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By Christopher Erickson  
Managing Editor

The last few months have been pretty busy outside of conventions and work, but those two items have also taken up a large portion of time. I was working on my Fifth Doctor outfit and I finally finished it with a couple of weeks to go before Comic-Con (and I had started on it back in late 2012). I was putting on a finishing touch to my sweater that I had forgotten about in the mad dash of packing, but it only took about half an hour. Ironically, an episode of “Magnum, P.I.” called “Déjà Vu” came on that Peter Davison was a guest star on while I was working on the sweater.

Comic-Con was almost a complete sensory overload as every day was packed wall-to-wall with people, but there was still some places where you could find some peace and quiet. It was almost a complete disaster from the beginning with receiving a speeding ticket while I was starting to get very tired while driving down, not having my driver’s license returned to me when we stopped over in Sylmar to get some sleep at 2 AM and having to drive from San Diego to Sylmar and back to get not only my own driver’s license but Jean’s ID as well. This pretty much ruined an entire day along with almost being hit by a merging big rig because the driver was not paying attention. Fortunately, our Judges’ Choice Award for our group’s Masquerade entry made up for it as well as seeing the amazing costumes.

Masquerade Medal  
by Christopher Erickson
The premiere of “Doctor Who” Series 8 was something I was looking forward to with a new Doctor and new outlook on the series. We attended the theatrical presentation at the Century Theaters San Mateo with other fans. The episode was great and laid the groundwork for another amazing season.

Other upcoming television shows that I am looking forward to with the new season is the second season of “Marvel’s Agents of SHIELD” with the addition of Lucy Lawless and Adrianne Palicki as the superhero Mockingbird, “Once Upon A Time” with the addition of Queen Elsa, Kristoff, Princess Anna from “Frozen” and the Knave of...
Hearts/Will Scarlett from the sister series “Once Upon A Time in Wonderland,” and new offerings in “The Flash,” “Constantine” and “Gotham.”

I have also been watching the Wrestlemania matches of Shawn Michaels as well. He was an amazing athletic performer with entertaining spots. The matches may be scripted, but the storylines of the matches are not predictable. He had an amazing career in an industry where very few people make it to the top with the right combination of athletic skill and charisma needed to be the main star.

We also attended a couple of shows. One was the Lamplighter production of Gilbert and Sullivan’s “The Pirates of Penzance.” The show had great costumes and staging and the singing was amazing. The production was at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts. It was a very nice venue and had a café in the building with great food. The other show was based on the Orson Welles broadcast of “War of The Worlds” at Nitery Theater on Stanford University. The theater was set up as if the audience was viewing the studio booth of the broadcast, with mentions of Superman comics, the Nazi aggression of 1938 and the Great Depression. The show we went to was the same weekend of LonCon 3 where the 1939 Retro Hugos were awarded with “War of the Worlds” winning Best Dramatic Presentation and a special award given to Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster for the creation of Superman.

I was part of a video shoot for a “Doctor Who” inspired song on a forthcoming album by “The Voice” Season 5 contestant Kat Robichaud. We did the shoot around Mission Delores Park and outside the mission itself. There were several cosplayers including an older man dressed as the First Doctor who drove from Lodi for the event. Jean and I later visited Mission Delores itself, which is the oldest building in San Francisco and was featured in the montage of places visited by Kim Novak’s character in Alfred Hitchcock’s “Vertigo.” The building was amazing and the Basilica next door had amazing stained glass windows with all of the 21 missions represented in the stained glass.

Jean and I also visited another great San Francisco landmark, the San Francisco Zoo with other members of the Greater Bay Area Costumers Guild (GBACG). The GBACG had a Steampunk Safari event. The turnout was very good and there were many great costumes. The zoo had an amazing array of animals including a red panda, several chimpanzees, giraffes, lions, tigers, a hippopotamus, apes, rhinoceroses, parrots, emus, bald eagles, flamingos, penguins, prairie dogs, zebras, sea lions and polar bears.

I have been reading more classic science fiction lately. I read the novelization of “Fantastic Voyage” by Isaac Asimov that I picked up from a friend who moved out of state. The book was similar to novels by Jules Verne where an implausible scenario is used to help illustrate science and technology. The other book I finished was the full version of “A Clockwork Orange” by Anthony Burgess. The restored ending with the final chapter (Part 3, Chapter 7) gave a different tone to the book with the main character Alex going bored with his ultraviolent ways and contemplating family and being a productive member of society. It allowed the character to have free will and a chance at personal redemption rather than the unchangeable nature of human evil reflected in the Stanley Kubrick movie and the original American publication.

I also saw “Guardians of the Galaxy” over Labor Day weekend. It was a great piece of old-fashioned science fiction
storytelling in the mold of “Star Wars” or the old Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers serials. It was a great ride with funny moments. I recommend this movie to anyone who has not seen it yet. The movie has important implications to the Marvel Cinematic Universe with identifications of the Tesseract from “Captain America: The First Avenger” and “Marvel’s The Avengers” and the Aether from “Thor: The Dark World” holding great power and being part of a group of similar objects being sought after by a character seen in “The Avengers.”

We also visited the Niles Essanay Silent Film Museum in Fremont. It is a nice little building that has photos from the time when the Essanay Film Company was located in Niles (later incorporated into Fremont). The studio has several types of cameras and shows a recreation of project room rooms from the time, which had metal lining to help prevent fire since the films were processed with reactive silver nitrate, a known oxidizer that can start fires. The studio also went through its history as a studio set up to help produce westerns and other films year round, the movies made at the studio including those of early stars Bronco Billy and Charlie Chaplin, and the origin of the word “flick” (coming from the flicker that could happen with hand cranked cameras). There was an antique automobile parked in front of the building painted to look like a taxi with Chaplin painted on the side of the car.

The one major event that Jean and I will be partaking in is a trip to the United Kingdom for the Jane Austen Festival in Bath, a visit to the Royal Naval Observatory (featured in the ending of “Thor: The Dark World) and the Prime Meridian, a visit the Charles Dickens house, Cardiff Castle, BBC Studios in Wales (where “Doctor Who” is filmed) and the Shakespeare play “Richard III”. The Jane Austen Festival features a costumed promenade, two balls and many other events. We will be spending two weeks in the British Isles and I am looking forward to it.

After we return, I have Con-volution to look forward to and several panels that I will be involved in, the Northern California Renaissance Faire, the PEERS Girl Genius Ball and the BAERS Waverly Ball. Halloween will also be coming up and I am looking forward to going to an event or two.

Have a wonderful October everyone!
And Knowing Is Half the Battle: The 50th Anniversary of G.I. Joe

By Christopher Erickson
Managing Editor

It is hard to imagine that a military-themed toy line introduced during the height of the social and political upheaval of the 1960s could have survived into one of the most successful franchises, but America’s Movable Fighting Man done just that. This simple plastic toy has created a unique cultural phenomenon that celebrates the people who choose to fight to uphold the ideas of freedom.

The first line of G.I. Joe toys was offered in 1964 by Hasbro. It was originally a 12-inch doll that was marketed as an action figure (leading to the generic use of the word for toys marketed for boys), had a claimed 21 points of articulation that was unique at the time, and had a line of accessories specific to each of the four figures: Action Solider, Action Sailor, Action Pilot and Action Marine. The playthings became popular quickly and was an instant success.

With the changing sentiments towards the armed forces due to protests against the Vietnam War, the marketing for the action figures moved away from its military roots and moved towards a more generic adventurer line in 1970. The Adventure Team series focused on military specialists operating in remote locations such as deserts, jungles, mountains, the ocean and space. The playsets promoted adventures of exploration and environmental preservation as the Joes fought against natural and ecological disasters, helping to promote environmental awareness. Several other...
innovations were introduced, including lifelike hair and beards, unique team members including an African-American soldier, moveable eyes and the famous Kung-Fu grip (which became a famous line in “Trading Places”). The toys were also released with accompanying comics showing the adventures of members of the team working together, helping to create a team concept where the separate toy lines were part of a larger shared framework.

These early innovations would come to dominate how toys were made and marketed. Most dolls and action figures would start to have movable parts for posing, come with some sort of promotional material such as comics showing the adventures of the different characters working together, playsets for the figures and create distinct characters.

The line of toys became so popular that it was marketed in other countries as Action Man, Action Force or a similar name to remove the American-centric sentiment of the toy line. The remarketing of toy lines to other countries would begin here as an example that was later followed by Go-Bots, Transformers and other toy lines.

1976 saw GI Joe go back to its roots with a simple line of toys focused on the military theme with anti-war sentiment having died down and many companies producing similar toys to the original theme. This toy line was introduced as The Defenders and featured one action figure in a series of military outfits and a limited set of accessories. All of the innovation was gone as the lifelike hair and multiple articulation points were not used anymore.

