

Science Fiction/San Francisco

Issue #49

August 15, 2007

email: SFinSF@gmail.com

Editors: Jean Martin, Chris Garcia

Copy Editor: David Moyce

TOC

News and Notes	Chris Garcia	2
Fans Hold First Meetup	Jack Avery	2
Letters of Comment	Chris Garcia	4
Editorial.....	Jean Martin.....	6
Santa Rosa Has New Sci Fi Source	Jack Avery	7
The Westercon Drunkzine Lounge	España Sheriff.....	8
The Con That Wasn't There	España Sheriff.....	10
Giants Share Stage at Asian Art Museum	Jack Avery	15
My Fantasy/Sci Fi Tour of the U.K.....	Jean Martin.....	19
BASFA Minutes		31
Bay Area Fannish Calendar	David Moyce.....	35
TAFF Ballot		47

Science Fiction/San Francisco is the twice monthly news zine for the San Francisco Bay Area. All issues can be found at www.efanzines.com
All articles and photos are copyright 2007 by the original creators. Used with permission.

News and Notes

By Christopher J. Garcia

Editor

I'm back from Collinsville where NASFiC was a joy. You can read more about it later, but the big news was the fact that it was a good time.

TAFF Ballot is official (as you can read in the official announcement section) and I'm going to have to change the name of my "Chris for TAFF" campaign. Why? Well, there's Chris Barkley and Christian McGuire also running. "Chris for TAFF" could mean any one of us!

The BArea eZine world is enjoying a rebirth. The most recent addition is *Consonant Enigma*, edited by Kristina Kopnisky.

It's a really good little zine focusing on the social sciences and how they related to fandom. Yes, I've got a piece in it, as does Andy Trembley, and the layout is fantastic. I can't say that enough.

She says that there'll be an issue every 3 months or so, and that's the perfect amount of time between issues.

More zines have popped up: *Pixel 16*, this issue without a "Found in Collection" from me, has been deemed the last one until at least the New Year.

It's a very good issue with Dave Burton's great layout work. The LetterCol is really strong, as all of *Pixel's* LoCs are from the best of the Fanzine Community.

Earl Kemp released a new issue of *eI*, the

best zine in the world as far as I'm concerned. Earl always puts out a good issue, and here he has Greg Benford, Bob Bloch, Charles Nuetzel, Robert Toomey and Earl Terry Kemp as well as a long and lusty list of Letterhacks littering the LetterCol. It's a really good issue.

Peter Sullivan, peter@burdonvale.co.uk, is the Official Editor of eAPA, an on-line APA that runs monthly. You might want to consider it because it's a wonderful group of folks and the APA, which I was a member of until early this year, is a darn good one.

Rodney Leighton gave us *The Mail Carrier Brought It #2 & Bits of My Boring Life #2* and it's a fun little typewritten piece that's been scanned. It's a simple zine that is something of a throwback.

I am told that there's a Chicago in 2012 bid coming up. It's probably going to be an easy year since folks are stacking up for 2013 and 2011 is Seattle.

I'm planning our SiliCon presence and I'm hoping that there'll be another *SF/SF* panel and perhaps...well, you want to be surprised, don't you?

Vintacon is coming up and you should look to the Vintacon LJ community for more info. It'll be a good time in Southern Santa Clara County. You like wine? You like the good fans of the BArea? You'll like Vintacon! I'll even be there, this year for sure!

Fans Hold First Meetup

By Jack Avery

Staff Writer

The first meeting of the *Science Fiction/San Francisco* Meetup was held at the new Mysterious Future Bookstore in Santa Rosa on July 15.

While *SF/SF* can host meetups throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, the Santa Rosa location is planned as a regular event to be held on the second Sunday of the month. Mysterious Future has graciously agreed to let us use their space to meet, and owner Sharon Halton even provided bottled water and brownies for the group.

We had six people attend the first meetup where we discussed what the group hopes to do and what the attendees wanted to see from a science fiction club.

The first order of business was to establish a rule that we were not to discuss a certain company. This rule came up because out of the people attending, half worked at this company and one person used to work there. For the most part we did pretty well adhering to the rule.

Jack Avery opened the meeting with a description of *SF/SF* and showed some hardcopy printouts of the zine as well as describing the new *SF/SF* livejournal community that was recently established.

The consensus seemed to be that we wanted to avoid having a lot of rules, officers and bureaucracy. It was decided that we didn't want to collect dues as we didn't really have any thoughts on what to spend money on anyway and it would be a big hassle.

Instead of having officers, the club will rely on volunteer "hosts" to help organize meetings on subjects that interest them.

The group has accumulated some debt as the meeting was organized using www.meetup.com. This resulted in one person finding the meeting and several more people expressing an interest. The cost to be on [meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com) is \$15 per month and an auction of items (several VHS tapes, and some older sf digests among them) donated by Jack Avery brought in \$15 to cover the cost of this month's expenses. The [meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com) site will remain up for another two months, and more if it turns out to be a good way to get fans together.

Several members of the group had not previously visited the bookstore and Halton sold a few books to members.

The next meeting of the group will feature Hugo award-winning artist Frank Wu, who has agreed to come in for a special meeting on August 5. Wu will be showing a director's cut of his film *Guidolon the Giant Space Chicken* and will discuss his work as an independent filmmaker and his art.

The regular second Sunday of the month meeting will be held the following week and is planned as a social get-together where fans can share their interests. The group hopes to have future guest speakers come in from other groups.

A meetup on July 30 was attended by only two members, possibly because of late notice. But it was fun anyway. A message was sent out through the meetup.com site that members were welcome to gather in Berkeley and see *Labyrinth* on the big screen.

For information on upcoming meetups, go to scifi.meetup.com/348/. If anyone is interested in "borrowing" the *SF/SF* meetup site to host a meetup in the Bay Area, please contact Jack Avery at backnumbers@gmail.com.

Costume-Con 26 is happening in San Jose in April 2008...and our first contest deadline is coming up soon!

Do you like sketching wild and avant-garde fashion designs? The Future Fashion design contest is right up your alley. Design fashion sketches and enter them. If the jury chooses your sketch, it will be published in our Future Fashion Folio. Designs must be postmarked before September 15, 2007 to be eligible for the Costume-Con 26 Folio.

To add a bit of spice, we have special design categories and awards in the Future Fashion Folio. They are in keeping with our Costume Continuum and League of Evil Geniuses themes (you've probably seen our Hall of Evil Geniuses at a con or three!). See the rules on the website for details.

The Folio will be sent out to all registered members in the winter.

There's yet more associated with the Future Fashion Folio! Designs may also appear in our Future Fashion Show.

The Folio is a design competition - create designs that may or may not make it into the actual Folio. Those designs are then up for grabs for construction and display in the Fashion Show. You may also submit Single Pattern designs to the Future Fashion Folio.

Single Pattern show entries will go on stage regardless of whether they were submitted in advance for publication. If you arrive at the convention with a completed garment, you can enter it into the Future Fashion Show on the spot. You are not required to submit a design in advance to have a garment judged in the at-con contest.

All told, if you like to design, to sketch, to sew, to model... there's an exciting competition for you at Costume-Con 26. Please contact us at info@cc26.info or visit our website at www.cc26.info if you have questions.

Letters Of Comment

We open with the legendary John Purcell!

Hey, kiddies - Pop Quiz time!

As I write this loc, Chris Garcia should be in St. Louis for which of the following conventions:

- a) NASFiC
- b) ArchCon
- c) TuckerCon
- d) none of the above
- e) all of the above

Take your time... but for Ghu's sake, hurry up!

Chris Garcia replies: I'm working on it! I know I was at Archon, I know they were calling it TuckerCon, but I'm not sure if it was a NASFiC or not (see reviews in upcoming issues of SF/SF and The Drink Tank).

Anywho, my mind is weighed heavily by the news coming from my old stomping grounds, Minneapolis, Minnesota, where a heavily traveled bridge spanning the Mississippi River between St. Paul and Minneapolis collapsed into the water during rush hour traffic last night. I haven't heard from my brother yet, but I am positive that he wasn't involved - or at least, I hope not. Rick lives and works in Bloomington, MN, which is a large southern suburb (where the International Airport is located) and so he would have no reason to be 30+ miles north where this tragedy occurred. My prayers are with the families of all of the victims. The fannish community up there - Minn-stf - has established a LiveJournal Community where people have been logging in to let everyone know that they're

alright. This is a big relief for not only ex-Minn-stf members like me, but for others in fandom who have strong ties to Crazy Minneapolis Fandom. It is good to know that everyone - so far - is okay.

