this play. “Macbeth” isn’t one of my favorite Shakespeare plays but the chance to see Kenneth Branagh live just seemed like something not to be missed. And when I found out the Alex Kingston (who I loved as Moll Flanders a long time ago and more recently as River Song in “Doctor Who”) was Lady Macbeth, I just had to go. To top it all off, two actors I like very much, Richard Coyle (“Coupling,” “Prince of Persia” and “Crossbones”) and Alexander Vlahos (“Merlin” and “The Confessions of Dorian Gray” audio dramas) have major roles in it too.

The play was at an old Armory that looks like a castle. I got to tour all the rooms on the first and second floors, which looked very Victorian. Then I settled into the room I was assigned to, which was for the Caithness clan. We were assigned to different clans depending on our seats. My seat was the very last row in a side sections and Caithness is in a remote part of Scotland. Then we were all led by our respective clan leaders (who were in costume) one room at a time into the auditorium.

When we approached the main door, our clan was announced and we all cheered. As we walked in, another guide led us to our section. It was very dark and it looked like we were going on a path through a field with Druids and witches. And you couldn’t miss the big Stonehenge-like structure that formed one side of the long, rectangular stage. On the other side of the stage was a cathedral with a big cross, large icons and lots of candles. The stage was set up more like a jousting tournament field rather than a traditional stage with bleachers on both sides. So we felt like we were part of the action even though I was at the very back.

The first scene was that of a battle and there was rain, mud and swords clanging. It seemed like we were watching a movie shoot rather than a play. It was quite impressive to see. Then Branagh, whose hair and clothes seemed to be immediately dry, started speaking and I felt like I was watching a historic moment. The witches were pretty eerie as they dangled in between the stone slabs. Kingston and Branagh’s interactions were fantastic and she looked wonderful in all the gowns she wore.

I didn’t recognize Vlahos as Malcolm at first because he was wearing a beard and his voice seemed more high-pitched than his manly, deep voice as Dorian Gray. Vlahos is still so young and I was impressed that he held his own among veteran actors. A rising star to watch. But it was Coyle as Macduff who really stole the show for me. His emotions and vitality transmitted itself all the way to where I was sitting. He was amazing. All in all, this is the best Macbeth I’ve seen.

After the show, I waited outside in the lobby with some people and befriended two women and together we helped each other spot the actors. I didn’t think we’d get to see Branagh and Kingston so I didn’t feel too disappointed not to have met them. I did get to meet both Vlahos and Coyle,
though, so I was ecstatic about that. Vlahos was very nice and he thought it was sweet that I listened to his Dorian Gray audios and he said I was the only one who’d ever talked to him about that. Coyle was on his way out the front door and it seemed like he thought he was going to escape detection so I felt bad about approaching him. But he was super nice and even funny after I asked for his autograph and had my photo taken with him. He was so cute as he made sure to give me my Sharpie back after other people asked for his autograph and was solicitous of my program that he signed to make sure I didn’t drop it.

Spakeasy SF
Box Car Theatre
“Joe’s Clock Shop,” San Francisco
June 21

This production was intriguing as it aimed to re-create a Prohibition Era speakeasy. It was interactive theatre reminiscent of Dickens Fair in that patrons show up in costume and experience the show put on by the actors in a fully decorated space. The rules were pretty strict (such as no photos, keep quiet, don’t talk to the performers unless they talk to you first and don’t tell people about what it was like) and you were supposed to show up at the Asian Art Museum and were told to follow directions to the location.

We wound up entering the place through an alley, although I found out later that other people came in through Joe’s Clock Shop on the other side. I’m glad we came in through the alley as that led us to the section with the stage. The host asked us if we reserved a seat and we said we didn’t but he found us somewhere to sit nevertheless. That’s when it got confusing as I couldn’t tell how long we were supposed to stay there and where we could go afterwards. People seemed to be coming and going. But I didn’t who we could talk to either as we weren’t supposed to talk to the performers.

Christopher and I ordered drinks and watched the show for a bit. This was the best part for me as I loved the singing and dancing girls especially. They did some numbers from the time period and they were wearing lovely costumes. The small band upstairs included Franklin Beau Davis, the leader of the Brassworks Band. Other than him, I didn’t know any of the performers or any of the guests, which I thought was unusual.

We found out there was another room with a bar and some actors were playing roles. Two of them seemed “modern” to me. There were also a piano and some musical numbers. I found this space a bit cramped and not all that interesting. I also didn’t like the staged bits about the evils of drink and drama about a wife chastising her wayward husband. I don’t drink myself but I came to this wanting to experience a Speakeasy and not to be lectured about serious topics.

We then found that the bookshelf led into a casino and I got to play craps and roulette for the first time. I also played blackjack for a bit. This room was a lot of fun but was so small and hot that we couldn’t stay there very long.

Christopher and I went back to the stage area and the host “recognized” Christopher as Rudolph Valentino and me as his wife Natacha. We were then escorted into a place of honor next to the stage, gave us free drinks and the actors on stage interacted with us for a bit. This was a lot of fun too and I’m glad we got to experience this. Then the evening ended when “cops” raided the place and we were all escorted out.
Mikado
Lyric Theatre
Montgomery Theater, San Jose
June 28

My friend Cordelia Willis also performs with Lyric Theatre and so we wanted to see this for that reason and also because Christopher and I have never seen a full-length version of the Mikado. We’ve seen an abbreviated version at Dickens Fair. I also know some other people in the cast and crew for this Lyric Theatre production.

The costumes and sets were great and the performances were as well. The actors were quite wonderful. But I guess this isn’t one of my favorite Gilbert and Sullivan offerings as I only liked some of the songs and the story is a bit farfetched. So far, my favorite Lyric Theatre G&S show is H.M.S. Pinafore. But I’m glad to have gotten to see the Mikado as it is one of the duos most famous creations and is unique in that it is set in Japan.

Pirates of Penzance
Lamplighters
Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, Mountain View
Aug. 10

I first saw Pirates of Penzance on Broadway in 1981 with Kevin Kline (as the Pirate King) before he became famous. Rex Smith (one of my favorite singers) was also in it as Frederic. I missed seeing it with Linda Ronstadt (who I love) but I do admit that her replacement, Karla DeVito, had a better voice for Mabel. This was my first introduction to Gilbert and Sullivan and I remember buying the LP and playing that over and over again. I haven’t seen Pirates since then.

Christopher hasn’t seen it and so I was curious what it would be like to see a local production after all these years. I’ve also wanted to see Lamplighters and have never had a chance to do so till now. I have to say that I enjoyed this production very much and that Pirates of Penzance remains my favorite Gilbert and Sullivan opera. I love all the songs and I think the story is clever and unique. The actors in this local touring production were quite good and the sets and costumes were fantastic.

War of the Worlds
Stanford Repertory Theater
Nitery Theatre, Stanford University
Aug. 17

This was a re-enactment of Orson Welles’s 1938 radio drama that scared listeners into believing that the U.S. was being invaded by real Martians. The set was made to look like a radio studio and the actors played actors portraying different characters from the script. There was a woman who did all the amazing sound effects and it was a show in itself watching her use commonplace and strange objects to make the most appropriate sounds. There was also a small band with singers that performed tunes from the time period in between the storyline.

The play started with the actors interacting like the radio actors and they interacted with each other throughout. I liked that they did this as opposed to just sitting or standing there. The actor playing Welles came in late, which was apparently something Welles really did frequently. The parts of the story,
which was transported into 1938 New Jersey from Victorian England, where the news reporter was relating the Martian attacks was quite terrifying. The actors made us feel like we were listening to the real radio broadcast even though we could see them.

The only thing I didn’t quite like was the ending, not because they changed it, but because it didn’t quite feel right to me interposing a panicked caller into the mix and attributing the hoax to Welles. But after listening to the director and actors speak afterwards, it makes sense why they did this.
PEERS Space Cowboys Ball

By Christopher Erickson
Managing Editor

PEERS brought the ‘Verse to Alameda on June 7 with the Space Cowboys Ball, based on the cult hit show, “Firefly.” The ball featured all of the main characters from the series and movie “Serenity” after the events of the motion picture.

The crew of Serenity

by Christopher Erickson

Cyrus Fremont, Fess Higgins and Companion
courtesy of Christopher Erickson
The main setting of the ball was at the palatial estate of Sir Warrick Harrow, potentate on the planet Persephone as previously shown on “Shindig.” The ball was thrown in honor of Captain Malcolm Reynolds revealing the extent to which the Alliance was behind the creation of the Reavers and the events on Miranda (as shown in the movie) and strengthening the position of the Colonies in relation to the Alliance. Sir Warrick proposed to promote Mal as a hero for the Colonies’ political agenda (creating a figurehead for their Independence movement).

While at the ball, old tensions flared up as Inara Serra and Mal rekindled their feelings for each other, even though Inara had a male companion with her at the time. Mal also sought to put his fight with Atherton Wing behind him, who was in attendance at the ball. Unfortunately, Atherton’s younger brother, Faxon, did not have the same idea and sought to restore the family’s honor after the humiliation of Atherton’s defeat at Mal’s hands. Atherton tried to dissuade Faxon from pursuing the matter since he accepted his defeat. Eventually, Mal’s sense of pride and honor, as well as his fast talking, got
him involved in a duel with Faxon. During the duel, Jayne was taking bets and Cyrus Fremont (a fellow Independent soldier and rival smuggler) goaded Mal into getting the confrontation over with. Faxon eventually wounded Mal, who then yielded to satisfy the honor of the Wing family.

Jayne Cobb also had to deal with a bit of public humiliation in the form of Fess Higgins, the son of the man Jayne crossed at Canton in “Jaynestown.” Fess has replaced his father as the local magistrate for the mudders and hero-worships Jayne. Jayne had to suffer through having Fess recall the deeds of the
“Hero of Canton” including singing the ballad composed for Jayne including the new verse about his triumphant return.

There was one other piece of interesting news as it was revealed that Zoe Washburne was pregnant with Wash’s child.

Other prominent guests included cargo transport and security specialist Cyrus Fremont, socialite Banning Miller (from “Shindig”), the CEO of the Blue Sun Corporation Mr. H Blue and his bodyguards (“two by two, hands of blue”), companion and Heart of Gold owner Petaline and her colleague Helen Yu (from the episode “Heart of Gold”).