The year of 1982 saw the introduction of the biggest and arguably most well-known version of the franchise, G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero. The toy line was revamped to a 3¾” size after the success of the Star Wars and Micronauts playlines. This one featured not only the heroes with unique uniforms and duties (similar to the first toys and the Adventure Series line) but with unique names such as Clutch, Rock and Roll, Duke, General Hawk, Snake Eyes and Gung-Ho. Female characters were also introduced such as Scarlet, Lady Jaye and Covergirl. The new toy line also featured an enemy combatant group for the first time named Cobra, which was a worldwide terrorist organization, moving the military aspect away from fighting America’s wars and more towards helping to preserve freedom and fight injustice around the world.

In addition, the franchise was one of the first to utilize licensed promotion of existing characters to help market the brand and sell merchandise. An accompanying limited cartoon series of five episodes that expanded to a second five episode series and a full series was released. The animation featured the available figures and accessories being sold in stores. The characters were also licensed to a popular comic book lasting over 100 issues published by Marvel. This became the model for selling toys that was used for other product lines such as Transformers, Jem and the Holograms, My Little Pony, Rainbow Brite and He-Man and She-Ra. Even established characters were promoted in this way such as the Super Powers line of DC Comics figures and the slate of superhero shows in the 1990s such as “Spider-Man”, “X-Men,” “Batman: The Animated Series” and “Superman: The Animated Series.”

The continued popularity of G.I. Joe led to the creation of animation shows and associated toy lines beyond the initial 1980s series. A successor series was introduced in 1989 as well as several new series that have been released throughout
the years along with the accompanying action figures. This was a template used to great effect for several Transformer series and new toy lines, the success of “My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic,” the additional He-Man shows and the upcoming “Jem and the Holograms” movie.

The popularity of the toy has also given us three separate catchphrases, “G.I. Joe with the Kung-Fu grip,” “Yo Joe!” and “Knowing is half the battle.”

G.I. Joe has shown that a toy can become an idea that changes with the times, promotes worthwhile values and still makes money. The Real American Hero more than likely be around for a long time to come.
Welcome to the Big Show:
San Diego Comic-Con International 2014

By Christopher Erickson
Managing Editor

I had the good fortune to be able to attend this year’s San Diego Comic-Con International at the San Diego Convention Center on July 24-27, 2014. The event was even more massive than the last time I was at the show back in 2010. The event has become a huge undertaking that seems to have a permeant home in America’s Finest City after the relocation rumors to Las Vegas or Los Angeles surfaced in 2010.

The convention itself has made a number of efforts to help out the people who attend. They had large selection of official hotels in several areas including Mission Hills, Hotel Circle, Downtown and the Gaslamp District. These hotels had special rates that were more affordable than other hotels in the area that still had availability with only a few months before the show. The hotel we stayed in, Days Inn, had free breakfast...
vouchers for all of the convention goers with pancakes, eggs, sausage, bagels and juice. A number of bus lines were set up for people to get to the convention center from their hotels to help alleviate parking and traffic issues as well as supplement the existing public transportation system. The buses ran 24 hours throughout the convention, making it easy for people to get to their hotels if they stayed for the late-night programming. The convention also partnered with Ace Parking for people to reserve a parking spot if they wanted it. It was convenient for people who may need to be close to the convention center due to large costume pieces that may need assembly, have a large amount of items (such as most masquerade entrants) or those who may have special accessibility needs that the bus lines may not have provided.

The organizers also maintained good crowd control for both Hall H and Ballroom 20 (the main panel rooms for all of
the big event panels) and the dealer’s room. People were allowed to stay overnight or line up early in designated spots that provided some shelter from potential rain (there were a few thunderstorms and some rain on one night) with use of restroom facilities. People had to wait in certain spots or needed to obtain tickets depending on what line they were waiting in, but it was organized so people could still get around and not block vital exits and pathways in case of an emergency.

The official Comic-Con app was one of the biggest improvements since 2010. Since most people have access to a smartphone, this was a necessity. The mobile app had not only maps and schedules, but allowed people to search for specific booths, panels, autograph sessions, convention exclusives and activities. The guidebooks were still available, but it was not
Meetings In Session

Twelve Backstage by Jean Martin
necessary to carry it around the entire time. Patrons could also create a personalized schedule.

The other major change was the incorporation of outside activities and venues into the official programming. The areas outside of the convention center were used as staging grounds for a number of fan experiences and promotional tools for movies, television shows and video games. There was a parkour course promoting the Assassin’s Creed video game series, a zip line promoting the upcoming show “Gotham,” an immersive fan experience for “Game of Thrones” with photo opportunities with show props and chance to climb The Wall, an interactive zone that had several booths set up promoting a variety of media properties including Hello Kitty and “Sleepy Hollow”, Homer’s Dome with a look inside the head of Homer Simpson, a Godzilla crossing area, a “Constantine” area, the Electric Dreams Factory Arcade set up as a 1980s

The Mandarin from Iron Man 3
by Christopher Erickson

Smaug at the Weta Booth
by Christopher Erickson
arcade, a gaming area sponsored by X Box, a Geek Couture Fashion Show and the MTV Fanfest with a concert by Linkin Park. Petco Park was also taken over as a zombie obstacle course during the show.

The vendors also improved the availability of con show exclusives by increasing the stock of items and having a dedicated booth area for some of the larger retailers like Mattel. Previously, most of the collectible items were limited in number of each offering and people would crowd Preview Night just to get the item they were looking for. I was on an unsuccessful hunt for a Hot Wheels Darth Vader car for a co-worker, but there was enough stock on that it was still being sold on Friday and Saturday.

I had made a conscious decision to avoid any of the large panels in either Hall H or Ballroom 20 since I had time commitments on Saturday for the masquerade. There were
plenty of other panels that I did not get to due to arriving late or being at a time that I was busy, but I was able to attend two panels at the Omni Hotel (one of the additional venue spaces), the Nerdist Panel featuring all of the personalities from nerdist.com and ”Anything Goes” with John Barrowman. The Nerdist Panel was fun as the people who work at the website talked about the growth of the brand, how they provide the content, how they work with each other and answered questions from the audience. The John Barrowman panel was only him taking questions directly from the audience and telling funny stories of his work and life.

Even if you didn’t attend any of the panel offerings, there was still plenty to see around the Dealer Hall floor. There were plenty of booths with unique items, the small press area, artist alley and plenty of impromptu fan gatherings. There were plenty of exhibitors who had their items displayed, making it a
museum experience. Sideshow Collectibles showed off their wares with their upcoming line of busts and statues including a life-size Han Solo in carbonite. The Lego booth has several statues made from the toy blocks including Groot and Rocket Raccoon from “Guardians of the Galaxy,” Spider-Man clinging to the side of a New York building (with camera webbed up, ready for action) and the Shredder from “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.” Mattel had all of their toys arranged in a dioramas and a full scale version of their Hot Wheels Darth Vader car. Hasbro had a Bumblebee statue and large Optimus Prime Lego-style toy along with displays of their toys. The Marvel booth had a mockup of Star Lord’s ship cockpit from “Guardians of the Galaxy.” DC Comics had several of the capes and cowls of Batman from the movies for the character’s 75 anniversary. Adult Swim had a castle tower set up with a game-show style wheel for people to win prizes and...
lead crowd chants. Weta had a set up with all of their items for sale in glass cases underneath the head of Smaug, which had eyes that opened, closed and moved around.

The main event for Jean and me was the Masquerade on Saturday night. The organization of the event was amazing considering the number of entries. The practice session was held early in the morning on Saturday, with a quick explanation of the rules and expectations of the presentation and a quick chance for all of the groups to practice on a replica stage and work through technical issues. There was space for all of the groups to store their props and costumes throughout the day so that people could enjoy some of the convention before having to come back in for check-in for the contest. A separate room was set up for people to construct large scale props, which was used to build a MODOK and framework for the tentacles of Ursula. Dressing booths were set up for people
to change into their costume in privacy and not have to wear it around the building, which also preventing the costumes from being revealed before the contest. Professional makeup services were also available to help achieve the perfect look.

The waiting room had plenty of seats for people to watch the video screen feeds of the entries and the halftime performance. There was also lots of water available for people to hydrate. While waiting in line for the stage, there were also screens to watch the presentations and also more water backstage.