It was a scary thing and I could imagine that fandom would come up with a get-in-touch board. When the big L.A. fires happened, Christian McGuire put together a site for folks to check in. There were a lot of people out there who really needed to know who was OK and who wasn't. I don't remember anyone losing their house to the fire, but I know the Nivens' place was close.

Onward to a few quick comments on your zine.

Chris's write-up of "Who's On The Ballot?" reminds me that any day now we should be learning who all the TAFF candidates are. I am very interested to learn these names because it should be a fun race. The latest word is that there may be up to 5 candidates. We shall see. By the time your 49th issue hits the electronic press, they should be Known To All. Good luck to Chris and the other candidates! Whoever wins will be well deserving.

The candidates are Chris Garcia, Chris Barkley, Christian McGuire and Linda Denneroff. It should be a good race. You can find your ballot at the back of this issue!

It is good to see Mike Deckinger writing in to you about the Breendoggle, one of fandom's sadder and most painful moments. While I agree

with Mike that bringing this subject up may indeed revive old wounds, I can understand why Chris wants to know more about it: Chris is a historian by nature and profession, and he simply wants to know as much as he can about it. Time may, by now, have tempered things down, but people do have long memories, so Chris does need to tread carefully here. My suggestion is that this kind of dialog should be kept out of the greater fannish press, and that Chris contact some of the older, wiser fen who were either active at that time or are knowledgeable about the actual events. My suggestion here is that Chris should e-mail people like Ted White, Richard Lynch, Earl Kemp, and Arnie Katz to get private messages about this sore spot so that Chris can learn as much as he can. From a historical viewpoint, I see where Chris is coming from. But like I said, due to the subject matter, he needs to be careful.

There was a little talk about it at NASFiC and a few folks said that it wasn't something that should be brought up and a few more thought that it was something we should try and learn from. What are you gonna do?

Man, I sure enjoyed this special "Jack Avery Issue" of SF/SF. He certainly covers a lot of territory here. What is especially interesting is that one of my summer session students just wrote a paper about Manga comics, their history and development, and how they favorably compare/contrast with American comics. It was a very interesting paper, also enjoyable. I

had no idea this student was into these. If she is still in classes this coming academic year, she will have to check out Aggiecon 39 next March and a bunch of the other Anime cons in the south Texas region. I gave her the URL for efanazines.com and sent her a copy of my zine, *Askance*, which carries regional convention listings (including gaming and anime cons), in hopes that she will become more interested in pursuing things fannish.

Jack came through big for us when we needed more content. Looking at this issue, we're solid!

This is a sidelight of my teaching career that I enjoy; sometimes students write about topics that are stfnal in nature, and that gives me the chance to direct them to cons and zines. Once they see that They Are Not Alone and can have a real good time pursuing these activities, then the chances of these kids contributing to my zine and starting their own zines - to say nothing of bringing more fresh blood to local fannish activities - increases. This is a fun aspect, and when it happens, I love it.

We had a nice long chat about that in a panel I was on at NASFiC. We all agreed that we need some form of mentoring, for lack of a better word. Really, it's about influence and elder fen accepting new folks. It's never easy being the newbie, but it's been very encouraging to see the way people have taken to some of the newer folks who have started showing up around BArea fandom.

Hey, time to sign off and head homeward. Thanks for posting, and let's hope that St. Louis survives the attack of the Garcia.

Well, it did try and kill me...

All the best, John Purcell

And Now Our Good Friend Kevin Standlee!

Chris described in *SF/SF* 48 our "Who's On The Ballot" routine as performed at Westercon 60. (The video of the performance is on Google Video at <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-6360821575500524273&hl=en>.) I was delighted at how well Chris and I work doing this routine. We both took the performance seriously. I was a bit worried that I was cracking up at my own jokes, but have been reassured that it's in keeping with my character. While our performance is *inspired* by Abbott and Costello, we both bring our own styles to it, and in my case that's sincere and smiling, not exactly deadpan. And as we go along, I do my best to project an attitude of "This is very simple, and if you just listen carefully, I'm sure you'll understand."

It was a great read on the material, too. I used the typical "be confused and be animated." It seemed to work. I've shown it to some people at work and while they don't get all the gags, they got the gist of it.

People who have only encountered me on-line or in the wrong context have been known to assume that I'm humorless. I think that's not true, but it's not always obvious that I'm aware of the potential for humor and inherent absurdity in a rule-bound society like Business Meeting Fandom. James Stanley Daugherty managed to capture this extremely well in "Who's On the Ballot," and I had a ball performing it. And, by the way, if you get past the funny names for the bids, the description of site selection is actually quite accurate. Not that I'd *really* try explaining things this way!

It's both entertaining and educational. To quote Homer the Wise, "MMmmmm...

InfoTainment!'"

I'd love for us to perform this elsewhere, but we're going to have to work on different variations of it. For example, Westercon and Worldcon's site selection rules are sufficiently different that a number of the specific jokes written for Westercon don't work in a Worldcon context. I'd also like for us to get conversant enough with the material to not have to perform it "on book." While I'm happy with the way in which I delivered the "That would never happen" line, looking at the video, I think it would look even better if I didn't have to switch hands holding the script as I do it. But I'm a perfectionist, and try to do everything on which I work as well as I can. Comedy, they say, is a serious business.

I think that's why we get along, Kevin: you're the perfectionist and I'm the Sasquatch who has somehow managed to educate himself in the ways of man.

Now, if we could just manage to get Chris out to SMOFCon in Boston this December; alas, I understand that even if the money could be found, time is likely to be the issue. And doubtless Chris needs to conserve vacation days for his TAFF trip next year. I wonder if there's any way for us to translate the jokes from Western American to British Eastercon?

Kevin Standlee

You know, I'd even promise to memorize it if it would mean I'd get to be the TAFF Delegate! I wish I could do SMOFCon, but there's the problem of watching Evelyn (not to mention other money) and other considerations, I've gotta pass on it. Bummer!

Always good to hear from Tall Kevin!

Editorial

By Jean Martin

Editor

We're now halfway through Summer, and lots of fannish activities have already passed, with lots more headed our way. I thoroughly enjoyed BayCon at the temporary site in San Mateo in May, as my article a couple of issues ago attested. And from what I've heard from others, BayCon went really well for them too.

Then I went on a two-week fan trip through the U.K. My long and thorough travelogue, with lots of photos, of course, is in this issue. If you have the stamina for it, do read my entire article, as it is chock-full of little and varied details from historical and mythological to sci fi and fantasy and everything in between.

After that, I was exhausted and couldn't really work up the enthusiasm or energy to do much, so I missed several noteworthy events. It's good that we have dedicated writers and photographers who contribute to our ezine so that we have rich coverage of whatever's happening in the Bay Area. And there's always something going on around here, that's for sure!

But I managed to get myself to Westercon for one evening in July. I had no excuse not to, as the San Mateo Marriott is only a few blocks away from my office. I was also interested in revisiting the site to see how another con would fare in the same location where BayCon was just held. So I chose to attend Monday night's festivities, and had a fantastic time.

I decided not to go to Comic-Con this year and no one in our staff attended either. So if there's anyone from the Bay Area who would like to do a con report, please contact us.

On the same weekend was a new convention, Con-X-Treme, which was held at the San Jose Doubletree. I would have liked to check it out, especially since it was at the beloved former site of BayCon, but I bailed out at the last minute. Several friends and staffers were going, but I was still in burnout mode. I probably could have gone for one day and/or evening but there wasn't any information on the web site about whether there would be one-day memberships. I certainly didn't want to pay for the entire weekend just to attend one day. I would have wanted to go on the night they had Regency dancing but there was no information on when that would be – nor was there any other programming information. Also, I was hoping to wear my new Star Trek uniform but the boots I ordered to go with it hadn't arrived. So I decided to just skip it and catch up on much needed rest.