There was plenty of entertainment between the duel and the dancing. Simon Tam was presented with a guitar by his lady Kaylee and maneuvered into singing “The Ballad of Serenity” by Kaylee and Mal, with crowd accompaniment. Mal also performed a number for Inara in a bid to get her back called “Aim to Misbehave for You.” Fess also regaled the crowd with his previously mentioned version of “The Hero of Canton” ballad. River also freaked out when the music for the snack Fruity Oaty Bars was played, but it turned out to be a practical joke that only she understood.
There were a number of guests who came dressed as the crew of the Serenity. There were also a Badger and a Saffron. Roj Blake (from “Blake’s 7”) and Spike Spiegel (from “Cowboy Bebop”) were also in attendance. A number of other people came in Western wear including one man who dressed in a 1950s Roy Rogers/Gene Autry style shirt. A good amount of people came in hoop skirts and frock coats. Others came in Asian inspired fashions including saris, kimonos, Chinese robes and cheongsams. The most interesting outfit was a woman who had a long Asian style robe for a coat over her Western wear.

Music was provided by Bangers and Mash for people to dance waltzes, polkas, schottisches, country steps and set dances. Dance lessons were provided by the Harrows for less polished society guests such as Mal to refine their talent. Mal and Inara opened the ball with a waltz. There was a Grand March with River dancing around everyone moving around her.
The people who attended had a fun time and danced the night away and enjoyed the music and conversation of the crew of Serenity and the members of high society. Everyone went home in their spaceships happy.
Dressed for the Ball

Lady in Kimono

Mudder’s Milk

by Christopher Erickson
Sails aloft and ships ran aground again in the Vallejo waterfront as the Northern California Pirate Festival was held for the 8th year at Mare Island Way on June 14 and 15. The swashbuckling tradition continued on to the delight and entertainment of everyone who attended.

One of extra attractions was the after-hours party, the Buccaneer Bash, back for its second iteration. The adults-only show featured two acts of burlesque performances by Burlesque of the Barbary Coast, a professional vaudeville show that performs locally at Yoshi’s San Francisco. The performances included many of the performers in bright costumes. Most were pirate outfits or based on Georgian fashion of the late 1600s. One performer based her look on the La Calavera Catrina (Dapper Skeleton or Elegant Skull) from...
the Dia de los Muertos traditions. Another performer did a veil/drape performance while wearing antlers reminiscent of a deer or gazelle.

The show also featured two pirate-themed rock bands. The first to perform was San Francisco-based The Boarding Party. They played a mix of sea shanties and original tunes with a mix of blues, rock and other styles. The other band to perform was The Dread Crew of Oddwood. They played several songs mixing Celtic rock, heavy metal and progressive rock with acoustical instruments to create a sound they termed “heavy mahogany.” They mixed theatrics and humor into their songs about pillaging, plundering, drinking and fighting with one
There were plenty of famous pirates in attendance at the show including Captain Henry Morgan, “Calico” Jack Rackham, Anne Bonny and Edward Teach helping to provide a bit of levity and master of ceremonies duties throughout the night.

The ale stand was open during the show and provided full service for a thirsty pirate looking for his drink and a few of the food stalls were also open to provide nourishment for the hordes.

During the daytime, there were still plenty of things to do for all those looking for shore leave with plenty of shows, shopping and carousing.

Even before the festival opened up for the day, there was a singing troupe outside to entertain the patrons as they stood in line. Officials from the Government House were also inspecting the line to make sure everything was kept in proper British fashion and the queue was orderly. They even stopped me to check for my letter of marque and I showed them a pardon that was granted to me previously.

The rum bar was back with full service for all the scalawags looking to try some of the favorite refreshments of seafaring scurvy dogs everywhere. The drinks were fit for anyone on the high seas and were served up by a mermaid.

Unfortunately, the mermaid lagoon was not working the entire weekend, but that did not stop the sirens of the sea from growing legs and trying to lure men with their song and fish tails. The land lubbers and privateers alike at least got to see their beauty on dry land.

There was also a fortune teller booth predicting tales of woe and sorrow for the right price as well. Another attraction was the House of the Rising Sun where men could be found
playing games and being entertained by the French courtesans singing songs and telling stories. There were many a British officer as well as salty sea dog enjoying the company of these fine women and the proprietor with his games of chance.

There was plenty of entertainment to be found on the main stage this year as well. The pavilion tent was back again this year to help cool off people and keep them out of the sun, even though the weather was rather nice this year. There were many favorite acts returning to the stage including perennial favorite Captain Jack Spareribs, the lovely songstresses The Merry Wives of Windsor, the belly dance moves of Serpent Siren Swords, the musical stylings of Skip Henderson and Starboard Watch, and more heavy mahogany from The Dread Pirates of Oddwood. There was also the Court of Pirate Lords reading Blackbeard’s last will and testament about a treasure for the last man standing who could get to it. A huge sword fight broke out amongst the troupe, before they decided that everyone can have a share. They ultimately found out that they were swindled by Edward Teach even in his death.
For the little deck swabbers, there was lots of piratical entertainment. Mister Mac was back with his sea shanties, there was a school of piracy where the little ones, a giant ship slide, the feathered jokes of Fowl Tales and the stories of adventurers Plank and Plunder. The Pirates of Emerson also had their booth set up to scare young and old alike.

The biggest attraction of the day was the exchange of cannon fire between the members of the British armed forces and the ship Nehemiah. Crows stood around while the guns were loaded and shot at the passing ship as it tried to take the dock. Smoke billowed out from both the cannons on land and on the ship as deck hands dropped from the incoming shells.
Kidnapping a Naval Officer

by Christopher Erickson
and had to be carried away.

There was a variety of entertainment to be found wandering around the village of the festival. Pirates could be seen kidnapping a naval officer. Famous pirates such as Henry Morgan, Jack Rackham, Anne Bonny, Blackbeard and Captain Kidd were spotted throughout the town. There were plenty of people in costume as well, with pirates ranging from the alluring to the dirty. There were several who came from as far away as the Middle East and the Orient. There was also a man who converted his scooter into a personal ship.

The Northern California Pirate Festival has continued to entertain throughout its eight years in existence. The faire has continued to grow and has established itself as a destination for costumers and thrill seekers.
The First-Ever Evolution Expo:
A Multitude of Stars in Oakland

By Amanda Kimmerly
Contributing Writer

Where else can you gab with NASA astronauts, hug Jason Momoa, dance with Ty Olsson, and step inside a dome of stars to hear the Chabot Space and Science Center tell you that you must wait six months from your actual birthday to see your zodiac constellation stir to life in the sky?

Evolution Expo.

Like many others who attended this first-ever event, my experience at Evolution Expo in Oakland, Calif., last June 27-29 was the kind you dream up: personal, endearing, intimate and inspiring. Not once did I have to stand in a dastardly long line like at Comic Con. No, I was able to connect with the people whom I drove all the way from Austin, Texas, to see: the scientists, celebrities and friends I knew I was bound to make (and God, did I make the best con-friends!), be it in the panel room, autograph booth, the hallway of the hotel or sharing a beer in the hotel bar. Everybody was accessible. And rarer yet: the guests and celebrities were genuinely stoked to be there.

Perhaps it was the concept that was so inviting: bringing scientists and celebrities together to share in one conversation, or “Putting the ‘Science’ Back into ‘Science Fiction’” as Evolution Expo coined it. It was nice to see scientists, engineers and NASA astronauts get the same kind of buzz usually reserved for Hollywood folk. Meanwhile, celebrities could talk about their own impact on the world, through their artistic creations or non-profit organizations. It was some weird kind of role reversal that worked. And to truly personify the bridge between worlds, Evolution Expo brought in actress and neuroscientist Mayim Bialik, from “Blossom” and “The Big Bang Theory,” as its keynote speaker.

For those who couldn’t make it to Evolution Expo this year, I’ll catch you up on some highlights:

Keynote Speaker Mayim Bialik

by Amanda Kimmerly
Seeing kids get crazy about space. Evolution Expo dedicated a portion of the weekend to education and entertaining grade school-aged kids in their “Evo-Kids” programs. Scientists like Dr. Pascal Lee talked with them about Mars exploration and the importance of curiosity, learning, science and technology. He passed out a free copy of his children’s book, “Mission: Mars,” for the kids to take home as a souvenir. Astronauts Wendy Lawrence and Joe Edwards answered questions about going up into space, the International Space Station, how an astronaut eats and manages to not float away forever and ever into a black hole (cue small children gasping: “No, no, not that!”). Joe revealed that traveling in space was like being a kid again, when you operated from the belief that anything was possible, because out there, above Earth, in that ever-expanding sky, it sure does seem like it. We learned that Wendy and Joe attended the same college, and both started out their careers in the Navy as pilots. Wendy’s first mission into space came right after the deadly Columbia crash, making her decision to jettison up to the International Space Station all the more brave.

**John Rhys-Davies** is an epic man, on and off stage. So friendly, I watched him engage in a playful light saber battle with a couple of young kids at the event. He even gave a sincere speech to a teenager regarding the chemical effects of “wacky tobacky” on an undeveloped brain. His care and
concern for children he’d never met before was a joy to witness. It was like a Papa Bear gathering his little cubs around to tell adventure stories, and the cubs (kids), wide-eyed and inspired, actually listened, because it’s John Rhys-Davies, and everything John Rhys-Davies says, even tasks as simple as giving directions, is exactly the epic dramatic saga you want to imagine.

**Dancing with “Supernatural’s” Ty Olsson.** Ty Olsson’s panels were like a secret hip party you were personally invited to, which was kind of the truth, considering that before his panels, Ty rounded up everyone in the dealer’s room, people walking the halls and even some hotel staff, to participate in what he called a “mandatory panel.” His last panel Sunday morning even started out with an audience dance party to Daft Punk’s “Get Lucky,” to jazz everyone out of the Sunday morning haze that usually sweeps over the crowd on the last day of a weekend-long event. Humor and spunk were never far suspects when Ty answered questions. Truly an entertainer, when there was a lull in audience questions, he even got down from the stage, stood at the mic stand, posing as “Pam” from somewhere faraway like Georgia or Mississippi, who had a question regarding some—er—interesting fan fiction (yes, slash fiction) that I will not repeat, but involves clarifying a preference for of tops and bottoms. Besides the belly laughter that Ty induced, the most touching part was when he brought things down to a real level, discussing art and his dedication to creative growth. An audience member asked him, if he could write a letter to his 16-year-old self, what would it say? Expecting a goofy or inappropriate response, he inspired some genuine “Amens,” with this simple and sincere answer: “Be easy, Son. It’s all gonna work out.”