The actual entrants were numerous and varied, with over 40 participant groups. There were four “Game of Thrones” entries including one with George R.R. Martin killing off everyone, three “Frozen” entries, a “Arkham Asylum” Batman fighting hallucinations, Edith Head creating two outfits for Delilah (for the movie “Sampson and Delilah), two “The Little Molly and Sherlock” by Christopher Erickson

MODOK by Christopher Erickson

Hillywood Show and Me courtesy of Christopher Erickson
Mermaid” presentations, a line of evening wear inspired by DC and Marvel female characters (presented by Tony Stark and Joker), an 1880’s Black Widow, a Elphaba from “Wicked,” Aurora and Maleficent walking through the woods, the Dragonborn from “Skyrim” practicing his swordsmanship, “Girl Genius” Agatha Heterodyne and her clank, a dancing Jawa, Regina from “Once Upon A Time,” an original entry similar to a “Sesame Street” teaching the values of healthy eating and fight sequences between Captain America and the Winter Solider, Deathstroke and Longshot, and woodland elves of original design.

The most impressive costume groups included AIM scientists and MODOK, a group of multiple fandoms converting a neophyte to being a fan (set to “I’ll Make A Man Out of You” from “Mulan”), a priestess from the “Warhammer 40,000” games, the xenomorphs from “Aliens,” a quick

Guardians of the Galaxy  by Christopher Erickson  Crew of the Bebop  by Christopher Erickson
change outfit with different costumes and props (showing how to attend numerous panels in one day), Raiden from “Metal Gear Rising,” the Iron Man Mark 42 armor, the three dragons from “Game of Thrones,” Ursula with full tentacles and her fish minions and two entries with mechanical wings. The Best in Show winner was a Rockettes-style number with showgirl outfits of Mothra, King Ghidorah, Mechagodzilla and Godzilla high kicking and knocking down cardboard buildings while toy gets flew by. Our entry was simply entitled “Twelve”, which featured all 12 of The Doctors bursting out of the TARDIS. We won Judges’ Choice, which was second place.

The technical aspect of the show went off without much trouble. There was also a new technology where a digitally projected backdrop could be added, making the presentations more dramatic. The dragons had flames around them, the Evil
Queen was wandering the forest and The Doctors had the TARDIS land against a backdrop of the time vortex.

There was a huge amount of variety of costumes for this year. There were plenty of superheroes from both DC Comics and Marvel Comics that could be found. A number of these were done in alternate fashions including a World War II uniformed Wonder Woman, Playboy Bunny outfits and a group of Jazz Age X-Men. There were numerous costumes for current or recent popular shows including “The Walking Dead,” a Headless Horseman from “Sleepy Hollow,” “My Little Pony,” “Game of Thrones,” “Once Upon A Time”, “Doctor Who”, “Legend of Korra”, “Sherlock,” “Merlin,” “Adventure Time,” “Arrow” and “Breaking Bad.”

Recent movies such as “Captain America: Winter Solider,” “Man of Steel,” “Thor: The Dark World,” “Frozen,” “Despicable Me 2,” “The Hobbit,” “Iron Man 3” and
“Guardians of the Galaxy” had a good amount of cosplay represented. There were costumes from beloved classic franchises, television shows and movies including Star Wars, Star Trek, “Mary Poppins,” “Teletubbies,” “Gremlins,” “Watchmen,” “The Magic School Bus,” “Muppets,” “Fraggle Rock,” “Battlestar Galactica” (both the original and re-imaged series), “Blues Clues,” classic “Doctor Who,” “Back To The Future,” “Transformers,” “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles,” and classic Disney characters. There was also a large amount of people dressed as anime/cartoon characters including Goku from “Dragonball Z,” Speed Racer, Popeye, Hello Kitty, Samurai Jack, several “Archer” cosplayers, The Powerpuff Girls, The Mystery Inc. gang from “Scooby Doo,” Dexter and Dee Dee from “Dexter’s Laboratory,” Princess Mononoke and the robot chicken from “Robot Chicken.”
There were plenty of costumes that were mashed up from different intellectual properties. One of the more popular ones was Deadpool mixed with other characters or archetypes. Steampunk was a popular crossover style as I saw a C3-PO, a Riddler hoopskirt, Link from “Legend of Zelda,” and the Caterpillar and Queen of Hearst from “Alice in Wonderland.” There were also several Playboy Bunny style outfits including Venom, Hulk and classic Star Trek officers.

There were also plenty of characters outside of comics, cartoons, video games and science fiction. I saw Harry Dresden from the “Dresden Files” novels, a Golem Inspector and Mailman from Terry Pratchett’s “Discworld” series, the Codex avatar from “The Guild,” Carmen Sandiego, one half of Daft Punk from the “Get Lucky” video and people dressed as professional wrestlers including “Nature Boy” Ric Flair, The Ultimate Warrior and Andre The Giant.
There was also plenty of opportunities to interact with people. I was able to talk with the stars “The Hillywood Show,” do the famous promos with the Ric Flair cosplayer and I interacted with a remote controlled robotic screen. There was also ample opportunities for photos with other characters.

Despite the problems with getting to San Diego, the experience was better than I had four years ago, even though the event seemed more crowded than ever before and there were numerous lines. I enjoyed it immensely.
There are comic conventions…and then, there is “Comic-Con”. While many large cities in the United States are now having their own conventions during the year from New York Comic Con to Seattle’s Emerald City Comic Con, I’m referring to the one and only, the big Kahuna of cons, Comic-Con International: San Diego, held annually each July. From its humble beginnings in 1970 as San Diego’s Golden State Mini-Con held at the U.S. Grant Hotel and attracting about 100 attendees, it has grown to the largest show of its kind celebrating comics and pop culture while attracting 130,000 people, including industry professionals, volunteers, and fans alike.
I attended my first San Diego Comic-Con in July 2006, a time when it was still easy to get admission online or even at the door. Even then, the Exhibition Hall was large and amazing. There were representatives from various television and Hollywood movies promoting their properties, but it was not nearly as massive and spectacular as the panels and previews today. It was a fun experience, but I didn’t return for another 5 years as there was always our annual Wonder Con to attend locally.

When I returned to the convention in 2011, I noticed how everything had just gotten more large and crowded. It was still relatively easy to get the badges to attend the entire convention, and you could buy next year’s passes during the convention despite waiting in a long line. Over the past few years, as Comic-Con has become more popular and mainstream, this was no longer the case. For the past couple of years, to get a badge, you had to register online, and hope you or your friends would get lucky in the random lottery selection to get the opportunity to buy the badges before they sold out. If you have not seen the hilarious “Big Bang Theory” segment of the gang attempting to get tickets to the convention, check it out on You Tube to get a taste of what it’s like. Those of you who have tried to get tickets on the day when tickets are released know what I am talking about. This year the show sold out in about an hour and a half.
If this did not dissuade you from attending Comic-Con, there were also very long lines to attend panels, especially at Hall H, the largest venue at the San Diego Convention Center. People would camp overnight in line in order to get into their desired panel, staying through panels they didn’t really want to see, which left lots of true fans out of luck. Comic-Con often gets tagged with the nickname “Line Con” as you would spend most of your time waiting in one line after another for a panel, for an opportunity to buy an exclusive toy or collector’s item, a chance at an autograph with a favorite actor or actress or comic industry icon or for even just to get some food. Lots of friends who used to attend the convention in years past would now refuse to go again, just because the convention has just gotten too big and unpleasant.

I did not fare well in this year’s ticket lottery, ending up with just the chance to purchase the Sunday badge (the last day of the convention). Was it really worth it to go to San Diego with just 1 day to visit Comic-Con? Since my vacation time was already set by my work, I decided to buy the badge and spend Wednesday to Saturday outside the convention center. As the show has expanded over the years, I have also seen that there have been more and more events being held outside the convention, and that you could still have an amazing time in San Diego with a little preplanning.
As it turned out, there was so much to do in the Gaslight Quarter and other areas in San Diego; there was not enough time to do it all. I didn’t even have to go to my backup plan, which was to spend a day at Legoland, a place I have yet to visit during all my trips to San Diego.

Arriving on Wednesday, typically the Preview Night at Comic-Con, I could spend my time to leisurely check-in and not have to worry about rushing to the Town & Country Hotel to pick up my badge. That day, July 23rd, was also Batman 75th Anniversary Day, and many comic shop retailers and bookstores were giving out free Batman comics and other promotional items. Later that evening, I got into the “Enchantment Under the SDCC Party” at Henry’s Pub, which was sponsored by the SDCC Unofficial Blog. Each food item or drink bought at the pub gave you a raffle ticket for prizes such as gamer gear from sponsors or the coveted Hasbro VIP pass and attendees were given a nice swag bag. SDCC Unofficial Blog website provided lots of useful information for attending the convention and a schedule of offsite events during Comic-Con.