Which leads me to talk about some of the weird things that happened to me during what I discovered to be a Mercury retrograde period. Now, I'm all into science and astronomy as everyone knows, but I'm also into metaphysics and astrology and the like. So I ordered these boots, and they sent me the wrong size. I had them re-send me the correct size but they weren't able to deliver them in time. Lots of

other things like this kept happening and I talked to a friend about it, and she said that other people experienced similar strange occurrences. Thank goodness we're almost out of it!

The fifth Harry Potter movie and the seventh novel came out recently. There was a lot of hoopla beforehand for both, which I was involved with a little bit, but it seemed to me that it all fizzled out shortly after the two releases. Perhaps the franchise is already long in the tooth and folks are just blasé now and not making as big a deal about it. I could be wrong, however. Do let us know if you think otherwise.

This Summer has also been very busy for me at work. Unfortunately, that's the nature of my day job: we're swamped this time of the year when we're all supposed to be having fun outdoors and enjoying the warm weather.

I've also been tired from my now-longer commute to and from work. Distance-wise, it's really not that far, but traffic on 101, especially from Menlo Park to Mountain View, can range from frustrating to horrendous. It takes me twice as long sometimes to get home than it would without traffic. And that's with no accidents! It wasn't so bad at first but it became worse after I got back from the U.K. I'm told that it's because the economy is picking up and more people are getting hired, which is a good thing, but leads to more cars on the road.

I know other people have worse commutes than I do, but I guess I'm just not used

to it and my car isn't very good so it's exhausting to drive. Plus, I spend more money on gas, which is so expensive right now, and I'm losing about 40 minutes to an hour a day that I used to have to do things.

So I'm looking into getting a used Prius with a car pool lane sticker to save time and money. After talking with several dealers, it seems it's impossible to find these, and if there are any, they're more expensive used than a brand new Prius! I haven't decided yet what I'll do about this but I just wanted to go on my bully pulpit and say that if some people have gotten an extra advantage from buying a green car, then other people buying green cars should too.

Looking ahead, there are more conventions, balls, faires and other fannish events coming up. The one I'm most excited about is SiliCon, where I'll get to see the Doubletree Hotel in San Jose once again. We at *SF/SF* are planning to be there in full force in our capacities as writers, editors, photographers, panelists and just plain con-goers and party animals!

We've missed a few issues but we're glad to be back with our regular production schedule. And we look as good as ever, bringing to you stories and pictures from all over the Bay Area.

More *SF/SF*!

There's a new *SF/SF* LiveJournal community. Drop in at community.livejournal.com/sfinsf/ to read and post news, fannish musings, and notices of meetups and other events.

Santa Rosa Has New Sci Fi Source

By Jack Avery
Staff Writer

North Bay residents no longer have to cross a toll bridge to get to a bookstore specializing in science fiction, now that Mysterious Future Bookstore has opened up in an attractive storefront in downtown Santa Rosa.

Shop owner Sharon Halton, a longtime mystery and science fiction reader, said she had long planned to open a bookstore when she and her husband retired. She accelerated her plans when she decided she'd rather be her own boss than work for someone else.

The shop specializes in genre fiction because Halton was trying to find a niche that would allow her to compete with the long-established Treehorn Books located nearby.

While the shop sells both new and used books, Halton said that "it's evolving into a used book store."

The store, open about three months, has about 2,000 used science fiction books and is expanding the number of sf books it carries. In fact, Halton recently installed more shelves in order to expand the science fiction section. She said she was surprised that science fiction is outselling the mysteries. Buyers are purchasing two science fiction books for every mystery sold.

Halton said she is hoping to find someone who is interested in leading a science fiction



Bookseller Halton

Photo by Jack Avery

book club to be hosted by the store.

Mysterious Future sells used books for half cover price with a \$3 minimum. She accepts used books in good condition for trade credit that can be used for up to 70 percent of the purchase price of used books, not counting tax.

The store also carries a selection of t-shirts with literary sayings and some gift type merchandise.

The store is currently hosting art by Cory Hakola as part of the Santa Rosa First Friday Art Walk.

The bright and uncluttered store is located at 531 Fifth Street in Santa Rosa.

The Westercon Drunkzine Lounge

By España Sheriff
Staff Writer

My memories of fanzine lounges at conventions are mostly of empty rooms shoved

someplace west of the convention, past the gaming room, after the anime room, beyond even the filk area.

Inside are mysterious publications and eager old fans who are full of interesting

information once you get past the desperately lonely look they give you when you first cross the threshold, not unlike that of a hermit trying to remember what it is that's so familiar about that bipedal shape approaching. It's not their fault; you just may very well be the first person they've seen all day... maybe you brought food and water, news of the outside world?

Perhaps I exaggerate a little. I have had interesting chats and once even read a zine or two at some Worldcon or other...but the point remains that the fanzine lounge is not generally known as a happening place.

Which is fine, I don't go to the library for the dancing, either. But it was a pleasant surprise to find that the fanzine lounge at Westercon was on the party floor. During the course of the convention, the fanzine lounge and the perennial League of Evil Geniuses, Wine Party and general Den of Fabulosity room became the two places to end up as the dances or parties waned. Mornings it seemed as though folks were ending up there after breakfast before wandering off to their panels, so it was not unlike a auxiliary con suite in a way. Except that unlike most of the con suites I've seen, we had booze (I am informed that Things Are Different elsewhere) and well, fanzines.

Chris Garcia opened the lounge early, but since he seems to have spent little or no time in it for the first 24 hours, we're not going to be counting that toward his brownie points.



Jason, Chris & Company Chillin' in the Lounge.

Photo by Jean Martin

Anyway his head has gotten big enough as it is.

Aside from Garcia (who had no place else to go between panels after all), at any given moment poking your head into the lounge might turn up Jason Schachat, Derek McCaw, Leigh Ann Hildebrand, John Hertz, Kevin Standlee, Frank Wu, Daniel Spector, Wendy Newton and a host of other folks whose names I'm forgetting but who represented a pretty wide swath of fannish interests. Conversations ranged from the uber-smofy "What to do about the future of Westercon," a discussion reiterated over the weekend in several different incarnations, to wrestling and the Chris Benoit tragedy, to comics and whether the current run of *The Hulk* is the Best Ever (damned close), to a delightful discussion of theology involving Anthony Kopec, Leigh Ann and myself that has forever changed the way I will look at rainbows.

Fanzines were read and distributed. John Hertz gave me a gorgeous issue of *File 770* and we discussed the pros and cons of online vs. paper, natch. As is traditional, a fanzine was created in the lounge itself, with a piece by Writer GOH Jay Lake. Over the next few days we all even got to be (or not be) Jay for a while.

There was also filking, drawing, blogging, kvetching and all manner of other fannish activity. The room got a little smoffy now and then but there were also a couple of folks that I'm fairly certain may never have seen a fanzine before.

And the rest of the convention? What I saw of it was great.

The only issue I ran into was a problem with the computers or something that temporarily slowed registration, but it was soon

solved. Plus the membership packet came with a trade paperback courtesy of local small press Night Shade Books — a choice between Jay Lake's *Trial of Flowers* and Elizabeth Bear's *The Chains That You Refuse* — so there was no reason to be bored during the wait.

The Jay and Frank Experience did a panel where we all got to see the truly gorgeous super-luxury Traife Buffet edition of *Greetings From Lake Wu* and witness an awesome display of hair prowess. The parties, though generally quieter than those I gravitate towards, were all good, the most boisterous being the ones hosted, cohosted or generally enabled by Kevin Roche and Andy Trembley, of course.

I missed the Masquerade but there were plenty of good hall costumes. The dance on Friday closed down too early for me to judge, and the Saturday dance ended early due to a mishap that left Wendy in a wheelchair with a broken foot. Which would have been sad, but she took it quite well — mostly by making Tadao feel guilty for encouraging her to get up and dance in the first place. She tried the same trick on me but there was no guilt left over, thank goodness.

Where BayCon was too large for the venue, Westercon fit it very nicely, with the advantage that a lot of the attendees already knew the layout and "the other second floor" and all the good shortcuts.

Once again I found the staff of the hotel to be genuinely wonderful. From the waitress who seated me for breakfast the first day who told us she was trying to convince her husband to come down for the charity *Serenity* screening, all the way to the nice gentleman who helped

guide Mette, Jason and me back to the lobby when we opened the wrong door and found our drunk selves suddenly in the bowels of the hotel in some sort of service corridor at 3 a.m.