**Amanda Tapping and Jason Momoa’s joint panel.** In this panel together, Amanda discussed her not-for profit organization, Sanctuary for Kids, which helps children in countries around the world who are “exploited, dispossessed, or threatened” as her website says. She talked particularly about the children in Nepal and Africa that Sanctuary for Kids have recently been helping to save from poverty and cruel practices, like child slavery and sex trafficking. This talk inspired great cheer in the room by those who realized that these real life actors not only play magnificent characters on stage, they use their acclaim and status to be real-life heroes too.
Jason Momoa treated the audience to a special clip of his now-released film, “Road to Paloma,” which he wrote, directed and starred in, alongside his wife Lisa Bonet. He discussed his passion for the movie, which deals with current Native American reservations, and the crimes and rape that go on unpunished by non-natives, usually Americans, entering the reservations. The story features a man named Wolf, played by Momoa, who travels by motorcycle across America to scatter his mother’s ashes. Visually, it’s poetic, mixing the golden hues of dusk and sunset together as if from a vintage 70s film.

Sadly, he didn’t answer Aquaman questions (as expected; the news had JUST been confirmed the week before the convention), but his openness with the audience regarding other subjects in his life—especially “Road to Paloma”—was pretty satisfying.

The scientists’ panel with Eugene Roddenberry (Gene Roddenberry’s son), Walter De Brouwer, Bob Richards, Jonathan Knowles, Andrew Hessel and Jason Dunn captivated the room as they discussed what it’d take to colonize Mars, how we’d have to bring artificial air to Mars and live in artificial gravity campsites in order to survive. “The whole universe is opening up,” De Brouwer said, talking about current technology’s impact on what’s now, or soon to be, possible in space exploration.

Actor Garrett Wang was a treat. He hosted karaoke for everyone Friday evening and encouraged brave souls to get up and sing classic karaoke hits from artists like Queen and Whitney Houston. Ty Olsson busted out some creepy Vampire
song that apparently is “Supernatural”-related. I didn’t get it, but it was weird and kooky and fun.

“Stargazing” in the Chabot Space and Science Center’s Planetarium. On the last day, after I snapped a few pictures with Jason Momoa, Ty Olsson, Wendy Lawrence and Joe Edwards (courtesy of Julie Caitlin Brown treating her staff members to photo ops), I finally toured the dome-like planetarium that all the kids had experienced earlier over the weekend. Inside, the woman from the Chabot and Space Center reminded me of the magnificence of these ancient stars, how the brighter, newer stars gave off a blue hue, and the older stars, a faint yellow. We peered at red stars, too, and pointed out constellations like Orion and the Big and Little Dipper, and how to find the North Star. The slideshow changed to Zodiac constellations: the Cancerian crab suspended between the Gemini twins and Leo the lion and so on. In between the Zodiac signs were figures of more Greek constellations related to mythology and lore—Andromeda and Cassiopeia, Zeus and Helen and the Pleiades dancing right above our heads. I imagined what it’d be like to chart the stars for hours and hours, like Mayans or Greeks or others societies used to do, before television and iPads and video games became the devices that light up most of our evenings. And yet, still, even with these newer (and fun!) forms of entertainment, it was clear that these stars will never cease to inspire human awe because even in an artificially created reproduction of them in the Chabot Space and Science Center planetarium they were beautiful.

Due to volunteering, there were many programs I didn’t get to see officially, like Tim Russ’s panels, Celeste Yarnall, NASA’s Tony Leavitt, Tom Skerritt, Veronica Cartwright,
Spock’s Beard and Jefferson Starship concert, but Twitter fans assured me that this was their experience.

The charity Gala Saturday night was certainly a testament to the event’s heart and success: Mayim Bialik helped attendees donate more than $25,000 for seven science and/or art based charities.

After Mayim’s panel on Sunday, co-founder of Evolution Expo, Julie Caitlin Brown, ended the event with a touching speech alongside her son and co-founder, Dustin Brown, and staff members on stage. Speaking through happy tears, she glistened with pride for the attendees, guest scientists and celebrities, and staff members who dedicated their support, money, time, and interest to be there, supporting the arts and scientists. It was one of those monumental moments, where, like Joe Edwards said on the first day, extraordinary things felt possible. Julie talked about community, influencing the world and coming together as one family. Paraphrasing, she said, it takes one person to make a difference. And one by one by one by one, we make this existence, this Universe, a consciously remarkable place.

My hope is that while Evolution Expo grows, it maintains its accessible, intimate feel. I drove home to Austin with stars in my eyes, ready for next year.
For more on Evolution Expo, visit EvolutionExpo.net and on Twitter @EvoExpo2014 and Facebook, facebook.com/evolutionexpo2014.

About the author:
Amanda Kimmerly is an editor, writer and creative writing coach in Austin, Texas. She coaches clients to complete and stay inspired by their novels through her unique business for writers, Polished Pear Creative Editing. Space exploration, stars, moons and planets have fascinated her, along with the magical, imaginative realms of science fiction and fantasy, since she was a little girl reading “A Wrinkle in Time” by Madeleine L’Engle. She’s co-authored an invented languages book with novelist Robert Stikmanz called “The Way it Grows: An Introduction to Dvarsh.” Amanda volunteered as Assistant to Press and Media-related tasks for Evolution Expo and loved every second of it. Find her on Twitter at @PortraitOfALady, and through her website, www.polishedpearcreative.com.
Ramen and J-Pop might be a better combination than anyone anticipated, if attendance to the San Francisco J-Pop Summit was any indication. The summit this year was held at both the same time and place as the Ramen Festival, which meant that there were J-Pop attendees in line for ramen, and ramen connoisseurs enjoying the music.

However, that also meant large crowds and longer lines.

Even early in the morning, before the ramen booths even opened, attendees were lining up to get their noodles before the broth could grow cold. The street was blocked from traffic and instead filled with countless booths, some serving ramen, others selling anime-related goods to attendees of the J-Pop Summit with every inch of free space between those booths filled with attendees.

For those who managed to get in line, they faced waits of up to several hours before getting a modestly-sized bowl. A larger attraction from the Ramen Festival was the ramen burgers - soy-marinated hamburgers with ramen noodle buns, which quickly sold out. Even those who decided to avoid the long lines and just get food inside the Japantown mall faced waits from 30 minutes to an hour.

Due to the draw of both events, parking was difficult for anyone who arrived close to the start of the event, and near impossible to find for anyone who arrived later in the day. Many managed the situation by parking farther away and walking over to the festival once the garages at Japantown were full, while some parked in a nearby shopping plaza lot and hoped they wouldn’t get towed.

For those who managed to park, and either got through the lines or gave up on them to enjoy the J-Pop Summit, there was still much to enjoy. The main stage in the plaza held performances of catchy, upbeat song and dance numbers from J-Pop Singers.
different groups throughout the day, entertaining a very full audience.

By that I mean the audience seating area was full; I can’t speak for how full the individual attendees were, but I suppose that all depends on whether or not they got through the ramen line.

Of course, as always, there were costumed attendees worth looking out for. Many went dressed in J-Pop fashion, with colorful decorations and eye-catching ensembles. Others took the chance to wear their favorite (or most comfortable, as the case also was for many) anime and manga cosplay, so there was no shortage of Vocaloids, school idols, Scouting Legion members and so on.

The entire weekend proved to be a crowded event, although a successful one. There’s no doubt that the two events occurring simultaneously helped make the crowd as large as it was, and while those just there for the ramen may not have enjoyed the crowds that came with the extra entertainment, it still made for an eventful weekend.
By Kara Nagle
Contributing Writer

My adventure to Stockton-Con was unexpected. I didn’t even know this convention existed until about a month back when a friend asked if I could tag along with her. My convention experience is limited, with only 3 under my belt, so I had little to draw from and little in expectations.

Overall, Stockton-Con was enjoyable. The atmosphere was jubilant, with fans fawning over the plethora of goods. All of the vendors, flush with San Diego Comic-Con exclusives, were lively and ready to share experiences from other shows. I stopped by one celebrity booth to purchase a photo and autograph for my mom, and found Nicholas Brendon to be gracious and kind. He helped wish my mom a happy birthday with a smile and a wink.
Stockton Arena is an unusual venue for a convention. It is an athletic pavilion, so the floor space is arranged much differently than a convention hall. Like all indoor stadiums, there is an outer concourse and lobby area, an inner concourse, and the basketball floor itself. Celebrities and fan groups such as the 501st and Castle Corsetry, as well as the Bay Area Ghostbusters were found on the inner concourse which had a great over-head view of the vendor floor. Vendors and artists were located on the court, and food, restrooms, and a “cosplaytality” room were found on the outer concourse. This arrangement allowed for a much more organic traffic flow than found at the other conventions I’ve attended.

All told, the fees for attending Stockton-Con are no more than dinner-and-a-movie cost. Pre-ordered tickets were $15 for the weekend pass, or $10 for the 1-day pass. At the door prices were $20 for the weekend, and $12 for a 1-day pass. Parking in the adjacent structures was $10, and it wasn’t a free-for-all battle for spaces like it can be in most downtown areas. These prices make the other conventions I’ve attended seem absolutely decadent. It was refreshing to not have to fork over a whole work day’s wages for a day of fun.

On the floor my friends and I had complaints about the convention. After I returned home I did some research to try and lessen these complaints in my own head. Stockton-Con is only 3 years old, and 2014 was the second year it has been in the Stockton Arena. There are always growing pains when organizing something as big as a pop culture convention. I will list these, but only because they should be addressed objectively and did not ruin the overall positive experience I had at the convention.
The organic traffic flow was burdened by the minimal aisle space and, on the upper concourse, ushers trying to move traffic away from booths which are meant to have stopped traffic. While in line for the signing at Nicholas Brendon’s table an usher continually tried to move gawkers away from his table, as well as the Castle Corsetry table across the way. These ushers were not on the vendor floor, where traffic jams were really bad. Vendors and patrons were packed shoulder to shoulder. It was uncomfortably close everywhere except the outer lobby concourse and the artist aisle way on the vendor floor. This may be due to unexpected attendance. Each year the attendance for this con has been exceeding expectations. Arenas are not meant for foot traffic.

The concourse of celebrities was terribly lit, and for a place where patrons were paying for photos, this needed to be amended, either with quick and cheap shop lights or real photographic studio light set-ups. I was lucky Nicholas Brendon was as gracious as he was, as the onboard flash for my camera was not compensating for the low-light atmosphere. After several tries and adjustments I was able to get the photo I paid for. My friends were not so lucky, and when they were stopped for photos on the concourse the photos were grainy and flat. Lighting was beautiful in the lobby, and that is where many cosplayers ended up near the end of the day. I think we spent an hour or more out in the lobby because of the better lighting opportunity.

Stockton-Con did not allow outside food and drink, as most sporting facilities do not let people bring food in. This really wasn’t a surprise. I can understand the worry that outside food and drink poses, but food prices were exorbitant, I paid $9 for a blended coffee drink, and the food was stale and cardboard-
like in texture. The only way back in to the convention if a person left to find more affordable food was by means of a smiley face stamp that smeared with sweat. For anyone in costume sweat was an ever-present danger. Needless to say I was extraordinarily hungry and thirsty when I left after the convention closed.