The Petco Park Interactive Zone was one such offsite area that offered free activities to the general public who did not possess a badge. There were booths sponsored by movies such as “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles” offering free Pizza Hut Cheesy Bites pizza slices and an activity where you ride in an armored vehicle that shot flying pizzas at enemy cutout targets.
and “Sin City: A Dame To Kill For”, which had a lineup of classic cars from the film and a photo booth along with opportunities for poster signings from the cast and crew. At the Norton “X-Men: Days of Future Past” tent, you could view props from the movie as well as make your own video trailer and take a photo of yourself as a member of the X-Men team. There were some Fox Television booths such as “Sleepy Hollow” with a replica of the covered bridge and a chance for an interactive virtual reality experience donning the Oculus Rift headset. The “24: Live Another Day” booth had an opportunity to operate a remote-controlled drone.

Adults and children were lined up to get a free prize from the lockers at the Amazon Geek Boutique booth at the Petco Park Interactive Zone. Another popular site for children was the “Hello Kitty” Fashion Music Wonderland and Interactive Experience and Pop-Up Shop where you could take photos with Hello Kitty and receive free giveaways like temporary tattoos and headbands.

For adult fans of Cartoon Network’s Adult Swim programing block, the Adult Swim fun house was back for another year. You could walk through an inflatable castle filled with rooms with the most bizarre sights and depending on which path you take, end up leaving through a slide, crawling through the end of a giant cat’s behind into a litter box, or having to sing your way free from a cage with karaoke music. The setup also had the “Meatwad Full Dome Experience”,

Game of Thrones: Survive the Realm Experience by Peter Lee

Game of Thrones King’s Landing Costumes by Peter Lee
which was a planetarium-style show with mind-blowing, surreal animation. You could also get a free live screen printed t-shirts and photos with another Adult Swim character, Black Jesus.

One popular spot that also offered activities to the public, especially gamers, was the Geek and Sundry Lounge at Jolt’n Joe’s, which was open Thursday and Friday. In addition to a line-up of panels and previews of various games and web series, there was a library of table top games that you could join with others to play. Each night there was a party for the over-21 crowd dancing to the music and sipping their specialty...
themed cocktails. Of course, there were also periodic sightings of Geek Goddess, Felicia Day.

By talking to other people in lines, on the shuttle buses or at parties, you could often pick up suggestions on some of the good outside activities to check out. One place that had good word-of-mouth advertising was the “Game of Thrones: Survive the Realm Experience” at the Omni Hotel Gallery. This event was open Thursday to Saturday starting at 11 am, and there were already lines forming well in advance. It took about an hour and a half to get in, but was worth it. There were many costumes and props from the show on display. You could take a green screen photo of yourself on a rock ledge next to Drogon the dragon and sit on the Iron Throne. There was also a simulation with the Oculus Rift headset where you would ascend the Wall. Finally, you would leave with the free GOT design-of-the-day T-shirt.

Another popular attraction, especially for Batman’s 75th Anniversary, was the “Cape/Cowl/Create” Art Exhibit featuring 20 different interpretations of the iconic Batman cowl and cape by contemporary artists. This was held at the Hard Rock Hotel Legends Room. There were some off-the-wall versions such as a Joker cross-over style to “Batman as Rorschach” from “Watchmen.” As a promotion for the “Batman: Arkham Knight” video game, you could also receive an exclusive lithograph.

Even if you just walked through the Gaslamp Quarter, you could discover lots of offsite activities on your own. At Gaslight Square, NBC Experience had taken over the Tin Fish Restaurant to promote their show “Blacklist.” In front of the Hilton Gaslamp Hotel was the Assassin’s Creed Experience where you could go through an obstacle course. I spotted...
another long line in front of a Subway sandwich shop in the Gaslamp Quarter that had been temporarily converted to a “Shirley’s Sandwiches” from the comedy “Community”. They were offering free sandwich meals Thursday afternoon as a promotion for the upcoming season on Yahoo! Screen. The Southpaw Social Club held the first Clone Club meet-up for fans of BBC America’s series “Orphan Black” on Friday afternoon.

Another place I enjoyed at the Gaslight Quarter was the Disney Infinite 2.0 Experience Pop-Up Shop. At this site, you could try the latest Disney Marvel Super Heroes 2.0 interactive video game ahead of its release. It was fun playing some of the Guardians of the Galaxy heroes even before I saw the movie. As part of the nightly event, free beverages, appetizers and t-shirts were offered.

Walking by the lawn area behind the Convention Center, there was a 24-foot tall sculpture of Godzilla to mark the site of the Godzilla Interactive Display. Further along Convention Way and Park Boulevard, there was another long line of people waiting to ride the “Gotham Zip Line” set up as skyline of Gotham City staged in the Hilton Bayfront Hotel area. Located at the Hilton Bayfront Park, fans of the long-running
series “The Simpsons” could enjoy Homer’s Dome, a giant projection screen inside a gigantic Homer Simpson head. There was the Kwik-E-Race game, where people competed with each other to get prizes like inflatable donuts. Blue cotton candy was given out at Marge’s Sweet Station.

As there is so much going on in the area, some events were announced throughout the day. So, watching for Twitter announcements from your favorite shows or having some Comic-Con apps gave you a chance at some fabulous opportunities. One of the best experiences of this weekend occurred after learning about the AMC “Walking Dead Barbecue” the night before and getting in line early the next morning to get a pass, limited to the first 200 in line. Not only was there a re-creation of the Terminus area from Season 4, there was a free barbecue dinner of sausages and chocolate pudding. Best of all, the cast and crew of the show came out to greet the fans.

All of the events I described so far, outside of the show, were free to the public and didn’t require a badge. There were also lots of other activities that you could pay for, such as ticketed shows, live music, panels, and other events. There was The Walking Dead Escape at Petco Park, where people could choose to be zombies or survivors in a large game of tag. The San Diego Symphony also played live again in concert, this year accompanying film screenings of “Star Trek” and music from the Tim Burton movies. I didn’t attend either of these evening events, but these have been offered in years past and could possibly show up again next year.

I did get tickets to “Hollywood Babble-On at Comic-Con” with Kevin Smith and Ralph Garman at the House of Blues again this year. While their raunchy comedy might not be to everyone’s taste, I enjoyed their latest live broadcast which included an appearance by Kevin Conroy, the voice actor who portrayed Batman in “Batman: The Animated Series.” Kevin Smith also performed a wedding for a couple in Thor and Jane Foster costumes during the show. AMC is currently developing their show as a pilot for a potential late night series.

“Nerdist Podcast Live” is another show back again this year, held at the Balboa Theatre. Chris Hardwick and his friends, Jonah Ray and Matt Mira, also did a live podcast with some celebrity guests in attendance at Comic-Con. Last year, Matt Smith, the 11th Doctor, was the guest. I caught the early evening show which had Michael Rooker (“Walking Dead”...

Finally, another venue outside Comic-Con, which provided both free and paid ticketed events was Nerd HQ, back again for its 4th annual appearance at Petco Park. Presented by Nerd Machine, a company founded by actor Zachary Levi (“Chuck”) and his partners, Nerd HQ provided a large space for the public and offers celebrity panels, gaming and tech experiences, and a nice place to relax.

The ticket sales to panels for “Conversations for A Cause” and photo opportunities during “Smile for Smiles” supported charities like Operation Smile which helps children throughout the world. The cost of a ticket to a panel was $22 (compared to the cost of a single day badge of Comic-Con which ranged from $30 to $45) and best of all, it was held in a small stage area accommodating about 300 people, and you could actually see the panel guests up close and didn’t have to wait in line for several hours. However, tickets were a hot commodity and a popular panel sold out in less than a minute. I was able to get tickets for the Craig Ferguson and Josh Robert Thompson panel, the Evangeline Lilly panel and the Orphan Black panel.

So, I hope this article has given you a glimpse of what you can do in San Diego during Comic-Con, even without a precious convention badge in your possession. With the trend towards interactive experiences in promotions and the limitations of space in the Convention Center, we should continue to see more areas open to the public in the future. The city comes to life during each year, and you can have lots of fun if you go looking. If all else fails, there’s always Legoland…
Living history visited once again in Downtown San Jose on August 2 and 3, 2014 as the San Jose Renaissance Faire returned for another year. The event was just as big as last year, taking up both sides of the Guadalupe River Green section of Guadalupe Park in the shadow of the SAP Center. Parking was easy as the lot for the nearby Shark Tank was available for a small fee, the San Pedro Square parking ramp being a short walk away and the parking spaces on the side streets in the area being available for free on Sundays.
“Whips and Cracks”
by Christopher Erickson

Competition of Skill
by Christopher Erickson

Falconry
courtesy of Christopher Erickson

Cannon loading
by Christopher Erickson
The weather was warm and delightful and the crowds thickened quickly within an hour after the gates had opened. There were many people milling about in the park visiting the market stalls, seeing entertainments, eating food, buying wears and playing games.

There were many goods to be purchased. Masks, walking sticks, wooden swords, jewelry, clothing, and plenty of accessories were available. Hair braiding and face painting was available for people look the part. People could seek spiritual guidance for their lives.