Speaking of which, having a 7-11 a block away was a lifesaver.

I would love to attend another convention of that size at the San Mateo Marriot.

When Wednesday eventually rolled around and it was past time to go, Garcia, Wendy, Tadao and myself managed to squeeze a few more hours of pure lounging out of the room, lingering while the last people trickled by on their way home. But even as we left, exhausted, the Last Gnome Standing party was just getting started.

Westercon is alive and well as far as I'm concerned.

Join our crew:

We are looking for writers to cover local events, conventions, fan groups and the fannish scene in general.

Contact Jean Martin and
Chris Garcia at
SFinSF@gmail.com

The Con That Wasn't There

By España Sheriff
Staff Writer

Before I start, let me address the issue of ghosting, because I know it's a sensitive subject and I know that I could have written that the con chair personally whapped us over the head and stole our wallets and there would still be fans who would shake their heads and say, "Well, you still should have bought a badge..." I disagree, but I know where you're coming from.

While there is no way in hell I would ever pay a cent to encourage the delusions of the people behind this train wreck, I do know that there were people there that weekend who were making an honest effort, and getting very little in return from those at the top. So everyone in my party has quite happily agreed to put their money where their mouth is and individually pay the full weekend rate of \$50 to one of the groups which in my opinion were treated quite poorly for their efforts.

Still with me? Excellent. (And if not, then no peeking, for shame!)

Calling Con-X-Treme the worst convention I have ever been to would be pure hyperbole — not because I have attended a worse convention, but because it would assume that Con-X-Treme was, in fact, a convention. Traditionally conventions include at least one of the following: programming, guests, and attendees; and to toss about those terms in relation to what I saw at this non-event would be a crime against the English language.

The omens were bad enough: rumors swirled concerning verbal contracts teetering on the edge of dissolution, hurt feelings and alienation of former allies, staff defections, and at least one person claiming shenanigans related

to their intellectual property. Additionally, promotion had been sporadic and misdirected, with even Doubletree regulars expressing surprise that there was a convention happening that weekend. Even ignoring all of this, the



There's got to be a convention around here somewhere.

Photo by Deborah Kopec



X-tremely quiet.

Photo by Deborah Kopec

website showed a distinct lack of focus and even of basic information. Rather than a schedule, there was a page that, with all the sincerity of a carnival barker, showcased a list subtitled “Things You May Encounter” ...obfuscating the fact that you might not encounter any one of them.

But the fannish rumor mill tends to spin mountains out of molehills and a lot of the parties

involved were not my closest acquaintances, so my cohorts and I decided to give it a chance. A new Doubletree convention was something to be excited about, and for my own part the anime angle intrigued me. I’ve been wanting to go to an anime convention for a while now, and attending one at the good old Doubletree, while still riding the high of BayCon and Westercon, seemed like a sure thing.

I rode down on Friday with Mr. Price, who is a bit of a martial arts aficionado and was curious about the Saturday contest. Before we even arrived, Chris Garcia called to say he was already there, which seemed like a happy omen. Then a little later Ophelia called to see what I was doing, and I informed her about the convention and told her to meet us at the Doubletree.

As is traditional with this type of event, we camped out in the Coffee Garden, near the edge for maximum visibility — which gave us a grand view of nothing and nobody. About an hour in, a lonely Klingon came by and informed us that their bar was open, but this was the only fan we saw during our entire meal.

We headed upstairs to see if people were simply hiding from the water polo conference we were sharing the hotel with, and discovered the BASFA room, hosted by Ed Stokke. Now, I will grant you that Ed is a party just by himself. But I don’t think that means that I can legitimately call what we encountered a party, so much as two people in a room: Ed and a staff member whose name I can’t remember.

Since my roommates and I constituted nearly half of the attendees I had seen so far, I decided not to worry about badges until the next day when, by Ghu, I would find out where they were hiding the con. Garcia (who did buy a badge) and the rest of us sat around and chatted until my roommates Ace and Lazer arrived carrying two huge bottles, one of rum and one of vodka, which they donated to the BASFA bar by way of thanking them for being the only thing going.

At this point we were easily the biggest Friday event at the con. While chatting on the

deserted terrace, our words were drowned out by the loudest music I have ever heard at the Doubletree. A DJ was set up near the end of the terrace, and since he was the only person out there other than us, we assumed he was simply testing his equipment for the following night. After a couple of minutes our assumption was proven incorrect, and we fled inside to escape the eardrum-shattering racket.

As we settled in to resume our conversation, two hotel security officers and a San Jose police officer politely poked their heads through the door and asked if they could use our room to access the balcony to speak with the DJ. They went to do that, and we were able to hear the DJ state that the contract with the hotel allowed him to go till 1 a.m. The gentlemen of the law politely disabused him of that notion, thanked us kindly for granting them access to the terrace, and that was the end of the music for the rest of the weekend.

Despite this, and Garcia managing to almost kill himself on a plate glass window to everyone's shock, horror and helpless laughter (he's OK; we're not *that* evil), we chatted and generally entertained each other until around 1:00 a.m. Then we headed over to Denny's for some much-needed greasy food.

Saturday I rose a little more hopeful. After a hearty breakfast during which we were again surrounded by nothing but mundanes and empty tables, we headed over to the ballroom area, where registration is normally located.

And there it was, with two people standing around near it. Since this was as many actual attendees as we'd seen in one place at one time, this actually cheered me up a little.

Whistling to drown out the crickets and kicking aside some tumbleweeds, we walked past the Art Show, which was apparently not set up yet. We kept going past the Dealers' Room, which appeared to have about half a dozen tables set up. Even if there had not been a gopher at the door, none of us was interested in crossing the threshold and committing to con membership just yet, so we walked back past the handful of tables in the Artists' Ghetto, feeling slightly guilty for not stopping since we appeared to be the only people in the hallway who were not there exhibiting.

As we walked back past the Art Show

**The martial arts tournament
had two people inside and,
I kid you not, a *sleeping* gopher
at the door.**

room, which was still empty and did not have a gopher posted at the door, we noticed a lady with her little dog heading in. The eagle-eyed Lazer, who is more observant than I, pointed out that she was looking at something on the white-tablecloth-covered banquet tables set up in the room. I squinted and realized to my dismay that she was right. This apparently empty and totally unsupervised room *was* the Art Show, after all.

Rather than bother with that crazy art establishment conformist BS, this convention had thought outside the box and laid the art out flat on the tables. Not sculptures, mind you, but regular matted 2-D art, lying on tables in an empty room with no supervision inside or out. I

paused for a second and thanked whatever gods there may be that I had not shown up on Friday with art to hang. I could only imagine what would have gone through my mind. Thankfully I was told later that there were only a couple of artists in the show, so either not too many people were conned into showing, or those who were turned on their heels and left when they saw what I saw.

Heading up the stairs to see if the Taiko was likely to happen (we had heard drumming on and off briefly during breakfast), we passed two girls with parasols in very nice costumes, and in what would become a recurring thought, I felt bad when I saw their badges. Not because I had not bought one (had I done that I would have felt much, much worse), but at the thought of these kids having spent their money on this. Over the weekend, I personally saw four or five cosplay kids with badges. They looked great, and the fact that they got ripped off is one of the things that bothers me most about this whole sorry affair. (The accounts I heard of the Masquerade told of six entries, with no A/V set-up whatsoever, no microphone for the announcer, and no music but what was provided by the dozen or so audience members singing.)

Needless to say, at the top of the stairs there was a whole lot more nothing. The martial arts tournament had two people inside and, I kid you not, a *sleeping* gopher at the door, who woke up just long enough to see us wandering to the very end of the hall and call over, "There's nothing over there!" like some gloomy soothsayer.

Finally, just to be thorough, we hit the back hallway where the gaming room usually is.

The anime room held one person, presumably the staffer in charge of it, and no one had bothered to post a schedule on the door. The gaming room was likewise only occupied by one person.

At the tables in the hallway, a fan was painting miniatures, and she mentioned that she would be giving a demonstration later on. This was the first bit of actual programming we'd heard anything about, and naturally I could find

nothing on the website about it.

We wished her luck and headed back to the room. On the way we ran into a friend who told us of the latest person to have made it to the con just to turn around after getting into a confrontation of some sort with the con chair. He then mentioned that he had thought about leaving as well, and we foolishly encouraged him to stay.