My first and only goal upon arrival was to find Nicholas Brendon to purchase my mum’s gift. We found a line for autographs quickly enough, but we didn’t know who it was for, and most the people in the line didn’t either. If the convention organizer hadn’t come by and answered our question we would have wasted more than 20 minutes in a line we didn’t want to be in. There was little to no signage for places and things, and volunteers were hard to find. My group didn’t know of the cosplaytality lounge until the last few minutes of the convention when we happened to be standing right next to the entrance. This dilemma could have been avoided if we were actually handed programs. The programs for the event were in a goodie bag, which for someone who doesn’t regularly attend conventions, looked more like a promotional giveaway and not a swag package.

I will reiterate: my overall experience at Stockton-Con was enjoyable. I didn’t witness any harassment of women in costume, vendors were courteous without being pushy, artists were genial, and celebrities were gracious. The venue was an enjoyable change from single floor conventions, and I did enjoy not having a lanyard swinging from me or my costume to prove I bought a ticket. It is an easy convention to attend, in an easy-to-find venue with reasonable prices. I can only hope Stockton-Con continues to grow next year, when it returns to the same venue August 8 and 9 in 2015.
By Diane B. Rooney

Staff Writer

I’ve been interested in the history of the World War I for a long time now, about 20 years. My grandparents were small children during the war, and I loved hearing what they remembered about that time. The era of the Great War (1914-1918), as it is generally called outside the United States, is important for many reasons. It’s the critical bridge between the Victorian and Edwardian eras and the roaring 20s. It set the stage for the modern era and the rest of the 20th century. The emancipation of women advanced, social class distinctions began to disappear (see: “Downton Abbey”), and 19th century manners and mores were pretty much swept away. Decisions made at the 1919 Versailles Conference, which settled the war, continue to influence international relations to this day as new states and boundaries were created in the Middle East, in the Balkans and Baltics, and drives for independence began to accelerate in British and French colonies. In 2014 we are still living with those decisions. Four empires disappeared entirely: German, Ottoman, Russian and Austro-Hungarian. Reparations mandated on Germany after the war contributed to economic destabilization in the 1920s and were one of many causes of Hitler’s rise.

Brief Background on World War I

World War I has no single cause but many interrelated ones, involving treaty alliances, trade relationships and jockeying to gain colonies, land, population or military
advantage as well as decades-old military plans sitting in drawers and the speed at which troops could be mobilized in developed versus less developed countries. A perfect storm, if you will.

A spark that helped ignite this pile of diplomatic, military and economic timber was the assassination, on June 28, 1914, of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Archduke Franz-Ferdinand, in Sarajevo by Serbian nationalists. No one particularly liked Franz-Ferdinand, including his uncle, the current emperor, Franz Joseph. He’d been sent from Vienna to Sarajevo for a goodwill tour and observation of military maneuvers. The assassins were positioned along the route, with the Archduke and his wife riding in an open car. All the assassins missed or opted out, until the last one, Gavrilo Princip, fired the shots that killed both royals. He then took a poison pill but then vomited the expired pill, tried to shoot himself, but the gun was wrestled from his hand, thus enabling his immediate capture.

Diplomatic gears began turning immediately across Europe after Austro-Hungary made demands on Serbia, which the Serbs refused. Within days, members of Europe’s two major alliances, the Triple Entente (the U.K., France and Russia) and the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austro-Hungary and Italy) worked to keep the peace while agreeing to honor their alliance commitments. They failed. On June 28 Austro-Hungary declared war on Serbia. On August 1 Germany
declared war on Russia and on August 3 on France. On August 4 the U.K. declared war on Germany. More declarations of war across the alliances followed in the following weeks, and four years of global war ensued, ending only with an armistice announced on November 11, 1918.

**The June 28, 2014, Observances**

The World War I Historical Association (www.ww1ha.org) was only one of hundreds of associations and governments around the world observing the anniversary. We started planning back in March, forming an event committee and creating a three-part event consisting of a panel discussion (or “press conference”), followed by a dinner and period dance, all set on June 28, 1914. Each of six members would present current opinions and background on a country that became an initial belligerent (Germany, Austro-Hungary, Serbia, Russia, France and the U.K.).

We met frequently to update both the flow of the day and the marketing and publicity campaign to draw attendees. One of our challenges as an organization was that we were trying to draw two different audiences, WW1HA members, who tend to be older and are not costumers or dancers, and the Bay Area costumer and dance communities.

We reached out repeatedly to WW1HA members through mailings and emails, Facebook and Constant Contact emails.
We posted in event listings in local papers and on event websites. We marketed to the Bay Area costumer and dance communities in much the same way, using contacts in GBACG and PEERS and leaving flyers at dance events throughout May and June. Jean included the event in her event wrap-up for Examiner.com.

On June 28, the committee and other volunteers arrived at Kensington’s Arlington Community Church around 12:30 p.m. to set up tables and chairs, sound and video, decorations and memorabilia. We had a table playing period ragtime music along with a display of sheet music and music books from the era. Guests began arriving at 2:30 p.m. to the sound of Scott Joplin. At the press conference, each panelist presented a 7-10 minute overview of their country’s recent history, and diplomatic, economic and domestic issues and concerns, and concluded, of course, by restating its commitment to maintaining peace. At the end of the Q&A session with the moderator and audience, we were all shocked when someone ran in with newspapers announcing that Franz-Ferdinand had been assassinated! The press conference quickly adjourned so panelists could call or telegraph their respective governments.

After a short break, we showed an episode from the BBC series on Albert Kahn’s collection of photos, “Europe on the Brink,” showing Europe as it looked and was lived in before the war. More than 70 people came for the press conference, and a number stayed for dinner, enjoying a delicious buffet of appetizers, salads, multiple main courses and European-inspired pastry desserts.

After dinner, volunteers reset the room for the third time, removing dinner tables and chairs and setting up side chairs and refreshment tables for the dancers. The American Ragtime
Ensemble, led by David Reffkin, provided live music from 8:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m. We did not draw as many dancers as we had hoped, but those of us who were there enjoyed two hours of waltzes, polkas, one and two-steps, and even the shocking tango. The band played an incredible Grand March, incorporating the anthem melodies of many nations and wars (I even heard the melody from “Dixie”!). Most of the dancers were in costume, carrying out the summer of 1914 theme. The best costumers, I think, were the couple who came as Franz-Ferdinand and his wife Sophie.

After cleaning up once again in the kitchen and ballroom, volunteers headed home with great memories (and leftover desserts and wine). Many thanks to my dance friends who came, including Jean-Anne, Jim, Laurie and the amazing George McQuary, who helped with everything while elegantly clad in full evening dress.
My Westercon vacation via train to Salt Lake City, Westercon and southern Utah National Parks was Marmentous!

First, I will begin with the question posed last in Westercon Part 1: “How many bags did you pack for Utah?”

Eleven. ELEVEN pieces of luggage. Three more than I predicted. Send me a message @yvettekeller on twitter if you guessed 11 and want a prize. This is what they looked like in the suite (and what I look like after 18 hours on a train and not-enough-sleep).

We slept late on our first day in Salt Lake City, adjusting to the altitude and the 3:00 a.m. train arrival. We picked up a rental car and had a phenomenal lunch at Pig and a Jelly Jar. Since we had slept past breakfast and well into lunch time, their special of chicken and waffles, was perfect! Waffles for breakfast and chicken for lunch … they just HAPPEN to come on the same plate at the same time. Veeeery tasty!

My husband decided that he would like to see the Golden Spike National Monument. I had no idea what that was, but hey, TRAIN THEME!! So off we went.

And went.

And went.

You should know, if you’ve never been, that when they say “The Great” as part of “The Great Salt Lake,” they ain’t kiddin’. We drove around the lake for more than two hours to get to Promontory Pass, the meeting point and “great wedding” of the transcontinental railroad. The museum is a mix of exhibits, gift shop, bookstore and video presentations. If you’ve ever wanted to learn about the great race between the Union Pacific and Central Pacific teams to win land rights, this is a fantastic National Monument to visit. The highlight of every day is when the reproduction Wood versus Coal fired
Steam Engines move to-and-from the engine house. The reproductions are works of art and watching them go is a thrill!

The next day we visited *This is The Place* Heritage Park. We spent most of the day walking around the beautiful historic site. The monuments are impressively imposing. The relocated cabins of pioneers are astonishingly compact, especially considering how many family members lived in them. I enjoyed watching the blacksmith and furniture makers building stocks for the weekend’s planned capture of troublesome outlaws. We also got a special tour of one of Brigham Young’s homes—beautifully preserved and decorated. This house was special because it sat on a large acreage used as an experimental farm. Young would send out search parties to find plant and tree seeds to bring back and plant at the house to see which grew best in the Utah climate.

After a full day of history, we drove to scenic Park City, Utah. We had a dinner date with friends and wanted to bring a bottle of wine. Utah alcohol laws are interesting, and you need to find a state alcohol shop in order to buy a nice Cabernet.

The next day was all about seeing and floating in the Great Salt Lake. Now, I have plenty of curves to make me float under almost any circumstance, but floating in the great salt lake is … interesting. It is very warm. It is the calmest water
I’ve ever seen. It is full of brine shrimp. You can see we had a lovely day for the great floating experiment.

The next day was Opening Ceremonies for Westercon 67. I admit that for all the cons I’ve been to, I’ve never attended any con opening ceremonies before. I learned that the ceremony serves as an excellent preview of what to expect from the con. Each Guest of Honor (GoH) is introduced and talks about their interests, where they will be, and what they will be doing during the weekend. Fan GoH Chris J. Garcia wore flowers in his hair.

For me, the ceremony was the cheat sheet for the perfectly harmless stalking of author Mary Robinette Kowal. Mrs. Kowal had a very full con schedule … full of program items I was interested in! I knew she was a GoH, and since I read (and loved!) her Glamourist novels earlier in the year, I toted them across three states to ask politely if she would sign them.

After the opening ceremonies, the first program item I attended was the book launch for The Shadows Beneath, by the Writing Excuses podcast authors and a series of live recordings for the show.

I have never been able to get into podcasts because it is difficult for me to find time to listen … but a live taping, well, that’s different! It was enlightening to hear the regulars and guests discuss topics like Dealing with Critique Groups and Editor Mis-matches. A key phrase that I love came up during the podcast about being on panels at cons and moderating: “The sum of what you’re passionate about is unique.” The Writing Excuses guest encouraged prospective panelists to write a great bio and be very clear about your unique interests. Great bios, lead to correct topic matching, and great panels! I came away impressed and engaged by the people, personalities and conversations captured in the Writing Excuses podcast. Plus, BONUS: writing prompts at the end of every episode!