The food was plentiful and varied. The Weasel Inn Sarsaparilla booth was back with all of their delicious flavors. Also popular in the beer garden was a mead sampler with five different varieties including raspberry, champagne, apricot and pomegranate.

There were three stages of entertainment this year. The Newcastle Stage featured crowd favorites “Bard’s Cloak of Tales” as told by author Michael Gallowgles and “Fowl Tales: A Parrot Comedie” (which included the act’s cart-pulling dog as well). The Hungry Hare Stage featured “Whips & Cracks”, a show demonstrating how to handle whips of different sizes
and stories of how to teach a class on whip handling, the musical stylings of local a Capella group Brass Farthing and folk dancing.

The Queen’s Stage featured two new acts with direct ties to the Age of Enlightenment. The first was “The World According to Galileo.” The show featured Galileo Galilei using audience members and models of the Sun, Earth, Moon and other planets to explain his astronomical observations and his support for the heliocentric theory of the solar system.

The second act was “Sound and Fury”, which featured three actors performing two of Shakespeare’s well-known plays, “Romeo and Juliet” and “Hamlet,” but at the same time as they could not decide which one to exhibit. This led to hilarious moments where Hamlet was talking to Juliet on her balcony, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern strutting down the street to “Staying Alive” before talking to Friar Laurence on how they are to get Hamlet and Juliet together, and the ghost of Hamlet’s father (sounding like Sean Connery under a bed sheet) making an appearance.

There was plenty of entertainment in the encampments as well. Queen Elizabeth held court with plenty of country dancing and glimpses of court goings-on including representatives from Scotland paying their respects, the Scottish court playing games and telling tales of life in the highlands, the Italian encampment flirting with the men and women who would drop by, and plenty of other areas with games to play for everyone. There was a brass rubbing tent
where people could create mementos similar to what pilgrims and peasants did during that time period.

One of the more popular features was the falconry area. People gathered around to ask questions about the two hawks. People were able to let the raptors sit on their arms with the proper leather gauntlet glove. There were numerous children lining up for a glimpse of the two birds of prey. The handlers explained about the raptors life in the wild, their diet and their special care.

There was plenty of areas for sportsmanship. Fencing lessons were available for people to try out their swordplay skills. The wooden rocking horses for patrons to try their horsemanship. The Italian ladies were delightful to watch as they were the loudest to express their joy. Knights in full armor were also competing in full contact battle.

There were also knights riding their steeds in full competition. The Knights of Mayhem featured full contact jousting and competitions of skill with sword and lance. The sword skill was cutting a head of lettuce balanced on a volunteer knight’s helmet and the lance was hitting a target while riding at full stride. The Knights of Mayhem also paid tribute to the police and military as show of solidarity and
thanks to the work they perform. The head knight also let the little girls in the crowd know that if they could be a knight if they wanted, informing the crowd that one of their best fighters was named Alicia. After the competition was over, the knights handed out flowers to favorites in the crowd. Patrons were also allowed to ride the horses afterwards to the delight of young and old.

On the same field, there was also a military demonstration of musket and cannon firing. The solders also took aim at a prisoner who was to be executed, but managed to hit the two men holding him while the prisoner was unharmed.

There were plenty of outfits to be seen in the village as well. Many of of patrons came dressed in period garb. There were also plenty of other amazing costumes. Merida and Princess Anna were in attendance. The Tenth Doctor could be spied walking around. Xena and Gabriel were making sure that no trouble was about. There was a walking bear, a faun and a dragon roaming free. One of the hobbits also ventured out of the Shire for a visit. There was also a ninja who travelled from the Orient.

The San Jose Renaissance Faire was a great time for everyone. There was lots of food, shopping and entertainment to take in right in the heart of Silicon Valley.
Can you tell SF/SF readers a little bit about your own science fiction in San Francisco background?

A couple of years ago I was riding the Muni around midnight, heading home after attending a performance of Don Giovanni at the San Francisco Opera. Sitting in my tuxedo I should have felt out of place, but in fact everyone in the carriage was unique in some way, and I felt perfectly at home.

Afterwards, as I was walking down New Montgomery St. to our downtown condo, the road was suddenly engulfed by speed skaters wearing fairy lights. They had even turned a baby pram into a mobile disco complete with illuminated flapping wings. For about 20 seconds I was surrounded by the swirling figures, then like a hallucination they were gone.

San Francisco is a great place for a science fiction writer to live. The population has an extraordinary diversity: socialites, leather boys, burners, baristas, ballet dancers, pan-handlers, techies, sex workers, bankers, nerds, surgeons, construction guys, performance artists, bureaucrats, musicians, lawyers, chefs, peddle cab drivers, and people of every conceivable gender blend and ethnic mix.

In many ways, San Francisco is the future. What better place to be inspired?

One hilarious and poignant pun threaded through the book is the use of the term "Birthday Suit." Why are appearances, and their modification, so central to your novel?

I was inspired by Joanne Gair’s amazing body paintings – she’s the artist who painted a business suit on a naked Demi Moore for the cover of Vanity Fair. I love the idea of an entire society similarly attired, or rather non-attired. If you lived in an environment where clothes were unnecessary I think people would still want to express their individualism with something like a Birthday Suit. (I should explain for people who haven’t read the book that a Birthday Suit is a layer of symbiotic bacteria living in the epidermis that can change color in response to simple stimuli. In other words, programmable body paint!)

On a general note I wanted to make the novel sexy but in a fun, PG-13 sort of way. I hope that the “Birthday Suits” fit that strategy.

What attracted to you to the idea of a protagonist Mailman – a job that many expect to be extinct within decades – preserved into the far future?

Until the invention of the telegraph in the 19th century, information travelled no faster than the speed that someone could carry it. In those days, the arrival of mail, especially from another country, was a big event. It’s a similar situation in the Swallow the Sky universe: there is no means of faster-
than-light communication so messages have to be carried from star system to star system, hence the revival of the mailman.

Being an interstellar mailman allows the central character to be a something of a wanderer – someone who’s literally been around - but with real purpose. I also liked inverting the status of mail carriers from today’s lowly position to that of a glamor profession. Those who are first…

This book has a fantastic cast of non-human characters. Can you talk a little bit about the way you portray “machines and systems”?

I think speech will soon become the default method of communicating with machines. (Apple thinks we’re already there but I’ve never met anyone who uses Siri on a regular basis.) When this does happen it seems logical to give them personalities to make conversation feel more natural.

Using this approach, I tried to give each system in my story a different personality according to its role. The key machine is the main character’s starship. I didn’t want a wise-cracking buddy but rather a personality like Batman’s Alfred – smart and affectionate with a world-weary wisdom.

By the way, you’ll notice that the word “computer” never appears in the book. The term is already becoming obsolete with its connotation of a beige box stuck underneath a desk. My iPhone is a computer but I would never dream of calling it that. Perhaps another term will emerge but I don’t see it happening as everything around us develops a degree of intelligence.

Swallow the Sky has so many references to both Artifacts and Architecture. Does your main character Carson notice and love these things because you love them as well?

If yes, how did your personal relationship with architectural spaces and human detritus develop? If no, how did you research such obsession in order to portray it?

No, I’m not particularly into antiques or architecture, although I already knew quite a bit about the antiques trade – before moving to the US I spent most of my adult life in Brighton on England’s south coast; Brighton is one of the country’s biggest antique centers and I knew many dealers and collectors. From them I learned that antiquing can be a ruthless and even vicious trade. Another great source of information was the long-running British TV series “Lovejoy” that chronicled the adventures of a down and out antiques dealer. Finally, there is Don Thompson’s great book “The 12 Million Dollar Stuffed Shark” that paints a vivid picture of today’s crazy art market.

It’s interesting that you noted the many references to architecture. It’s simply that I wanted to paint a strong picture of Carson’s world, whether it was the gothic palace on Orpheus, the wild organically-themed structures of New Earth, or Kaimana’s city built inside the crater of an extinct volcano.

The leviathans and the ants play heroic roles in your novel. Why did you want the grandest and smallest scale creatures to figure so prominently?

To be honest, the Leviathan originated as a simple plot device to enable our heroes’ escape from the ocean world of Kaimana, but when people started reading the book they all said “Hey, I really liked the whale!” So now I wish I had written him a bigger role!

Later on in the story I comment on how Leviathans have evolved independently on thousands of worlds and despite
their intelligence they want nothing to do with technology. What I was hinting at is that these graceful gentle creatures may be the real pinnacle of the evolutionary tree and that the human race is a kind of freak. The 20th century writer Arthur Koestler suggested that our brains are an evolutionary mistake – they’ve got too big for our own good, like the huge fangs on a saber-tooth tiger. Perhaps he is right.