Con-solation prize courtesy of Kwik-E-Mart and Chris Garcia.

Photo by Deborah Kopec

We grabbed some coffees and our books and spent an hour or so reading before going to the room to take a nap. Upon waking I looked at the clock, and my first conscious thought was disappointment at how early it still was, barely 5:30 p.m. We eventually perambulated down and out of the hotel.

Yes, we left the hotel during a convention. To add insult to injury, the Coffee Garden has changed its menu, and although the breakfast buffet has improved with more juice choices and cute little Danishes, the lunch and dinner choices are underwhelming for the price.

We wandered around in the San Jose heat taking funny photos and looking for food. Eventually we found a little Indian restaurant that was right in the middle of setting up for a little girl's birthday party. They had a section open to regular customers, so we ordered some very tasty dishes including the awesomely named Chicken 65 and some lovely, lovely curry, and enjoyed watching the kids in their bright saris and listening to the awesome Indian/hip-hop/industrial music coming from the party.

Yes, you read that right: not content with condemning ourselves to Fannish Hell for ghosting, we confirmed our contempt for the Rules of Civilized Society by crashing a five-year-old's birthday party! And it felt *goood!*

As the sun set, we meandered back to the hotel, taking the long route until Garcia called to say he had a box of donuts and a bottle of scotch. I swooned and we all picked up our pace.

Back at our room we decided we might as well dress up a bit to make things feel more festive, and blow some time. When we approached the party hall, a gopher was on duty



At least the Klingons were there to party!

Photo courtesy Deborah Kopec

to check badges. As we prepared to slink back to our room in our Sunday best, clutching our wine bottles, he asked if we had a badge, a bracelet, or were staying on that floor. We happily declared that as a matter of fact, we were staying in 217, down and across from what appeared to be staff feed. I cheerfully (but erroneously) took this to mean that the powers that be were trying to make the best of a bad situation by freeing up the party floor, and added a point back into their column.

We first wandered over to the BASFA

party, which was empty, so we popped over to the other party, The Black Hole, and over the next hour or so we drank with the Klingons and a few other people. Despite witnessing some rather scary non-convention-related folks going in and out of an adjacent room, the atmosphere was fun and relaxed — until things rather suddenly fell apart. Starting when a staff member, apparently drunk (the same one who had been checking badges earlier, now at least off-duty) tried to grab my friend inappropriately and then managed to

spill my drink all over me when I moved him away from her. We immediately left the room for the terrace, but this incident set the tone for the rest of the night.

The next half hour or so was a farce of incompetent and aggressive staff members making things extremely unpleasant both in and out of the convention-controlled areas, misstating verifiable facts and being exceedingly creepy. And it saddens me to report that it was not just us ghosts, the lowest of the low, but at least a few other folks who had every right to be there that had to deal with this boorish behavior.

Things got stupider and stupider until the assembled staff managed to eject all us pariahs. I stood at the threshold of the party floor facing the elevators, looking at my fellow ghosts and a half dozen friends, and realized that there were quite likely as many people standing in front of me as there were behind me on the so-called party floor.

I took the opportunity to congratulate one of the more difficult staff members on a successful convention and was pleased to see the con chair a little ways down the hall, giving me the chance to pass along further congratulations and to single out specific staff members for their zealous efforts.

Done with that, and since the night was still young, our band of ghosts, friendly staff members, and random volunteers headed back to our guest room and drank wine, ate cheese and chatted until around 2 a.m., which my sources tell me was about as late as the official parties lasted.

Hell, we even managed to have a little martial arts exhibition of our own. Perhaps I should have charged admission.

Giants Share Stage at Asian Art Museum

By Jack Avery
Staff Writer

The Asian Art Museum of San Francisco has taken a very bold step in pairing two special exhibitions: one on the 20th century's "God of Manga," Osamu Tezuka, and the other on leading 19th century wood block print artist Taiso Yoshitoshi.

But it shouldn't be surprising that the two exhibits go so well together. The two artists explored common themes, both used their art to tell stories, and both were strongly influenced by the turbulent Japanese history that each lived through in his youth.

I can't tell you how much I recommend seeing *Tezuka: The Marvel of Manga*, through September 9, and *Yoshitoshi's Strange Tales: Woodblock Prints from Edo to Meiji*, through September 2, along with a complimentary exhibit: *Telling Tales: Illustrated Storytelling Scrolls*.

Both Tezuka and Yoshitoshi lived through times of great change in Japanese history. Yoshitoshi was present at the battle that signaled the end of the Edo period and the opening of Japan to the West, with the enormous social and civil upheavals that followed. Tezuka was a youth during World War II and saw

the end of the Japanese empire and the country's transformation into a modern democracy. The work of both is infused with the notion of change and upheaval. Yoshitoshi tended to look to the past, toward heroes of bygone ages, while Tezuka looked toward the future, albeit futures that often had atom bombs going off.

Both men tapped speculative fiction tropes as a fundamental part of their work.

While the Yoshitoshi exhibit features some contemporary scenes of actors, politicians, courtesans and such, the truly impressive pieces are of historical heroes and events and mythological characters. There's a reason the museum emphasized the "Strange Tales" part of his work. The first rotation contained some spectacular pieces, superior in many cases to those in the second half.

Unfortunately, the delicate nature of the prints requires that only half of the exhibit be displayed at a time. The prints are displayed in low light, making it tough to really see the details and richness of Yoshitoshi's work.

The lovely "Monkey Watches A Battle Above the Clouds," retelling



"The Battle Between the Genji and Heike at Dannoura," 1865, by Taiso Yoshitoshi (1839–1892). Woodblock print, ink, and colors on paper. Collection of Harvey Garneau Jr. Image courtesy Asian Art Museum

a story from “Journey to the West” starring the Monkey King, Son Goku, could be a splash page for a modern comic book. Like many of Yoshitoshi’s works, it combines a strong image with a block of explanatory text. You have art and text combining to tell a story. The only thing that is missing is the sequential panels that would allow for a depiction of events in time.

Son Goku isn’t the only figure Yoshitoshi illustrates that would later show up in anime and manga by modern artists. He adapted works from Japanese literature including an image featuring “The Magician Jiraiya Riding on a Toad,” a character who would later show up as a supporting figure in Mashashi Kishimoto’s popular *Naruto* manga and anime series. He also created images based on characters from the famous Chinese novel *The Water Margin*.

Another notable work is “Fearless Mitsukune Contemplates Skeletal Apparitions Unmoved” from his series “One Hundred Ghost Tales of Japan and China.” The spectacular composition of “Wakashima Gonemon Dives For a Magic Bell” prefigures the art on early *Timely Comics* covers featuring the Sub-Mariner. A stark lightning bolt exploding across the image of “Sugawara Michizane Conjures a Storm on Mount Tempa” would look right at home in any modern action manga.

But perhaps the best work in the first rotation is a triptych that tells of a battle among a number of famous magicians. Although the text accompanying this exhibit is quite well done, I thought this image alone needed almost a book to explain

the background of these magicians and their familiars and the layers of meaning in each tiny detail. Yoshitoshi packs



“The Greedy Old Lady Chooses the Large Basket,” 1865, from the series “One Hundred Ghost Tales of Japan and China” by Taiso Yoshitoshi (1839–1892). Woodblock print, ink, and colors on paper. Collection of Ed Freis. Image courtesy Asian Art Museum

a lot of symbolism into every picture, which would have been apparent to his contemporaries but is a bit obscure to the modern Western audience. In the case of this work, the text does provide some fascinating details, for example that the inclusion of a spider tells us that a magician was adept at casting spider spells.

Yoshitoshi was a great artist, and he was very concerned with the quality of reproduction of his wood block prints, one of the reasons he’s held in high esteem by collectors. His work is dynamic, his images swirl and explode on the paper. The exhibit also has examples of different printings of the same image to show how this affected the reproduction.

The second rotation does have a number of nice works, including ones illustrating warriors facing off against demons, spirits, tengu and tanuki. One very nice piece is “Princess Otomo Wakana with a Scroll of Spider Spells,” which has a most delicate and finely done image of a spider in the background. The printing on this is so well done that the spider almost disappears into the background.

“The Fox Woman, Lady Kayo, with Severed Heads” is also wonderfully done, illustrating the history of a famous mythological character.