Next I attended Schmoozing 101, or “How to network and make the most of a convention without coming off like a weasel.” This informative panel set out to help SF/F fans understand and interpret body language, make appropriate small talk and more easily connect with people of different status in the con environment. Panelists were Dave Doering, Mary Robinette Kowal and Sandra Tayler.

The most interesting part of the panel for me was being introduced to a specific definition of “status” among con-goers. Mrs. Kowal defined status for the purposes of the schmoozing panel based on time constraints. Instead of a
“higher status” person being “better than you” in some judgmental way, she pointed out that GoHs, editors and publishing professionals have many demands on their time at conventions. They are “higher status” than a fan (like me), who may be at con for the sole purpose of following someone like Mrs. Kowal around.

I found this way of contextualizing rank and access to what I have dubbed “famous-ers” helpful for thinking about how to have meaningful interactions. The panel encouraged appropriate small talk, knowing when to continue a conversation or end it, and above all, listening! Mrs. Kowal shared a quote from her mother about meeting new people: “Everyone else is more interesting than you. Ask questions. Listen.”

At the end of the discussion about body language, the panelists all acted out appropriate and inappropriate ways to approach each other. That led to some wonderful, funny moments!

After the last panels of the day there was an ice cream social fundraiser. At last I got to sit down next to Mary Robinette Kowal and introduce myself. She was friendly and generous with her time. We briefly discussed the merits and historical accuracy of various Regency dress patterns.

The next morning, during her GoH slot, Mrs. Kowal read from an in-progress novel, “Ghost Talkers,” set in 1916 during the First World War. She did a wonderful British accent and an almost incomprehensible Irish brogue as she read, so at first it was a little hard to follow. I enjoyed it once my ear adjusted to the voices, and I think the novel—as yet unwritten—will be a very interesting read.

Mrs. Kowal also did a short shadow puppet show, displayed and discussed her handmade stage, lighting and puppets. She demonstrated a lot of the basics of puppetry, discussed some hilarious aspects of her 20-year career on stage as a professional puppeteer and generously signed all three of my books.

Later that day I attended a Fanzines Panel, where Fan GoH Chris J. Garcia, Ric Bretschneider and M. Todd Gallowglass talked. And drank Scotch. Which they shared. There was enough Scotch that no one remembered what the panel was supposed to be about, but I am pretty sure a podcast was recorded, a discussion of “what do you look for in a good business card” ensued, and there was more scotch.

I was especially excited to hear Peter S. Beagle interviewed because “The Last Unicorn” was one of the defining films of
my young life. I later read the book and many others by Beagle, but didn’t know very much about his life or him as an author. Behind the microphone, he was a thoughtful and wise man. Every one of his stories had a punch line, but I found that I had to wait for it. No instant story gratification for him—you had to go along for the ride in order to get the prize—but so very, very worth it. Listening to him speak was like gorging on the most delicious language ice-cream on the hottest summer day.

I got only the briefest chance to walk through the enormous convention center and FantasyCon. I had the impression that I could have spent a week there, and thousands of dollars getting gear to turn myself into a fully-loaded cosplay troll, elf, mermaid, wizard, dragon … anything I could imagine. But I only had time to rush though on my way to a second program item where the Writing Excuses cast was going to interview Beagle for a podcast. This was where Beagle really handed out some amazingly quotable insights and stories. I gathered just two to share with you:

“If your muse is late, start without her,” Beagle said, to emphasize that his career has always been as a working writer … working to support his family. When asked about how he became a storyteller, he said: “When they stopped taking notes and just listened, I knew I had something. The old man gave me that.”

Kowal was among the Writing Excuses cast interviewing Beagle, and she asked if someone in the audience could please take her picture sitting next to him, tweet and tag her. I was happy to oblige!

It was a truly wonderful day.

I won’t bore you with the fine lunches and dinners we had with friends. If you’ve been to a con you know that a big part of it is the in-between conversations, meals and fun of just hanging out in a safe, like-minded environment.
The evening entertainments were pretty fantastic. I dressed up in Regency garb (Mrs. Kowal did too!) for John Hertz’s Regency Dancing. Mrs. Kowal had generously brought seven of her own Regency gowns to share with new dancers. I was able to help “save the day” a little bit by welcoming new folks and manning the audio system. After dancing I went to a lot of fun parties.

Another night I was chosen as a contestant for the hilarious Match Game SF, but I was AWFUL. I’m glad I got to play though, and I shall cherish my “Lovely Parting Gift” badge ribbon.

Researching Costumes was the last panel I attended before leaving Salt Lake City for the south of Utah and the glorious National Parks. As a result, I must say I wasn’t THAT attentive to the panelists, but I was able to thank Mrs. Kowal again for being fun and interesting enough to follow around for the entire weekend.

Then my husband and I were off to the next part of our marmentous vacation!

Utah is gorgeous! We only had three days, and there were definitely moments when I kind of wish we had skipped the con!
Wildflowers

by Yvette Keller
We camped for three nights at Point Supreme in Cedar Breaks National monument. All the camping gear and bedding was in one big roller duffel that was carted unopened from train, to Doubletree, to Marriott, to campsite and FINALLY, put to use!

After getting up and having breakfast, we visited the ranger station and overlook. I was surprised and excited to be in the area for the wildflower festival. It is shocking to this strictly sea-level girl, but at an altitude of more than 10,000 feet, spring manages to roll out of bed around July. That meant we had the opportunity to see the high altitude plants in bloom at the height of their very short season. It was an incredible treat!

We hiked the Alpine Pond Loop, oohing and ahhing over the wildflowers. Then we did the same with the wildlife! We
Zion Canyon from the Pa'rus trail

by Yvette Keller
Bryce Canyon

by Yvette Keller
marmot-watched for a good half an hour as they climbed all over their “apartment complex” of fallen rock. I quickly figured out that a “lookout” was stationed at the tippy top of each rock “floor.” The lookout would give the all clear in a bright chittering sound for the others to move about the rock pile.

We got up with the sun on our second day of camping to drive down to Zion National Park. At Zion, we had a wonderful brunch in the lodge and hiked several trails in a big loop: Upper and Lower Emerald Falls, Grotto and Kayenta trails. Along the way we saw a mule deer grazing.

Hot and hungry, minus one convertible pant leg lost near the grotto, we rode the shuttle bus back to the visitor center to collect lunch. Another short but gorgeous bus ride through the canyon brought us to the Riverside Walk at the north most end of Zion. We ate our lunch on the banks of the Virgin River, defending against very aggressive squirrels who wanted our sandwiches.

We went to the end of the trail to watch brave folks come back from the Narrows, even though the sign has listed flash flooding as “probable.” Having seen thunder and lightning and been showered on during our hike the day before, we were not inclined to trust our luck and venture into an area where we could be easily killed and washed away.

As the sun set over the west edge of Zion, we followed the Pa’rus trail south along the river. It was amazing how the clouds rolled past the mountains and the colors of the rock shifted as each minute passed.

It was fun to catch sight of a young buck mule deer on our way to the Human History Museum. As we left the park, we drove out in the opposite direction, through the incredible Zion-Mt. Carmel Tunnel. This feat of engineering was started in the late 20s and completed in 1930. The tunnel plunges cars into near-complete darkness, then suddenly large, open holes appear, looking out into Zion Canyon! On the other side of the tunnel we saw a family of big horn sheep, completing the list of animals I had hoped to see.

We broke down camp and headed for Bryce Canyon on our way back to Salt Lake City, and our train home. We weren’t sure we would have time to do much except drive though and enjoy the lookouts, but as it turned out, we arrived in plenty of time to hike the easiest trail down into the Queen’s Garden and visit the Hoodoos. Hoodoos, also known as tent rocks, fairy chimneys and earth pyramids struck me as the very friendliest rocks I have ever met. I should clarify that my favorite place
to play as a child was Rocky Nook Park in my hometown, and clambering over Santa Barbara Sandstone has long been my idea of a good time. The hoodoos were made of beautiful colored stone, much of it smooth and begging to be caressed. The shapes made by erosion were drip-sandcastles made by the children of giants.

We made it back to the top of the canyon rim and headed away from the beautiful parks, hoping to return with friends again later for another exploration of our amazing national treasures.

Arriving in Salt Lake, we found that we had time to kill: flooding in Iowa had caused our train to be delayed by several hours. We had a very late, second dinner at a famous late-night, local restaurant called Dee’s.

Back on the train at last, and not TOO wet from seemingly tropical thunderstorms, we rolled into our sleeperette and SLEPT. I love the rocking and rolling sensation of the train, along with the clickety-clack as it moves along the rails. Soon we were home with another adventure under our belts and, for me, a desire to do it all again soon.
Frank Robinson

By Jack Avery
Editor Emeritus

Hugo-award-winning science fiction author and noted pulp magazine collector Frank M. Robinson, 87, died June 30 in San Francisco.

The long-time resident of the city’s Castro district had been too ill to attend the SFWA Nebula Weekend in San Jose in May where he was honored as a special guest.

Robinson was a fan and collector of science fiction from a young age, assembling one of the first complete runs of Weird Tales Magazine. He followed his interest in pulp magazines into the publishing field when he was hired as a teenager as an office boy for Chicago-based Ziff-Davis, publisher of Amazing Stories among other pulps.

His career in publishing was interrupted by service in the Navy during World War II. He also served during the Korean War.

In between his service, he earned a degree in physics, although he pursued careers in publishing and writing instead of working in science. He later followed up with a master’s in journalism.

He has an extensive list of publishing credits, both as an author and in editorial. He is noted as the first to write the Playboy Advisor column in Playboy Magazine where he gave advice to straight men on dating. He was also an editor for a number of other magazines.

Although older than most who were part of the youth movement, he moved to San Francisco in the 1970s, where he said he became an “over age, quasi-hippie.” He played an important part in the history of San Francisco, becoming the speech writer for the California’s first openly gay politician to hold office, Harvey Milk.

His home in the heart of the Castro District was filled with thousands of pulps and science fiction magazines. He maintained complete runs of almost every science fiction magazine ever published and was known in pulp collecting circles for his quest for the absolutely best condition magazines he could find. Even decades after assembling his complete run of Weird Tales, he was still seeking to upgrade a couple of early issues that had such tiny flaws that they were nearly unnoticeable.

In 2012, he began auctioning off his collection through pulp dealer John Gunnison. The sale of what some collectors say was one of finest collections in existence, both in terms of scope and of quality, brought in more than half a million dollars. Robinson’s set of pristine Weird Tales brought in more than a quarter million alone. Robinson said it was difficult to auction off the effort of a lifetime, but he wanted to use the money to enjoy himself before he died.