By contrast, I had always planned to include intelligent insects in the story. Ants are extraordinary creatures. The famous biologist E.O. Wilson feels that a nest is effectively a single “super organism” and I simply took that idea one step further. I really enjoyed imagining how the world would appear to a smart ant and how they would interact with humans.

The subtitle of the book is *A Space Opera* but it reads more like Indiana Jones than Star Wars. There are many debates over what Space Opera is, so can you share why you chose that subtitle and what it means to you?

“Swallow the Sky” is a pretty neutral title so I wanted to give potential readers a better idea of what the book is about. I also wanted to make it clear what the book is not: it’s not a coming-of-age story, not a vampire/werewolf/zombie tale, and not a Tolkeniessque fantasy. Maybe I should have called it “Space Raiders of Kaimana” <grin>.

I’m not sure I agree that it reads more like Indiana Jones than Star Wars. Yes, Indie was also hunting ancient artifacts, but they all had a spooky-mystical connection, whereas my guy is after something more solid. Besides, both movies have a great deal in common: fast-paced adventure, humor, and a sense of wonder. If my readers feel that I’ve successfully incorporated those elements into my novel then I’m honored and delighted.

For me “Space Opera” means good old-fashioned science fiction: guys and gals whizzing around in spaceships having adventures. I love reading all types of SF, many of which are firmly rooted on terra-firma, but I wanted to write a Space Opera.

As characters travel through your universe, they come into contact with huge religious variety. Gods, Goddesses, Mystics, Scientists, Founders, Currency...each culture reveres something. Why did you decide to incorporate such diversity of religion and religious attitudes in the book?

In the universe of “Swallow the Sky” there are a million inhabited systems and as I’ve noted, the only way to communicate is via mail. Moreover, it takes days to reach even the nearest neighboring system and decades to travel a significant distance across the galaxy. As a result, each system has developed in semi-isolation resulting in a wild diversity of cultures. That diversity is reflected in their religions. I’m an atheist but I acknowledge that spirituality is one of the fundamental components of the human psyche. I feel it would be foolish to assume that the advancement of technology would wipe out belief but hopefully religion will evolve so that it is not in conflict with science.

The primary plot driver is a treasure-hunt search for humanity’s origins, yet the founder of the new human race would like it to be "free of Earth's insane history." Why did you choose to make the tension around history repeating itself, and whether that history is understood or not, a critical part of your novel?
I’m not the first SF writer to suggest that human history is so appalling that it would be hidden from a future, saner society. Cissokho, the leader of the remnants of the human race, takes this view to the extreme and chooses to start the New Earth colony with a completely clean slate. At the time she was probably right – the society that evolved was far more harmonious than any on Old Earth. Whether she was still right 8,000 years later when “Swallow the Sky “takes place is more debatable. Perhaps by then the human race is mature enough to confront its awful past. I left it to the reader to decide what is the right course.
By Yvette Keller  
*Staff Writer*

It is coming.  
Something evil enough to swallow the sky.  
All the skies.  
Between all the star systems.  
Scheming to destroy not only the human race, but absolutely Every. Single. Thing.  
And no one knows yet.

A scary premise if there ever was one, and yet “Swallow The Sky: A Space Opera” is, in the words of its author, “...guys and gals whizzing around in spaceships having adventures.” This book is fun, filled with machines who have sassy personalities, leviathans who enjoy a good-natured game of hide-and-seek, and sentient insects who trust that someday, humans will evolve.

If they do, the first one won’t be Carson, a mailman, academic, and antiques dealer who spends his time scouting for relics of Old Earth. During the equivalent of many lifetimes, Carson visits dozens of worlds flung far-and-wide across the galaxy. Delivering the mail is a lucrative job in the future, but only part of Carson’s reason for choosing “spaceman” as a career. He will do anything to acquire unique artifacts: sometimes embedding himself culturally, as an ethnographer, or merely garage sailing his way across the galaxy.

A futuristic one-man “Antiques Roadshow”, Carson spends a lot of time genuinely helping out planetary governments with his expert knowledge and a sincere, “*Do you understand what you’ve got here?*” He is not above buying low in order to sell high(er), but his greatest desire is motivated purely by the pursuit of science and history; to know more about the legacy of Old Earth. He really is a unique antique himself, and an adorable good-guy to spend time with as a reader.

“Swallow the Sky” follows Carson’s latest planet-side visit, where a romantic encounter with the beautiful Aiyana seems to go REALLY well at first, but turns out dicey in the end. Carson unwillingly garners the attention of a powerful mafia-like clan, and has to choose: Work with the authorities to bring down the criminal clan elder, or become an agent for the higher bidder.

The biggest cache of ancient Earth Artifacts imaginable is at stake, and Carson might even have to venture into the quarantined Old Earth solar system to find the ultimate treasure, assuming his and Aiyana’s enemies don’t catch up with them first.

Chris Mead has written the book in a light hearted, modern, easy to read style. I found some of the “translation” from “Ancient English” into “Universal” distracting, but that probably won’t bother any reader who has escaped the curse of copy editing as a hobby.
The novel has all of the great chases, escapes, feints, and mysteries expected in good space opera. After all, you never know what you’ll run into on planets no one has visited for hundreds of years.

If there is one thing that lessened my enjoyment of the book it was Carson’s companion, Aiyana. She played her role well, but I found myself jaded by a few of her over-the-top heroine qualities.

She is an exclamatory female character. She is from a hot, humid world, prefers to be naked as much as possible, and claps her hands frequently. She needs rescuing just as often as she saves the day. She is an endearing character in the book, asking lots of questions and enabling Carson to access information and experiences that would otherwise block his progress. But if she were a real person, I would hate her guts: she loves children and animals. She is completely unafraid and unfailingly adventurous. She gets along with everyone and doesn’t hold a grudge, even against those who (literally) kill her.

In a future where disease is wiped out and everyone looks young, Aiyana actually IS young. She is also inexperienced and impressionable, but not too young to be attractive to Carson, and plenty old enough to become insatiably involved with him, a man hundreds of years her elder.

Still, Aiyana’s exuberance could be a selling point for some readers, and it certainly didn’t stop me from enjoying the philosophical questions raised in the book. “Swallow the Sky” is both a superficial good time and a more meaningful thought experiment, something I expect and appreciate from well-done Science Fiction.
Meeting 1257

September 1, 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
President, Vice President and Secretary absent
Treasurer presiding
Adrienne Foster, acting minute taker
Began around 8 p.m. as my order started to arrive, so I wasn’t looking at time
25 people were there, but some (like our VP!) left before the meeting started
A party jar was established
The minutes for meeting 1256 were accepted as “not too old for Worldcon”
Nothing was said about money.
There was a proxy report for the VP. There’s a new “Drink Tank” out at efanzines.com/ and he likes movies.
The proxy for the president said he had nothing fannish to report.

Sports committee reported that although all of the tix for the BASFA group outing to see the San Francisco Giants game on September 12 have sold out, someone is unable to make it and one is now available. If interested in going, please contact the treasurer.
Announcements:

Kevin R. said the movie “Journey to the West” is available on BluRay and DVD. [www.amazon.com/Journey-West-Bluray-Zhang-Wen/dp/B00I1PL1JS/ref=sr_1_4?ie=UTF8&qid=1409640868&sr=8-4&keywords=journey+to+the+west](http://www.amazon.com/Journey-West-Bluray-Zhang-Wen/dp/B00I1PL1JS/ref=sr_1_4?ie=UTF8&qid=1409640868&sr=8-4&keywords=journey+to+the+west)

JC says there’s a new installment of the Nerdvana Podcast out with a performance by the fabulous Unwoman. [nerdvanapodcast.com](http://nerdvanapodcast.com)

Valerie said she’s looking for essay submissions for a Joss Whedon anthology she’s editing. For more details, please contact her.

Beth finished the first five-week course for her master’s degree and earned an A on it. And there was much rejoicing.

Tom B. said Potlatch 24 will be held in Seattle February 6-8, 2015, at the Hotel Deca. Book of Honor to be announced. For more details, please go to: [www.potlatch-sf.org](http://www.potlatch-sf.org).

He added that he includes BASFA minutes in “Science Fiction/San Francisco” and he always makes sure that “Nerdvana” and “Rassilon” are spelled correctly.

Mike Mc. said John Scalzi will be signing books at Books Inc. in Mountain View at 7:00 p.m. on September 4.

Reviews:

Ric without a k saw “Journey to the West”. He believes Director Steven Chow has frenetic energy and it was loads of fun. Mo followed on that is very entertaining.

Ric further said that premium economy class on Virgin Atlantic was worth its price. Andy additionally praised Air Lingus for his trans-atlantic flights and British Airways for its business class commuter flights.