My impression is that this second rotation has a few more historical and contemporary subjects and a few less supernatural ones, but it makes up for it with slasher fiction from such series as

“Twenty-eight Murders with Verse,” like “The Murder of Kasomori Osen,” the true story of a

woman who was killed by her stepfather. While considered fine art now, originally this series was done to boost newspaper circulation with lurid, true-crime stories. There are also some excellent historical works still on display. If you like samurai battles, Yoshitoshi excelled at this.



“The Old Woman of the Lonely House,” 1873, from the series “Essays by Yoshitoshi” by Taiso Yoshitoshi (1839–1892). Woodblock print, ink, and colors on paper. Collection of Harvey Garneau Jr. Image courtesy Asian Art Museum

There’s no disputing that at a cursory glance, Yoshitoshi’s best work is more detailed, more lush with rich colors and fine line work, than Tezuka’s. But that is somewhat misleading. Yoshitoshi is putting all of his effort into one image, or perhaps three in the case of a triptych, and he has the advantage of working in a color medium. Tezuka spreads his story across page after page of sharp, modern, sleek black-and-white images, one flowing into the other. Tezuka’s style is more of what we would call a pop style, clean and iconic, and that has unfortunately led some to underestimate his ability as an artist.

San Francisco *Chronicle* art critic Kenneth Baker, for instance, gives the Tezuka exhibit short shrift, declaring, “I doubt that future collectors will cherish the original drawings of Tezuka Osamu... as connoisseurs now covet fine impressions of Yoshitoshi, but who knows?”

This is the sort of ignorant attitude

that is all too common in the art world. Art snobs dismiss mere “funny books,” only allowing into the art canon works that the established reactionary art community deems worthy.

But the real irony here is that the very works that Baker and his ilk now accept as high art, those of Yoshitoshi, were originally designed and viewed much as the manga of today: cheap, popular entertainment to be viewed and disposed of.

In fact, one reason Yoshitoshi is accepted as a fine artist is that his works, along with those of fellow woodblock print artists, were wadded up and used as packing material to ship Japanese antiquities to France. There, artists of the Impressionist school discovered these discards and were influenced by them.

You could even argue that while both were originally sold as entertainment for the masses, Tezuka’s works had a higher “moral” standard. In a comparison of both artistic skill and moral value, Yoshitoshi’s bloody “Tajima Seitaro Kills His Wife” (a primitive recreation of a famous crime for the Postal Dispatch newspaper) pales beside the skillfully done, multi-volume *Buddha* by Tezuka.

I fail to see how anyone could extoll the virtues of Yoshitoshi while dismissing the artistry of Tezuka. While it is true that appreciating Tezuka’s work may be more difficult because it is presented in small fractions of the complete whole and because the native Japanese isn’t translated, this ends up highlighting the pure genius of his art.

In a section from *Banpaiya* (The Vampires) we see Tezuka use dynamic composition and sleek art to show the

transformation of a werewolf into a boy. Each frame, each figure, sends the viewer's eye racing to the next just as the wolf is racing to his goal. There is no need for a translation; in fact, there are few words to translate — this is pure graphical storytelling.

One of the hallmarks of Tezuka's work is that he used storytelling techniques borrowed from cinema to expand the vocabulary of manga. This can clearly be seen in the stark scene of a hanging suicide from the pages of *Human Metamorphosis* or the sophisticated use of graphic storytelling elements to describe psychological breakdown in *Bomba*.

In this work, and many others, Tezuka has his characters break the frame just slightly, not enough to be obtrusive, but enough to send his characters leaping out of their paneled confinement, making them come to life.

Tezuka has a mastery of line and composition. He uses both bold blacks and negative space to convey action, intent and emotion. The Tezuka exhibit mixes examples of his original art with larger facsimiles, so you get to see both where the images come from and how they reproduce.

In addition to showcasing his artistry, the exhibit also demonstrates Tezuka's versatility and breadth.

From the science fiction of *Metropolis*, *Astroboy* and *Phoenix* to adaptations such as *Crime and*

Punishment to noir such as *Human Metamorphosis*, from kids' stories such as *Jungle Emperor Leo* and *Wonder 3* to adult fantasy stories such as *Black Jack*, *Song of Apollo* and *Eulogy for Kirihito*, from girls' comics such as *Princess Knight* and *Marvelous Melmo* to biographical works such as *Buddha* and *Ludwig B.*, there's hardly a genre of manga that Tezuka didn't make his own. Practically any one of these would have made his reputation as a mangaka; for one man to have done them all is nothing short of astounding.

I have to admit, even as a manga reader, I didn't appreciate the genius of Tezuka before I saw this exhibit. Now I have a lot of Tezuka to track down and read.

A related exhibit in a second floor gallery helps tie Tezuka and Yoshitoshi to a larger tradition of using art for storytelling purposes. Several large scrolls from Japan, China, India and Thailand demonstrate how illustrated art was used to aid in telling stories and relating myths throughout Asia.

These historic scrolls are tantalizingly close to comic strips, but the leap to using panels to depict action through time had yet to be made.

Sequential art has become so commonplace that it takes seeing these three exhibits together to realize what a big leap it was to make that development.



Title page for *Princess Knight (Ribon no kishi)*, 1965, by Osamu Tezuka (1928–1989). Watercolor. © Tezuka Productions.

Image courtesy Asian Art Museum

My Fantasy/Sci Fi Tour of the U.K.

By Jean Martin
Editor

The British Isles, the land of *The Lord of the Rings*, *Doctor Who*, Shakespeare and *The Prisoner*. Few places in the world have inspired me in so many ways, from literature to music, mythology to history, fantasy to sci fi.

I've relished tales of King Arthur and his noble knights since I was very young, and this had a lot to do with my getting into fandom. I started out with Renaissance Faires when I first moved to the U.S. I was amazed at how one could immerse oneself in an alternate reality right here in the Bay Area. Then I moved into conventions, dancing, costuming, and of course, reading and writing.

The latest extension of my varied genre interests is touring to other parts of the world to experience the specific places where these works were created or continue to manifest themselves. I always wondered what other people got out of going to movie locations and the like. But I realized in 2002, after I went to the U.K. to see J.R.R. Tolkien's Oxford and Jane Austen's Bath, that because of these connections these places take on a deeper meaning and more significance than mere tourist attractions. I didn't have time to see Tolkien's grave, but I did get to see the Eagle and Child pub, where he and his friends and fellow writers from the "Inklings" (including C.S. Lewis) had their meetings. I also enjoyed

the Jane Austen Museum in Bath.

Then last year, I went to New Zealand to do a *Lord of the Rings* movie location tour. (I'm sure I saw some *Hercules* and *Xena* locations while I was there as well.) From then on, I was hooked.

But how to top that amazing adventure? As luck would have it, I had made friends and kept in touch with most of my "Fellowship" from that tour. When one of them started organizing a group of us to go see the *Lord of the Rings* musical soon after it opened in London, I just had to make a trip to the U.K. to see that, and to have a reunion with them.

I figured if I was going to the United Kingdom, I might as well make a whole vacation of it. And fortunately, I had enough miles to cover my airfare, and I knew someone I could stay with in Wales if I wanted to go there. I'd gone west to Wales in 1999 for an afternoon, and saw the Wye Valley and Tintern Abbey. That was the year my interest in Wales started, after watching *Horatio Hornblower* featuring Cardiff native Ioan Gruffudd. Wales gained even more importance for me after the new *Doctor Who* series began in 2005. *Torchwood* followed soon after that.

Wales is not very often on American tourists' radars — which suited me fine. But planning how to get there and how to get around once I was there proved difficult for that reason.

I did a lot of research and contacted several local tour companies, but none offered what I wanted.

Basically, I wanted to see Cardiff, the capital of Wales and where the main *Doctor Who* museum is. Cardiff is also where a lot of *Doctor Who* and *Torchwood* episodes have been filmed. I also wanted to see Portmeirion, where the 1970s sci fi TV show *The Prisoner* was set. Apparently, buses and trains do not go from Southeast Wales to Northwest Wales. And in general, it was very difficult traveling south to north: you had to go east to England and then back west into Wales.