He was a popular and approachable figure at pulp collector gatherings, well respected and liked among his peers and a determined competitor if a particularly rare and pristine pulp
came up for auction. He also served as a mentor to several generations of science fiction writers.

An early science fiction novel, “The Power,” was made into a movie starring George Hamilton and Michael Rennie. The best known movie made from his works, however, was “The Towering Inferno,” based partly on his collaboration with Thomas N. Scortia, “The Glass Inferno.”

While writing the book, he said he and Scortia discovered that the production company for the movie was interested in it and a rival book “The Tower” by Richard Martin Stern. He said he and Scortia attempted to write the book from a cinematic perspective with descriptions of the fire written with filming in mind in an effort to appeal to the producer. He also said that what set the book apart was that they took the premise of a disaster story and looked at it from a science fiction perspective—making the fire act like a living creature and giving it a personality so it would become the antagonist of the work.

The best-selling author’s 1991 novel “The Dark Beyond the Stars” is considered a major work of science fiction and he had a number of other novels and short stories published over the years.

It was his landmark non-fiction “Science Fiction of the Twentieth Century: An Illustrated History,” however, that won him his Hugo for best related work in 2000. Both that and his earlier work “Pulp Culture: The Art of Fiction Magazines” drew from his extensive collection and personal knowledge.

A memorial service open to the public was held in San Francisco on August 8 at the San Francisco Women’s Building.
Meeting 1254

August 11, 2014
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 8pm, with less comedy
12 people attended
The minutes of meeting 1253 were accepted as “shazbot”
The Treasurer was not present; the proxy report is that last week we took in $11.50 in the regular jar & $3.65 in the party jar
The Vice President reported that there are now 3 new “Drink Tanks” out on the internets
The President had nothing fannish to report

Announcements:
JC announced that Nerdvana podcast, episode 31, part 3 releases soon
Vannessa announced that Chris Garcia fanzines will be available on itunes and smashwords ... soon

Ken announced that the next Legion of Rassilon meeting will be at the IHOP on Steven’s Creek near Lawrence, 7 pm this time - and on Saturday, August 30 - both of which are unusual
Yochanan announced that AMC movies are doing cheap older, re-released movies mid-week for another week
Chris announced that the Silicon Valley short film festival will be shown at Convolution.

Mike announced that Bill Watterson made a charitable donation.

**Reviews:**

Ken reviewed that they are 99% moved and used Silicon Valley Moving & Storage - and were very impressed by them, recommends them, worth full price - a 7 hour move and the cats are happy.

Chris reviewed Higher Ground Moving as amazingly professional with a 3 hour move & he reviewed a DC comic collection as really solid stuff & he also reviewed a paleo pizza Vanessa made as worth full price & highly recommended & he also recommends Hulu.

Yochanan reviewed “Wish I Were here” as a great movie & amazing & reviewed free Shakespeare in the park - “Taming of the Shrew” - as it had good production values and was worth double full price.

There were no auctions.

We adjourned at 8:23.

And the rumor of the week was: “Mork has returned to Ork.”

### Meeting 1255

**August 18, 2014**

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 8pm, with expectations

10 people eventually attended

The London BASFA minutes were approved as “cricket sounds” & the minutes of meeting 1254 were accepted as “approved.”

The Treasurer was not present; the proxy report is that last week we took in $1.00 in the regular jar.

The Vice President was not here.

The President had nothing fannish to report.

**Announcements:**

Ken announced that the next Legion of Rassilon meeting will be at the IHOP on Steven’s Creek near Lawrence, 7 pm this time - and on Saturday, August 30.

JC announced that Nerdvana podcast released 3 shows this week & he’s drawing a blank & announced that Nerdvana Podcasts’ 2nd year anniversary is August 23 & a party to celebrate this will be held at 7 stars bar and grill from noon till 4pm.
Reviews:

Geri reviewed taking a tour of Levi Stadium & the museum as it cost $25 and it was cool, they saw a lot of things and weren’t allowed to touch the grass - plus they have a shop and restaurant that are open every day - and among the follow-ons Diane invited people going to the stadium to come park at her place.

Bob reviewed the Hugo Awards as worth full price & were fantastic & the retro-Hugos were reviewed as “they sucked”

There were no auctions

We adjourned at 8:26

And the rumor of the week was: “Next week there will be auctions”

Meeting 1256

August 25, 2014
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 8pm, with pie
16 people attended

We established a party jar

The minutes of meeting 1255 were accepted as “this week there are auctions”

The Treasurer was not present; the proxy report is that last week we took in $0.25 in the regular jar

The Vice President reported that there are 2 new “Drink Tanks” out, plus a new “Claims Department” out as well

The President had nothing fannish to report

Announcements:

Ken announced that the next Legion of Rassilon meeting will be at the IHOP on Steven’s Creek near Lawrence, 7 pm this time - and on Saturday, August 30.

JC announced that Nerdvana podcast had their 2nd year anniversary party & that episode 32, part 1 will be released Wednesday.

Adrienne announced that it is Mo’s birthday today & that they will be going to a 9:30 showing of “Deep Breath”

Chris announced that the Silicon Valley short film festival will show 22 short films at Convolution on Saturday night.

Reviews:

Lisa reviewed travel as fun, enjoyed NASfic and Mythcon Adrienne reviewed the Paul McCarthy concert as yes, there was traffic, but they made it in - the concert was enjoyable, Mo had fun - and then Adrienne stated that she dislikes the way they are handling Outlander

Chris reviewed the ibooks author app as it makes him happy & that he finally saw “Addams Family”, “Addams Family Values” & “Zombieland” & that they are excellent, excellent films

We did auctions [but put auctioning off Mo for another week]

We adjourned at 9pm

And the rumor of the week was: “Mo’s birthday is not just a rumor, but a movement”
Life is complicated; putting on an event is even more so. Please check before attending, as events are sometimes canceled or times and locations changed.

Follow the calendar on Twitter: @sfsfcalendar

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

Fridays-Sundays, August 29-September 14
Half Moon Bay Shakespeare Company presents “A Midsummer Night’s Dream”
John L. Carter Memorial Park
Stone Pine Road, Half Moon Bay
www.hmbshakespeare.org
The popular play about fairies and star-crossed lovers set in the 1920’s with era music. $20

Friday-Monday, August 29-September 1
CelestiCon
Fremont Marriott
46100 Landing Parkway, Fremont
celesticon.com
CelestiCon offers four days of family-friendly gaming in the San Francisco Bay Area. Hundreds of game events, along with exciting special guests, sponsor prizes and gaming, gaming, gaming. $45

Friday-Sunday, August 29-31
SacAnime
Sacramento Convention Center
1400 J St, Sacramento
www.sacconventions.com
Anime and pop culture show $45

Saturday, September 6
PEERS Casablanca Ball
Alameda Elks Lodge
2255 Santa Clara Avenue, Alameda
peersdance.org/
Ball inspired by the all-time classic film featuring swing and vintage ballroom dance music performed by The Brassworks.
8 p.m. $15 (advance), $20 (at the door)

Saturday-Sunday, September 13-14
Much Ado About Sebastopol
Ives Park
7400 Willow Avenue, Sebastopol, CA
www.muchadoaboutsebastopol.com
Immerse yourself in life of 1578 England in this historically recreated village.
$14 (until September 11), $16 at the door, 10 and under free

Saturdays-Sundays, September 13-October 12
Northern California Renaissance Faire
Casa de Fruta
10031 Pacheco Pass Highway, Hollister, CA
www.norcalrenfaire.com
Northern California’s annual Elizabethan festival. $25, 12 and under free

Saturday, September 13
High Desert Steam Victorian Steampunk Ball
Piper’s Opera House
12 North B Street, Virginia City, NV
www.facebook.com/HighDesertSteam/events
www.highdesertsteam.org
Bazaar and ball with entertainment, steam train rides, a parade and exhibits helping to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the founding Nevada. Noon Check websites for pricing packages.

Saturday, September 13
GBACG Workshop: Mechanical Wings
Site TBA
www.gbacg.org/gbacg-calendar.html
Join for fabulous day of workshops. Questions? Email workshops@gbacg.org Check website for prices
Sunday, September 14
Antique Autos in the Park
History Park
635 Phelan Avenue, San Jose
historysanjose.org/wp/events/
200 antique automobiles, fire equipment, bicycles and motorcycles from late 1800s to 1945 on display.
11 a.m. - 4 p.m. $5

Sunday, September 14
Gatsby Summer Afternoon
Dunsmuir Helman Historic Estate
2960 Peralta Oaks Court, Oakland
artdecosociety.org/gatsby.htm
Afternoon picnic party with dancing, cars and the Deco Belles inspired by “The Great Gatsby”.
Check website for prices

Saturday, September 20
San Francisco Silent Autumn Silent Film Festival
Castro Theater
429 Castro Street, San Francisco
www.silentfilm.org
One day of silent film programming with live musical accompaniment featuring Laurel and Hardy shorts, Buster Keaton’s feature “The General”, the German expressionistic classic “The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari”, the Rudolph Valentino’s last film flick “Son of the Sheik” and more.
See website for tickets

Sunday, September 21
GBACG Bilbo’s Birthday Bash
Holbrook Palmer Park
150 Watkins Avenue, Atherton
www.gbacg.org/gbacg-calendar.html
Celebrate Bilbo’s eleventy-first birthday at Hobbiton (Holbrook-Palmer Park). All hobbits, dwarves, elves and humans welcome.
Members, $10; Non-members, $15

Friday-Sunday, September 26-28
Convolution 2014: Halfway Home
Hyatt Regency SFO Airport
1333 Bayshore Highway, Burlingame
con-volution.com/2014/
General science-fiction/fantasy convention
$55 (pre-registration through September 26)

Saturday, September 27
Superhero Street Fair
1700 Indiana Street, San Francisco
superherosf.com
The co-creators of How Weird Street Fair and Burning Man Decompression present a street fair with a superhero theme to celebrate all the heroes in the community.
1 pm - 11 pm $10 (in costume or early bird)
$20 (no costume)

Friday-Sunday, October 3-5
HRM Steampunk Symposium
Old Sacramento
Sacramento, CA
www.hrmsteampunk.com
Steampunk convention with tours of Old Sacramento, train rides, murder mystery dinner theater, screening of “Serenity” and dance.
$50/$85 (pre-registration)

Saturday, October 4
Impalas United
History Park
635 Phelan Avenue, San Jose
historysanjose.org/wp/events/
Car show
11 a.m. - 4 p.m. $5 per person, $25 per car

Saturday, October 4
PEERS Girl Genius Europan Oktoberfest Ball
Alameda Elks Lodge
2255 Santa Clara Avenue, Alameda
peersdance.org
Ball inspired by the popular webcomic “Girl Genius” and music by Avalon Rising.
8 p.m. $15 (advance), $20 (at the door)

Saturday-Sunday, October 4-5
Kraken Con
Oakland Convention Center
550 10th Street, Oakland
www.krakencon.com/
General anime convention
$25
Saturday-Sunday, October 4-5
Alternative Press Expo (APE)
Festival Pavilion, Fort Mason Center
2 Marina Boulevard, San Francisco
comic-con.org/ape
2 days of small-press and independent publishers and artists. $15

Sunday, October 5
GBACG Costume Salon: Victorian
Site TBA
www.gbacg.org/gbacg-calendar.html
Join us for potluck tea snacks, socializing, and sharing resources. Theme appropriate books, patterns, garments, or projects also welcome. Our Salons are free and no dress-up is required. If you’d like to attend, email costumesalons@gbacg.org.