In addition, Ric highly recommended the Warner Brothers’ Harry Potter studio tour. Definitely worth full price. [www.wbstudiotour.co.uk](http://www.wbstudiotour.co.uk)

Valerie went to a steampunk fair in the Sacramento area and enjoyed it.

She also went to a pub in Campbell to see a new episode of “Doctor Who” and found the management wasn’t at all prepared for the response they received.

Bill L. said Loncon 3 had lots to offer and was the biggest in history. He also saw a production of “Julius Caesar” at the Globe Theatre and went to the Victoria & Albert Museum. The wedding gown exhibit required a fee for admission at the V&A, which is usually free (but accepts donations).

Tom also saw the same performance of “Julius Caesar” and thought it was brilliant, after thoroughly preparing for it.

Diane went to Pacificon and enjoyed the energy, even though she admitted being clueless about games.

She also saw “Bad Words” and recommends it if you enjoy dark humor.

I went to Star Wars Day at AT&T Park, where the San Francisco Giants whooped the Milwaukee Brewers, 15-5. We were given a R2D2 wooly cap on admission and some of the costumes were impressive. Mo & I both warned everyone how uncomfortable seats on the left field side can be in the sun during day games.

Dave C. read “Bitter Seed” by Ian Tregillis. It’s part of a dark fantasy series and he’s looking forward to the next one. Ric followed on that he enjoyed it and both agreed it’s worth full price.

While in London, Dave C. saw “Monty Python Live” and says the troupe is getting on in years. Eric Idle and Michael
Palin are holding up best. John Cleese doesn’t have as much fire as he did when he was younger, [but he’s doing better than Graham Chapman].

Dave C. also saw “Book of Mormon” and does not regret a penny of it. He threw “Let the Right One In” into the mix and thought they did good.

Tom said his Loncon 3 volunteer t-shirt was worth full price and saw a stage version of “Shakespeare in Love” and enjoyed it.

He added that Loncon 3 went well and Shamrokon was tons of fun. He notes that Seanan McGuire and Kim Stanley Robinson are being GoHs a lot lately. Tom said Loncon 3 had the best beer at a Worldcon since 2005. Ric and Carole followed on. The Fan Village had its pros and cons. Dave G. like it. Tom thought Loncon 3 was worth full price.

Dave G. said he and Spring also went to Amsterdam and its coffee shops smelled funny. The only ones that sold coffee were Starbucks. He gave quick reviews of the hotels he stayed at. If the Hilton Docklands remains a part of the Hilton group, it should be rebranded as a Hampton Inn. He liked all of the other hotels he stayed at, though. On the other hand, he believes the service on Air Lingus has tanked since 1995.

We did auctions, then cut them short as the crowd was tired and dissipating.

Rumor of the Week: “I am Scottish. I can complain about things.”

We adjourned 9:57 p.m.

Meeting 1258

September 8, 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
26 people attended
We established a party jar
There was a motion that failed, then another motion that failed
The minutes of meeting 1257 were accepted as “we appreciate those people who take the minutes”
The Treasurer reported that last week we took in $1.00 in the regular jar & $14.00 in the party jar
There was no vice president report
The President had nothing fannish to report
The Sports committee reported that there are 2 additional tickets available for the September 12 Giants game [this Friday]

Announcements:
I announced that Subway has fun “Guardians of the Galaxy” happy meal bags
JC announced that on Wednesday Nerdvana Podcast releases an interview with Cindy Williams & announced that
“I am Groot” & announced that he’ll be on panels at Convolution
Beth announced that Kathryn will be in a musical in January
John O announced that his Hugo pics are processed & posted to Facebook & Flickr & announced that Stephen Colbert had the XKCD author on his show
Brad announced that he’ll be on panels at Convolution & announced that he’ll have at least 5 articles in John Clute’s encyclopedia & announced that his next book project is looking good, so he’ll be busy
Lisa announced that today is “talk like William Shatner Day” & is the anniversary of the showing of the first “Star Trek” episode in 1966
Mo announced that she needs help moving
Dave C announced that it’s the publication of the last Leonard Malkin movie guide
[evil] Kevin announced that there will be a Masquerade & announced that this weekend is Gay Rodeo in Duncan’s Mill
[tall] Kevin announced a WSFS amendment

Reviews:
Adrienne reviewed the last week as not good
JC reviewed “Spiderman 2” as he liked it & reviewed “12 Years a Slave” as really good, extremely emotional & reviewed a health scare as it ended with a happy minor surgery and his 3rd doctor was excellent.
Ric reviewed “The Last Ship” as a pretty good TNT show
Bill reviewed the London Worldcon as there was always something interesting going on & it had uniformly excellent programming
Brad reviewed his 17-country trip [as he was rained on in 12 of them] & highly recommends airB&B.com & enjoyed his trip immensely
Dave C reviewed a book by George Chesbro - “2 Songs the Archangel Sings” as part of a series he has no interest in reading more of & reviewed a “File 770” link to hasdcdonesomethingstupidtoday.com as a fun read
John O reviewed their trip as they had a good time & recommend Aer Lingus airlines
Diane reviewed an author signing at the Los Gatos Village House of Books by Steven Mix as he wrote a delightful zombie book “Goodbye from the Edge of Never” as she recommends it
We did auctions
We adjourned at 9:45 pm
And the rumor of the week was: “BASFA will eventually implode due to its own motions”

Meeting 1259

September 15, 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
16 people attended
We established a party jar
The minutes of meeting 1258 were accepted as “abridged too far”
The Treasurer reported that last week we took in $0.50 in the regular jar & $10.75 in the party jar
There was no vice president’s report
The President had nothing fannish to report
The Sports committee reported that we all had a good time at the September 12 Giants game
The Party Committee reported that there will be a BASFA party at Convolution on Saturday
JC made a request that announcements and reviews be done with brevity

Announcements:
Fred announced that Convolution will be Sept 26-28 at the Hyatt Regency SFO
Carole announced that she will be in the Convolution Art show
[tall] Kevin announced that at 8am the hotel reservations open up for next year’s Worldcon
JC announced that Nerdvana Podcast will be at Convolution & that he’ll be on panels at Convolution
Bradford announced that he got a 4th good review on his book
Aatheus announced that it’s national drive electric week
Geri announced that you should go to AT&T on Friday if you want an iPhone on release day

Reviews:
Michael reviewed “Here Be Monsters” by Alan Snow as it started the boxtroll movement & was a fun read
Aatheus reviewed watching the China all-electric formula one race as worth watching on Fox Sports
Bill reviewed British transportation options & recommends the boat/train & taking out the deductible collision insurance
The Giants’ outing was reviewed as wonderful
Geri reviewed South Bay Termite & they stayed back in their old place while the new is being tented & recommend Wiring by Woody, Ryan Wood = 408-393-6237 & say JC sent you
We did auctions
We adjourned at 9:37 pm
And the rumor of the week was: “if brevity is next to impossible then your dictionary is very small”
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, 7:30 pm & that KFJC, 89.7 FM will have live coverage of English radio, the Liverpool Psych Fest Friday & Saturday, 6am to 6pm

JC announced that Nerdvana podcast will be at Convolution, noon till 2pm, and that he’ll be on some panels there

Chris announced that this weekend is Convolution & that he’ll host a film festival there, Saturday 4pm & will be on panels there AND be doing a signing on Friday afternoon & announced that he is looking for movie reviews of sf films and monster movies from the ’30s to the ’70s, deadline Oct 19, send them to garcia@computerhistory.org

Bradford announced that Silver Age comic material did not go down in value this last year

Fred announced that there will be a Latino comic expo Oct 11-12 at SJ state campus at the King Library

Dave C announced that SFinSF will have a do on Thursday, Sept 25 at the Hyatt Regency SFO, with readings and signings, free for Convolution members & $10 otherwise & announced that Phil Davis & Margaret Mannatt will not be at Convolution & announced that an Escapist Comic shop rumor about Xmen

Reviews:

Chris reviewed “The Man Who Laughs” - a silent film with Conrad Veidt as it had incredible acting, worth full price & reviewed the “Boxing Cats” from 1894 as the 1st cat video & demands we all see it & then reviewed a kale dish as the best thing he has ever tasted ... obviously delirious at the time

JC reviewed the TV “Flash” as promising and he wants to see more of the shows

Dave C reviewed “The Apocalypse Codex” by Charlie Stross, a Laundry book, as entertaining & a fun book

Bradford reviewed “Guardians of the Galaxy” as he enjoyed it

Howeird reviewed “House and Garden”, a play by Alan Acorn as one play done in 2 theatres, as superbly acted & being performed at the Fair Avenue Theatre

[evil] Kevin reviewed “Rare Exports”, a Finnish film, as creepy and rye and hysterically funny - and subtitled, available on Xfinity & reviewed the newly revamped Gay Rodeo in Guerneville as pleasant, with comfortable temperatures and well-received by the local community & worth full price

We did auctions

We adjourned at 9:25

And the rumor of the week was: “There is a conspiracy to mispell the subtitles of our lives”
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.