I was nearly ready to give up on seeing both when I found friends in the Cardiff area to stay with, who also kindly offered to drive me around. The best way to get around, it seems, is by car. I wasn't about to drive on the other side of the road in an unfamiliar area all by myself, though, so I truly appreciated having someone to show me the country. The only thing I had to do was catch a bus from London to Cardiff, which would be the only major expense I would have other than a hotel in London for three nights.

First, though, was the London part of my U.K. fantasy and sci fi tour. I left the U.S. on May 30th and landed at Heathrow airport the next day. I hadn't been to the U.K. in five years and I was excited to finally visit again. I love England and I especially enjoyed being able to see more of

London this time. In the past, I've usually just stayed a day on my way to tours of other parts of England.

I was in London for four days and took the Tube to get around. I even took it to get from Heathrow to my hotel in Covent Garden! The Underground is very easy to use and I felt very much at home. Every time I heard "Mind the Gap," I smiled to myself as I remembered Neil Gaiman signing my *Neverwhere* paperback with those same words. *Neverwhere* is a fantasy novel set in the London Underground.

I only had very limited time so I started touring right after I checked in, even though I had only had a couple of hours of sleep on the airplane. I had a very detailed itinerary because I wanted to make sure I got to see most of the sites I had not seen on previous trips to London.

My first stop was the Charles Dickens Museum a few Tube stops northwest from my hotel. Being part of PEERS as well as loving Victorian dancing and costuming, and the Dickens Fair, of course, I had to see the Dickens Museum. It is actually a four-story townhouse where Dickens lived when he was a child. The



The Dickens Museum in London.

Photo by Jean Martin

rooms depicted how they would have looked like when he lived there. There were also manuscripts and first editions of his novels on display. The backyard garden was beautifully landscaped. It looked more modern, but it felt like an oasis in the middle of one of the largest cities in the

world. There was also a cute souvenir shop that I promptly made use of.

Then I walked through Russell Square, a charming park which was featured in a reality TV program called *Country House*, about the Russell family (a.k.a. the Dukes of Bedford) who own the park, much of Bloomsbury, and the country estate at Woburn Abbey.

The British Museum, which was my ultimate destination, is right next to Russell Square. I had a few things I wanted to see there, but was unprepared for how spectacular the museum was. It is basically a treasure-trove of art and artifacts from all over the world collected, and in some cases purportedly stolen, by the British from their once vast Empire.

The Grand Courtyard was an impressive mix of the old and the new with a modern building surrounded by Greek ones. The ceiling over this all was a stunning metal and glass webbing. I was surprised to see an actual Greek temple in the Greek exhibit. The Elgin Marbles, which are the sculptures from the Parthenon, and which the Greeks have been trying to get back for a long time, took up several huge rooms. The Egyptian section had the famous Rosetta Stone, which was used to translate Egyptian hieroglyphics. I was disappointed to find that the European section was already closed for the day. I did come back early the next day to see it, as I really wanted to see the Sutton Hoo Ship Burial, which was discovered in Sutton Hoo, Suffolk. The items uncovered from this archaeological find included early 7th century Anglo-Saxon weapons, jewelry, and the like. The showpiece was a king's helmet that was used on the cover of the *Arthur* trilogy of my favorite author, Bernard

Cornwell. I also saw early Christian, Celtic and Regency exhibits on my second jaunt to the British Museum. The Roman Britain exhibit was closed for renovation, so I'll have to go back someday! I had not realized there was so much to see there.

But having to go back meant that I was behind on my itinerary. So I dashed off to the Tower of London, not realizing that that would take longer than I expected as well. First, there are twenty or so towers where I thought there was only one. Well, they should have called it the "Towers of London," then! I also had to wait in line to get tickets. It was late Spring/early Summer and I can just imagine how much more crowded the place would be in the peak tourist season! And it was already hot and the sun was beating down on me as I waited in line. At least I had a spectacular view of the Thames River, the Tower Bridge and the outside of the Tower while I was waiting.

Inside, I waited for the next tour to commence, which would be led by one of the Yeoman Wardens, more commonly known as Beefeaters. One came, and he was funny and knowledgeable, but he talked too long and with such a big group following him, it would have taken forever to see what I wanted to see. So I ventured off on my own and went into several towers. I had lunch at a great cafeteria. The cafeterias at major English tourist spots are gourmet, healthy and delicious. Everything looked like normal prices to me until I remembered that I had to multiply everything by two because the dollar was at a record low versus the pound!

The two most important sites at the Tower of London were the White Tower, which

is the "Tower" you would normally see in photos, and the Jewel House. The White Tower housed arms and armor throughout the ages. The Crown Jewels were in the Jewel House. There were more jewels and expensive gifts, besides the coronation crowns, scepters and orbs that I expected to see. And I'm not really into jewelry but the coronation jewels were amazingly beautiful and tasteful.

I also saw the Tower's famous black

ravens, Edward I's rooms (from the 13th century), the tower where the Lost Princes from Shakespeare's *Richard III* were imprisoned and vanished, and Sir Walter Raleigh's prison. I had worried that the Tower of London would be too gruesome for me, but other than the rifle exhibit, I thoroughly enjoyed the history and majesty of the place.

After three hours at the Tower, after only planning to be there an hour, I literally ran to the



At the Globe Theatre.

Photo by Malibu Burns

Tube to get to the Millennium Bridge, which I decided would be the fastest and most scenic way to the Globe Theatre in Southwark. The Millennium Bridge is a pedestrian-only bridge and as I started walking on it, I marveled at the Tate Modern building on the other side, and gasped when I looked back and saw the familiar dome of St. Paul's Cathedral dominating the London skyline behind me. Walking over the Thames was quite a wonderful experience. The Thames has been the hub of life in London since before England's recorded history.

I got to the Globe Theatre's museum an hour before they were about to close. I need not have hurried. The museum was miniscule compared to ones I've seen so far this trip. Being a costumer and performer, I really enjoyed the displays of costumes and sets from previous productions, which were mostly Elizabethan. But they had one prominent display that I had looked forward to ever since I'd found out about it: a costume of one of the witches from a very recent episode of the third season of the new *Doctor Who* entitled "The Shakespeare Code." In this episode, the Doctor and new sidekick Martha Jones help Shakespeare defeat three evil (and alien) witches.

Part of the tour was a short foray inside the actual theater. The theater is a replica of the original, which was destroyed long ago, but was built to the same specifications and using the same methods of construction as in Shakespeare's day. While our tour group was inside the theater we were able to witness the rehearsal of the final scene of the next production, *The Merchant of Venice*. And wouldn't you know, the last scene consisted of an Italian Renaissance dance (which I learned when I used to attend SCA dance



***Doctor Who* Exhibit at the Globe Theatre.**

Photo by Jean Martin

meetings a couple of years ago) and a lively jig with everyone wearing colorful Elizabethan costumes. I would have much preferred seeing *Merchant of Venice*, which is a comedy and one of my favorite plays, but the play being shown, and for which I had tickets, was *Othello*. A good play but quite serious and dark.

After the tour, I had dinner in a nearby waterside Greek restaurant, then came back for the evening's performance. Other than some

stage lighting, there were no microphones or anything modern inside the theater. We had to sit on benches with no backs (you can rent cushions, which I did). At least I had a reserved seat — lots of poor fellows had to stand in front of the stage for three hours! *Othello* was good and I was very happy to see Eamonn Walker (who starred in the modern TV version of *Othello* a few years ago with Christopher Eccleston, *Doctor Who*, as Iago), and Tim McInnerny (from *Blackadder*) as

Iago. But it was uncomfortable sitting shoulder to shoulder with people and, being jetlagged, I nodded off a few times. It was late and dark when the play ended and I made my way back to my hotel. The night lights of London were quite romantic and I felt safe walking alone and going on the Tube by myself.

By chance, I saw a newspaper lying on a seat while I was in the Tube. I normally don't read newspapers but I wanted to find out what was going on in London to get more of a feel for the place. My eyes were drawn to a headline that said something about an actor being injured during one of the performances of *The Lord of the Rings* musical and the show being closed for a few days. It said that it was scheduled to reopen with previews on Saturday. I heaved a sigh of relief because the show I was going to see was a matinee that Saturday! I didn't come all this way not get to see it! And most of my friends who were coming to see it were from other parts of the U.K. and Europe (including some expatriate Americans). Only one couple was actually from London. So we were all flying in just for this, though I was the one who had to travel the farthest.