Saturday, October 11
BAERS Waverly Ball
Masonic Lodge of San Mateo
100 N. Ellsworth Avenue, San Mateo
baers.org
Regency ball with English country dancing.
8 p.m. $15 (advanced), $20 (at the door)

Friday-Sunday, October 17-19
Big Bad Con
Hilton Airport Oakland
1 Hegenberger Road, Oakland
www.bigbadcon.com
Role-playing game convention $40

Saturday-Sunday, October 18-19
Folsom Renaissance Faire and Shakespeare Festival
Folsom Lion’s Park
403 Stafford Street, Folsom
www.folsomfaire.com
22nd Annual Faire in beautiful Folsom.
8 p.m. $16, under 6 free

Sunday, October 19
Sac-Con
Scottish Rite Temple
6151 H Street, Sacramento
www.sac-con.com
Anime convention
10 a.m. $8

Saturday, October 25
Gaskell October Fancy Dress Ball
Scottish Rite Temple
1547 Lakeside Drive, Oakland
gaskellball.com
Vintage ball featuring the music of Franklin Beau Davis and the Brassworks. Costumes admired or formal attire required (19th to 21st century)
7: 30 p.m. $20

Saturday-Sunday, October 25-26
Witches Brew Ball
Tyme for Tea & Co
37501 Niles Boulevard, Fremont
www.tymefortea.com/home.html
Come in costume for a Halloween themed tea setting. Reservation required
11 am and 2:30 p.m. $34 (includes tax and gratuity)

Friday, October 31
The Sun Kings-Halloween Beatles Tribute Concert
The Bal Theater
14808 East 14th Street, San Leandro
www.baltheatre.com
Halloween concert featuring local Beatles Tribute band The Sun Kings.
7: 30 p.m. $24.99-39.99

Friday, October 31
Cosplay Halloween Ball
Hotel Kabuki Japantown
1625 Post Street, San Francisco
cosplaysf.com/cosplay-halloween-ball
Come and be part of our Cosplay Halloween Ball inside at Hotel Kabuki in San Francisco Japan Town!! Dress up as one your favorite character on a Japanese Anime, Video Games, Comic Superheroes, American Cartoons, Sci-Fi Movies, Television Series and their related interests.
7 p.m. $30
Saturday, November 1

PEERS Le Bal des Vampires
Alameda Elks Lodge
2255 Santa Clara Avenue, Alameda
peersdance.org
21st Annual ball of the undead featuring music by Bangers and Mash, halftime show featuring the exploits of Sherlock Holmes and dark dance music at the Nightfall Club.
6: 30 p.m. $20 (until September 1) $30 (until October 12), $35 (until October 31)

Saturday, November 8

GBACG On The Road
North Beach Area
San Francisco
www.gbacg.org/gbacg-calendar.html
Don your 1950’s best and come howl with the beatniks as we explore North Beach on a walking tour that includes the Beat Museum, City Lights Bookstore, and more.
Check website for prices

Saturday, November 15

GBACG Workshop
Site TBA
www.gbacg.org/gbacg-calendar.html
Join for fabulous day of workshops. Questions? Email workshops@gbacg.org.
Check website for prices

Saturdays-Sundays, November 22-December 21

The Great Dickens Christmas Fair and Victorian Holiday Party
Historic Cow Palace
2600 Geneva Avenue, Daly City
dickensfair.com
The annual Victorian Holiday season celebration featuring Victorian London populated by celebrities and Dickensian characters
Weekends 1-3: $25, Weekends 4-5: $30; Children 5-12, $12, under 5 free

Saturday, December 27

New York Society Holiday Tea
Garden Court, Palace Hotel
2 New Montgomery St, San Francisco
www.gbacg.org/gbacg-calendar.html
Mrs. Astor and Mrs. Vanderbilt invite the cream of New York society to their holiday tea. We’ll enjoy a sumptuous tea, sparkling wine, holiday cheer, and the very best possible company in the incomparable Garden Court.
Costume: daywear, 1870-1889.
Check website for price

Friday-Sunday, December 12-14

The Official Star Trek Convention
Hyatt Regency San Francisco Airport
3300 Bayshore Highway, Burlingame
www.creationent.com/cal/st_sanfrancisco.html
Official Star Trek convention with many celebrities
Check website for price packages

Saturday, December 3

Gaskell Festive Holiday Ball
Scottish Rite Temple
1547 Lakeside Drive, Oakland
gaskellball.com
Holiday ball featuring the music of Franklin Beau Davis and the Brassworks. Formal attire required (19th to 21st century)
7:30 p.m. $20

Sunday, December 14

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. $8

Friday-Sunday, January 3-5, 2015

Sac-Anime
Sacramento Convention Center
1400 J St, Sacramento
www.sacconventions.com
Anime show.
Saturday, January 3, 2015
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. $20 (advanced), $25 (at the door)

Sunday, January 11, 2015
GBACG Costume Salon
Site TBA
www.gbacg.org/gbacg-calendar.html
Join us for potluck tea snacks, socializing, and sharing resources. Theme appropriate books, patterns, garments, or projects also welcome. Our Salons are free and no dress-up is required. If you’d like to attend, email costumesalons@gbacg.org.

Free

Thursday-Monday, January 16-20, 2015
Further Confusion 2015: London Fog-A Victorian Murder Mystery
furcon.org/2014/
San Jose McEnery Convention Center
150 W. San Carlos Street, San Jose
Anthropomorphic costuming convention
$50 (pre-registration), $60 (at con)

Friday-Monday, February 6-8, 2015
Potlatch 24
Hotel Deca, 4507 Brooklyn Avenue NE,
Seattle, Washington
potlatch-sf.org
Literary SF convention $55 (until October 1)

Saturday, February 7, 2015
PEERS A Dance of Fire and Ice: A Grand Court Ball in Westeros
Alameda Elks Lodge
2255 Santa Clara Avenue, Alameda
peersdance.org
Ball inspired by the books of George R.R. Martin and the show “Game of Thrones” with music by celtic rock band Avalon Rising.
8 p.m. $20 (advanced), $25 (at the door)

Friday-Monday, February 13-16, 2015
DunDraCon
San Ramon Marriott
2600 Bishop Drive, San Ramon
www.dundracon.com
Gaming convention Price TBA

Friday-Monday, February 13-16, 2015
Pantheacon
San Jose Doubletree
2050 Gateway Place, San Jose
pantheacon.com
Pagan convention. This year’s theme is Pagan Visions of the Future and Building Pagan Safety and Social Nets.
$60 (Till September 1), $70 (till January 1), $80 (after January 1)

Friday-Monday, March 6-8, 2015
Consonance 2015
Crowne Plaza San Jose/Silicon Valley
88 Bellew Drive, Milpitas
consonance.bostoncalifornia.com
Filk convention convention. Guests: Wild Mercy, Gary Hanak, Jim Partridge, Phil Mills $55

Friday-Monday, March 6-8, 2015
FOGcon 2014
Walnut Creek Marriott
2355 North Main Street, Walnut Creek
fogcon.org
Saturday, March 7, 2015
PEERS Dances of Mystery and Imagination: A Victorian Costume Ball in Honor of Mr. Edgar Allan Poe
Alameda Elks Lodge
2255 Santa Clara Avenue, Alameda
peersdance.org
Ball honoring the author Edgar Allan Poe set in Paris featuring 19th Century ballroom dancing and music by Baguette Quartette.
8 p.m. $20 (advanced), $25 (at the door)

Friday-Sunday, March 13-15, 2015
ConQuest Sac X
Sacramento Red Lion Hotel Woodlake Conference Center
500 Leisure Lane, Sacramento
www.conquestsac.com
Tabletop gaming convention. $60

Friday-Saturday, March 27-29
Corflu 32: Tynecon III
The Vermont Hotel
Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, United Kingdom
corflu.org
Fanzine fandom convention. $85

Saturday-Sunday, March 28-29, 2015
Twisted Terror Convention
Sacramento Doubletree by Hilton
2001 Point West Way, Sacramento
twistedterrorconvention.com
www.facebook.com/TwistedTerrorConvention/ info
Horror/Sci-fi convention. $35

Friday-Sunday, April 3-5, 2015
BabsCon
SFO Hyatt Regency
1333 Bayshore Highway, Burlingame
babscon.com
Convention devoted to “My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic.” $50 (pre-registration)

Saturday, April 4, 2015
PEERS Dance Comes to Pemberly: Pride and Prejudice 10 Years Later
Alameda Elks Lodge
2255 Santa Clara Avenue, Alameda
peersdance.org
Ball featuring the 10th wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Fitzwilliam Darcy and their friends with English country dancing, quadrilles and waltzes. Music provided by Bangers and Mash..
8 p.m. $20 (advanced), $25 (at the door)

Saturday-Sunday, April 18-19, 2015
Big Wow! ComicFest
San Jose McEnery Convention Center
150 W. San Carlos Street, San Jose
bigwowcomicfest.com
Comics convention.
Pricing TBA

Saturday, May 2, 2015
PEERS My Fair Lady Ball: A Ball at the Transylvania Embassy
Alameda Elks Lodge
2255 Santa Clara Avenue, Alameda
peersdance.org
Ball based on the popular musical fill where Miss Higgins is presented into public for the first time with waltzes, tangos and more. Music provided by Bangers and Mash..
8 p.m. $20 (advanced), $25 (at the door)

Saturday, May 9, 2015
60th Anniversary Screening of Japanese Version of “Godzilla”
Sundance Cinemas Kabuki
1881 Post Street, San Francisco
www.sundancecinemas.com/index.html
Prior to screening, there will be a reception in the lobby from 5:30 to 6:40 pm, offering the opportunity for attendees to obtain copies of the second edition of “Eiji Tsuburaya: Master of Monsters” (Chronicle Books), the lavishly illustrated biography of the visual effects mastermind behind Godzilla and Ultraman. Afterwards, there will be a Q & A session and an additional book signing.
7 p.m. see website for prices
**Wednesday-Thursday, May 13-14, 2015**