Sat, Sun, Oct 4-5

PEERS Girl Genius Europen 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)

Sat-Sun, Oct 4-5

TableFlip Games Conference
Apportable Office
657 Bryant Street, San Francisco
tableflip.us
A weekend of case studies and game play exploring design of tabletop games. Limited to 75 people.
$175

Sat-Sun, Oct 4-5

Kraken Con
Oakland Convention Center
550 10th Street, Oakland
www.krakencon.com
General anime convention
$25

Fri-Sat, Oct 3-4

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)

Sat-Sun, Oct 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

Sat-Sun, Oct 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)

Sat-Sun, Oct 4-5

Alternative Press Expo (APE)
Festival Pavilion, Fort Mason Center
2 Marina Boulevard, San Francisco
comic-con.org/apex
2 days of small-press and independent publishers and artists.
$15

Sat-Sun, Oct 4-5

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

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**Thursdays-Saturdays, October 9-November 22**

**Special Days: Tuesday & Wednesday, October 28-29**

**Shocktoberfest 15: The Bloody Debutante**

The Hypnodrome
575 10th Street, San Francisco

thrillpeddlers.com

Thrillpeddlers are pleased to announce our annual Halloween Extravaganza “Shocktoberfest 15: The Bloody Debutante” – An Evening of Horror, Madness, Zombie Puppets, Edgar Allen Poe and Song.

8 pm

$30-$35

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Saturday, October 11

**BAERS Regency Ball**

Masonic Lodge of San Mateo

100 N. Ellsworth Avenue, San Mateo

baers.org/

Regency ball with English country dancing.

8 p.m. $15 (advance), $20 (at the door)

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Friday-Sunday, October 17-19

**Big Bad Con**

Hilton Airport Oakland
1 Hegenberger Road, Oakland

www.bigbadcon.com

Role-playing game convention

$40

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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

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Sunday, October 19

**East Bay Mini Maker Faire**

Park Day School & Studio One Art Center
360 42nd St., Oakland

ebmakerfaire.wordpress.com

Small scale mini Maker Faire.

10 a.m. $20

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Saturday, October 25

**Halloween Bash-A Community Arcade**

Bon Air Center
50 Bon Air Center, Greenbrae

www.bayareascience.org/event/halloween-bash/

A mashup of Halloween and makers, celebrating community-made arcade games, with free trick-or-treating and a food drive.

12-4 pm Free

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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

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Monday, 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/](http://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.

**Saturday, November 1**

**PEERS Le Bal des Vampires**
Alameda Elks Lodge
2255 Santa Clara Avenue, Alameda
[peersdance.org](http://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. $30 (until October 12)

**Saturday, November 8**

**GBACG On The Road**
North Beach Area
San Francisco
[www.gbacg.org/gbacg-calendar.html](http://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.

**Saturday, November 15**

**GBACG Workshop**
Site TBA
[www.gbacg.org/gbacg-calendar.html](http://www.gbacg.org/gbacg-calendar.html)
Join for fabulous day of workshops. Questions? Email workshops@gbacg.org.

**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](http://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

**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](http://www.creationent.com/cal/st_sanfrancisco.html)

Official Star Trek convention with many celebrities

**Saturday, December 3**

**Gaskell Festive Holiday Ball**
Scottish Rite Temple
1547 Lakeside Drive, Oakland
[gaskellball.com](http://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

**Friday-Sunday, January 3-5, 2015**

**Sac-Anime**
Sacramento Convention Center
1400 J St, Sacramento
[www.saconventions.com](http://www.saconventions.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 (advance), $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.

Friday-Sunday, January 16-18
Salute to Supernatural
Hyatt Regency San Francisco Airport
3300 Bayshore Highway, Burlingame
www.creationent.com/cal/supernatural_sf.htm
Official Supernatural convention with many celebrities

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)

Saturday-Sunday, January 31-February 1, 2015
Animation on Display
Hyatt Regency San Francisco Airport
1333 Bayshore Highway, Burlingame
www.aodsf.org
Celebrating Japanese animation (anime), video games, recent American cartoons, and their related interests.
$30 (till January 1), $35 (at convention)

Friday-Sunday, February 6-8, 2015
Potlatch 23
Hotel Deca
4507 Brooklyn Avenue NE, Seattle, Washington
potlatch-sf.org
Literary SF convention
$60 (until January 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 (advance), $25 (at the door)

Saturday, February 14, 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.
$70 (till January 1), $80 (after January 1)
**Friday-Sunday, 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-Sunday, March 6-8, 2015**

**FOGcon 2014**  
Walnut Creek Marriott  
2355 North Main Street, Walnut Creek  
fogcon.org  
Literary SF/F convention. Theme: The Traveler. Guests: Kim Stanley Robinson, Catherynne M. Valente  
Pricing TBA

**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 (advance), $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.conquestssac.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 (advance), $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 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 (advance), $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.

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.

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.

Saturday, May 23, 2015
31st Annual Art Deco Preservation Ball
Bimbo’s 365 Club
1025 Columbus Avenue, San Francisco
www.artdecopreservationball.com/
Art Deco ball in the grand style of the Golden Age of Hearst Castle.
Ticket packages TBA

Friday-Monday, May 22-25, 2015
Clockwork Alchemy
Doubletree Hotel
2050 Gateway Place, San Jose
www.clockworkalchemy.com/#/home
Steampunk convention in conjunction with Fanime.

Friday-Monday, May 22-25, 2015
KublaCon
Hyatt Regency San Francisco Airport
1333 Bayshore Highway, Burlingame
www.kublacon.com
West Coast’s largest gaming convention.

Friday-Monday, May 22-25, 2015
BayCon
Hyatt Regency Santa Clara
5101 Great America Parkway, Santa Clara
baycon.org/2015/
General interest science fiction/fantasy convention.

Saturday, June 6, 2015
PEERS The Doctor Dances: 1756 (Time Travel with The Doctor through the Fireplace to Madame du Pompadour’s Grand Costume Ball)
Alameda Elks Lodge
2255 Santa Clara Avenue, Alameda
peersdance.org
Join the Doctor and Rose at an 18th Century ball hosted by "Reinette," the beautiful Marquise du Pompadour, at the Court of Louis XV for English and French country dances and waltzes. Music provided by Bangers and Mash.
8 p.m. $20 (advance), $25 (at the door)

Friday-Monday, June 19-21, 2015
WizardWorld Sacramento Comic-Con
Sacramento Convention Center
1400 J St, Sacramento
www.wizardworld.com/home-sacramento.html
General comic book and pop culture convention
$80 (advance), $90 (on site)
### Thursday-Sunday, July 2-5, 2015

**Westercon 68**
Town & Country Resort and Conference Center  
500 Hotel Circle North, San Diego  
westercon68.org/  
General interest science fiction/fantasy convention  
$55

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**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

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**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.

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**Sundays**

**Amtgard Game Day**
Codornices Park  
1201 Euclid Ave, Berkeley (Across from Berkeley Rose Garden)  
caamtgard.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.  
Free

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

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

**Wednesday and Sundays**

**Escape From The Time Travel Lab**
Real Escape Room
1746 Post Street, San Francisco
realescapegame.com/ersf2/ttlab/
You are trapped in a mysterious laboratory where they study time travel and must escape in this immersive game.

**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.

**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 Crepreville
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

**Vintagewaltz**
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
steam-federation.com/%20cal2.html
www.facebook.com/groups/steamfederation/
General gathering for craftwork, discussions and general fun. Free

Thursdays

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

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

Fridays

Friday Night Waltz
First United Methodist Church
625 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto
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

Fridays and Mondays

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

Saturdays

Niles Film Museum Saturday Movies
Niles Essanay Silent Film Museum
37417 Niles Boulevard, Fremont
www.nilesfilmmuseum.org
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.

Gaslight LARP
289 8th Street, San Francisco
gaslight.endogaming.net
www.facebook.com/groups/gaslightlarp
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
Dorkbot-SF
www.dorkbot.org/dorkbotsf
www.facebook.com/pages/dorkbot-SF/101954222010
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
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
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
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. Free

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

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

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

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

**Science Fiction and Fantasy Book Club**  
Borderlands Books  
866 Valencia, San Francisco  
[www.borderlands-books.com](http://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

**Micro Gods, Inc.**  
Berkeley Public Library, West Branch  
1125 University Ave, Berkeley  
[mgisciaf.angelfire.com](http://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

**USS Defiance**  
5026 Don Julio Blvd, Sacramento  
1566 Howe Ave, Sacramento  
[www.myspace.com/d2121978](http://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](http://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
**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.