*60th Anniversary Screening of Japanese Version of “Godzilla”*

Alameda Theaters and Cineplex  
2317 Central Avenue, Alameda  
www.alamedatheatres.com

Prior to screening, there will be a reception in the lobby from 5:30 to 6:40 pm, offering the opportunity for attendees to obtain copies of the second edition of “Eiji Tsuburaya: Master of Monsters” (Chronicle Books), the lavishly illustrated biography of the visual effects mastermind behind Godzilla and Ultraman. 7 p.m. see website for prices

**Saturday, May 10**

*31th Annual Art Deco Preservation Ball*

Bimbo’s 365 Club  
1025 Columbus Avenue, San Francisco  
www.artdecopreservationball.com

Art Deco ball.  
Ticket packages TBA

**Friday-Monday, May 22-25, 2015**

*FanimeCon*

San Jose McEnery Convention Center  
150 W. San Carlos Street, San Jose  
www.fanime.com

General anime convention in conjunction with Clockwork Alchemy. Pricing TBA

*Clockwork Alchemy*

Doubletree Hotel  
2050 Gateway Place, San Jose  
www.clockworkalchemy.com/#/home

Steampunk convention in conjunction with Fanime. Pricing TBA

*KublaCon*

Hyatt Regency San Francisco Airport  
1333 Bayshore Highway, Burlingame  
www.kublacon.com

West Coast’s largest gaming convention. Pricing TBA

*BayCon*

Hyatt Regency Santa Clara  
5101 Great America Parkway, Santa Clara  
baycon.org/2015

General interest science fiction/fantasy convention. Pricing TBA

**Ongoing**

**Daily**

*Cartoon Art Museum*

655 Mission Street, San Francisco  
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/

Current exhibitions: Alice in Wonderland starts May 1.  
10-6 p.m. $20 (Closed Tuesdays)

*San Francisco Ghost Hunt Walking Tour*

Begins: Queen Anne Hotel  
1590 Sutter at Octavia, San Francisco  
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/

Radio show covering nerdy topics  
5-6 p.m.
**VIZ Cinema**
1746 Post Street, San Francisco
www.newpeopleworld.com/films
VIZ Cinema is a 143-seat underground cinema inside New People in San Francisco. Its programming focuses on the latest and hottest films from Japan, as well as classics, favorites, documentaries and anime. Please check theater for showtimes and tickets.

**Wednesdays - Sundays**

**Escape From The Time Travel Lab**
Real Escape Room
1746 Post Street, San Francisco
realescapegame.com/rersf2_ttlab
You are trapped in a mysterious laboratory where they study time travel and must escape in this immersive game.
Various time - check website $28 (online booking), $33 (at the door)

**Sundays**

**Amtgard Game Day**
Codornices Park
1201 Euclid Ave, Berkeley (Across from Berkeley Rose Garden)
caatmgard.com
Amtgard is a swords and sorcery styled medieval combat, culture, and sciences LARP. The Shire of Wyvern’s Spur plays Sundays at noon. We play on the main lawn or within sight of picnic areas 1 or 2. Loaner gear is available 12 p.m.

**Golden Gate Knights (Lightsaber Instruction Class)**
Studio Gracia
19 Heron Street, San Francisco
goldengateknights.com
www.facebook.com/groups/goldengatejedi
Instructor-led class on lightsaber stage combat and choreography.
12 p.m. $10

**Cloondara Fighter Practice**
Golden Gate Park
47th Avenue @ Fulton, San Francisco
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

**Vintage Ballroom Dance Classes sponsored by PEERS**
Alameda Elks Lodge
2255 Santa Clara Avenue, Alameda
peersdance.org/dance.html
2 dance classes offered: the first one covering basics for newcomers and those wanting a refresher, the second class offers choreography for experienced dancers and adventurous newcomers. Suggested attire is comfortable clothes and leather-soled shoes that glide easily
2 p.m. to 4 p.m. $10

**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 Societ**
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

**Fridays and Sundays**

**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.
Free
### 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

### 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. 408-534-1169.  
7 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.  
Free

**Vintage Waltz**  
Lake Merrit Dance Center  
200 Grand Avenue, Oakland  
vintagewaltz.com  
Weekly drop-in class in Victorian Waltz. No experience or partner needed.  
7 p.m. - 8 p.m.  
$8

### 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 Planetees, Derek McCaw, Ric Bretschneider and Nate Costa.  
7 p.m.  
Free
### Fridays

**Friday Night Waltz**  
First United Methodist Church  
625 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto  
[www.fridaynightwaltz.com](http://www.fridaynightwaltz.com)  
High energy dance featuring waltzes and other dances with 2 classes before the dance.  
7 p.m. - Midnight  
$12 for dance and class, $8 class only  

**Haunted Haight Walking Tour**  
Meets at Coffee To The People  
1206 Masonic Avenue, San Francisco  
[www.hauntedhaight.com](http://www.hauntedhaight.com)  
Reservations required.  
7 p.m. - 9 p.m.  
$20  

### Saturdays

**Niles Film Museum Saturday Movies**  
Niles Essanay Silent Film Museum  
37417 Niles Boulevard, Fremont  
[www.nilesfilmmuseum.org](http://www.nilesfilmmuseum.org)  
[www.nilesfilmmuseum.org/movies.htm](http://www.nilesfilmmuseum.org/movies.htm)  
Weekly showing of selection of silent features and short subjects with live musical accompaniment. Check website for movies.  
7:30 p.m.  
$5  

### 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.  

### Biweekly

**Gaslight LARP**  
289 8th Street, San Francisco  
[gaslight.endogaming.net](http://gaslight.endogaming.net)  
[www.facebook.com/groups/gaslightlarp](http://www.facebook.com/groups/gaslightlarp)  
[www.facebook.com/gaslightlarp](http://www.facebook.com/gaslightlarp)  
Full immersion Victorian-era World of Darkness Boffer LARP bimonthly weekends in the Santa Cruz Mountains  
Time and dates available on website, contact organizers for cost  

### Monthly

**Dorkbot-SF**  
[www.dorkbot.org/dorkbotsf](http://www.dorkbot.org/dorkbotsf)  
Dorkbot hosts regular forums for artists, designers, engineers, students, and other people doing strange things with electricity. Dates vary.  
Free, donations welcome  

**Foothill Anime**  
Building 5015, Foothill College  
Los Altos Hills  
[foothill.anime.net](http://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  

**Doctor Who Perv Society**  
Wicked Grounds Cafe  
289 8th Street, San Francisco  
[www.wickedgrounds.com/regular-events.html](http://www.wickedgrounds.com/regular-events.html)  
Gathering for Doctor Who fans to discuss the show and other topics. Meets first Sunday of every month.  
4 pm  
Free
**The Tech After Hours**
The Tech Museum of Innovation
201 South Market Street, San Jose
[www.thetech.org/programs/after-hours](http://www.thetech.org/programs/after-hours)
The monthly evening event where adults 21 and older can enjoy science, technology, entertainment and cocktails together with their friends. Held on the first Thursday of the month.
7 p.m. $10

**Silicon Gulch Browncoats**
Various locations (see website for details)
[www.silicongulchbrowncoats.org](http://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](http://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/](http://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

**Time Warp Cartel Presents “The Rocky Horror Picture Show”**
The Vine Cinema
1722 First Street, Livermore, CA
[www.timewarpcartel.com/](http://www.timewarpcartel.com/)
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.
Midnight

**QSF&F Book Club**
Borderlands Books
866 Valencia, San Francisco
[www.borderlands-books.com/about_events.html](http://www.borderlands-books.com/about_events.html)
Meets the second Sunday of the month.
5 p.m. Free

**East Bay Star Wars Club**
Central Perk
10086 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito
510-558-7375
[www.facebook.com/groups/35116614719/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/35116614719/)
Meets the second Friday of every month.
7:30 p.m. Free

**BAERS Second Friday Dance Party**
St. Mark’s Episcopal Church
600 Colorado Avenue, Palo Alto
[baers.org](http://baers.org)
Learn Regency dances in a informal, supportive atmosphere. Dances led by Alan Winston and guest callers.
Held on second Friday of each month.
8 p.m - 10:30 p.m. $10

**Fantastic Frontiers**
[www.freewebs.com/fantasticfrontiers/](http://www.freewebs.com/fantasticfrontiers/)
Social club for Sacramento County sci fi/fantasy fans usually meets the second Saturday of the month. Check website for meeting times and locations.

**No-Name Anime**
Saratoga Library
13650 Saratoga Avenue
Saratoga
[www.nnanime.com](http://www.nnanime.com)
Anime screenings usually take place on the second Saturday of the month.
Free
SF Browncoats
Cafe Murano
1777 Steiner Street, San Francisco
www.sfbrowncoats.com
SF Firefly/Serenity fans usually meet up on the second Saturday of the month.
Noon Free

Science Fiction and Fantasy Book Club
Borderlands Books
866 Valencia, San Francisco
www.borderlands-books.com
Meets the third Sunday of the month. Please contact Jude at jfeldman@borderlands-books.com for more information.
6 p.m. Free

Night of the Living Book Club
Books, Inc.- Mountain View
301 Castro Street, Mountain View
www.booksinc.net/night-living-book-club
Monthly book club discusses classic and contemporary selections from suspense, thriller, and horror fiction genres. Meets every third Sunday of each month.
5 pm Free

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

USS Northern Lights
sites.google.com/site/ussnorthernlights
Contact firstjedi2000@yahoo.com 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.
7 p.m. Free

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

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

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
International House of Pancakes
5403 Stevens Creek Boulevard, Santa Clara
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

Vintage Invasion (Vintage Waltz Party)
Finnish Brotherhood Hall
1970 Chestnut Street, Berkeley
vintagewaltz.com/Invasion.html
Parties held each 4th Friday of the month with lessons in vintage waltz with DJs.
8 p.m - Midnight. $7
Wicked Games
Wicked Grounds Cafe
289 8th Street, San Francisco
www.wickedgrounds.com/regular-events.html
Gaming at Wicked Grounds. Meets fourth Saturday of every month.
6 pm to 10 pm  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

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 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

For even more events in the Bay Area, check out Bay Area Geek Guide: The San Francisco Bay Area Guide to Geek Events & Nerd Culture: bayareageekguide.com
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*Science Fiction/San Francisco* is the monthly news zine for the San Francisco Bay Area – www.efanzines.com.