Cat, from Cornwall, and I became close during the tour and she was coming in by train late that evening to stay at the same hotel I was staying at. We planned to have breakfast together that morning and see some sights before meeting up with everyone else after lunch. We had breakfast at a Cornish pasty shop in Covent Garden, famous for the musical *My Fair Lady*, and Cat proclaimed that the pasties were even better than those at home. Then we went to Westminster Abbey using the Underground.

Getting out of the Westminster stop, we both were surprised to see Big Ben right above us and the London Eye right before us. There was a monument to Boudicca, the warrior queen (and friend to Xena), across the street as well. We walked alongside the Houses of Parliament and got to Westminster Abbey. The Abbey was quite beautiful inside and we got to see the graves of several important kings and queens, including Queen Elizabeth I herself. Poet's Corner had the tombs of Chaucer and Dickens and memorials to Austen, Byron, Shelley and Shakespeare.

Cat and I went back to Covent Garden for lunch in an outdoor café, then walked to the Nell of Old Drury pub to meet up with everyone else. The pub was across the street from the theater and after lots of hugs, drinks and photos, we made our way to the Theatre Royal Drury Lane.

This theater is a very famous one, and I've read of it in several Regency novels. It was quite a thrill to actually be sitting in the orchestra! While we were waiting for the show to start, we were entertained by hobbits who ran around on stage and in the aisles trying to



LOTR Musical at The Theatre Royal Drury Lane.

Photo by Jean Martin

catch "fireflies" with nets. The stage had a huge gold ring instead of a curtain and around it were branches that spread out into the wings. Then the hobbits came on stage and started singing and

dancing and the musical began for real.

Unfortunately, the only actor I knew and actually liked, Jerome Pradon, was indisposed and his understudy was taking his place as Aragorn. Oh well! At least the show was back on!

The musical was about three hours, but still important elements were missing (such as the entire Rohan storyline and characters). It was quite a different take on *Lord of the Rings*, but then again, each incarnation has been different from the last. I'm just so used to the movies now, and it was strange because most of the characters in the musical were patterned from the movie versions, while some were radical departures. For example, Legolas had long dark hair, and Galadriel was Madonna complete with a gold bustier.

None of the songs were memorable, and there was a lot more dialogue than I expected. It was more like Cirque du Soleil, a visual spectacle rather than a traditional musical. There were acrobats flying around and crawling, and the Orcs reminded me of the *Lion King* musical with their arm and leg attachments. The sets were quite magical and impressive. And the stage rotated as well as rose and fell in perfectly timed segments. The choreography for the fights and dancing was unparalleled.

After the show, we ate at a classy English restaurant called Porters. We were 17 in all including some friends, relatives and someone from an earlier Middle Earth tour. Then we said our goodbyes again, but it felt more like "till we meet again." It felt like a family reunion and I'm sure we'll all meet again someday.

Cat and I then walked back to our hotel with John, the guy from an earlier tour, and we

chatted at the hotel bar with Cat's mom until late. I wish I could have spent more time with her, but it was at least nice to see her again. We both had to wake up early the next day to catch our respective transports, mine a coach to Cardiff, and hers a train back to Cornwall. We did get the chance to eat a scrumptious English buffet breakfast at the hotel the next morning before we checked out.

I intended to take the Tube back to Heathrow to catch the bus at the National Express Coach Station but as soon as I was on board, an announcement came up and said that the trains weren't going there that day! It

It was quite a novel experience watching *Doctor Who* in the place where it was made.

advised Heathrow-bound passengers to head to Paddington train station, which was way north of Heathrow, then take the Heathrow Express. I'm glad I left very early! But I could have gone to Paddington with Cat and her mom if I'd known that.

Paddington was quite modern and the train was quite nice. It was hard lugging my baggage (I even packed light!) on and off trains and buses, though. I found the coach station quite easily and then, after only a short wait, I was on the Cardiff-bound bus.

It took about three hours to get to Cardiff, and I slept most of the way. Added to jet lag, running around London really wore me out. I've seen the English Countryside several times so

I didn't feel I missed much. And fortunately, I woke up right as we were about to cross the New Severn Bridge from England into Wales. I'd crossed this bridge before so I knew what it was. And so began the Welsh leg of my U.K. adventure.

I saw signs in English with Welsh translations underneath. Welsh is one of the world's oldest living languages and I really felt like I was venturing into another country. I thought Wales was going to be like England but it was quite different. Cardiff is the capital but it seemed more like a big town than a city. Cardiff Castle was the first big landmark I saw, with the rest of the city spread out around it. It seemed like nothing had changed there in centuries!

Wales is known for its castles and so I was looking forward to seeing Cardiff Castle and some other ones too as time permitted. I was only going to be in Wales for a week and it's a big country. My friends picked me up and we went to their town 15 miles north of Cardiff. There was only one main street in the town, which was surrounded by hills with sheep grazing on them.

I'm pretty good at understanding British accents because I watch a lot of British programs, but Welsh accents on TV are not very common. Well, that all changed when *Torchwood* came out! The accent is quite melodic and lovely to listen to. Less clipped than the London accent and not as rough as the Northern English or Scottish.

That evening, I got to see the latest episode of *Doctor Who*, "The Family of Blood." It was quite a novel experience watching *Doctor Who* in the place where it was made, and seeing a current episode the weekend it's first shown!

The next day, we went to Cardiff and



Jean at the Millennium Centre in Cardiff.

Photo by Malibu Burns

drove by BBC Cymru Wales. Then I got to see the Castle, which was part Victorian and part Medieval. We took a tour of the Victorian building, which had a lovely library and rooftop garden. The Medieval castle was very old and was surrounded by a moat. This was a real castle and I walked into some small rooms that only had arrow slits for windows. From the top, I could see a panoramic view of Cardiff. The Castle was originally a Roman garrison and I

was able to see some sections of the wall that have been there since Roman times.

Across the street was a Victorian arcade, which led into an old church, and then into a modern pedestrian-only shopping area. We went back to the castle and went on a hop-on, hop-off tour bus, which took us around Cardiff. I saw government buildings (one with a dragon on top, as Wales's symbol is the Red Dragon), gardens and monuments, most of which looked familiar

from watching *Doctor Who*. It was great to have a tour guide, too, since I hardly knew anything about Cardiff beforehand.

The tour also took us to nearby Cardiff Bay, which used to be the world's biggest coal mining port. It has been renovated with lots of modern buildings with shops, restaurants and the Millennium Centre, a huge armadillo of a building with large English and Welsh words and Wales's version of the Sydney Opera House. Oh, and did I mention that Cardiff Bay is the site of the Cardiff temporal rift and the headquarters for the Torchwood Institute? I forgot... that's all fiction! But it's so cool to see it all. I even saw two men working on a hatch right behind the metal monolith fountain that leads to the underground realm of *Torchwood*.

After lunch at an Italian restaurant in Mermaid Quay, we walked around and saw the Roald Dahl House and the new Assembly Buildings. We saw some TV cameras set up around the Assembly Buildings but didn't know what they were for until later that evening. Apparently, the Queen was coming the next day to open the Welsh Assembly or Senate. I would have loved to see the Queen, Prince Philip, Prince Charles and Camilla but it wasn't meant to be. We were all headed to the West Coast early the next day.

But the day wasn't done yet. The biggest attraction, and one of my main reasons for coming to Wales, was yet to come. The *Doctor Who* Museum is in Cardiff Bay at the Red Dragon Centre across the street from the Millennium Centre.

The Red Dragon Centre is a big convention hall, and the *Doctor Who* Museum

occupied only a portion of it. The museum was unexpectedly quite impressive, with lots of costumes and props from the new *Doctor Who* series. It was also all nicely displayed with labels and interactive options. Right at the entrance was David Tennant's costume, bathrobe and pajamas, from his first full episode as the Doctor

the Tardis, the Doctor's time travel machine. There followed several characters and aliens in sets depicting episodes they were in, such as K-9 from one of my favorite episodes, "School Reunion," a Clockwork Droid from another favorite episode, "The Girl in the Fireplace," the Daleks, and the Cybermen. The last display was

bedsheets and lunch boxes to books and videos. After an initial stage of wanting everything, I wound up with just a t-shirt, a Sonic Screwdriver torch and an electronic cell phone charm. I only brought a very small suitcase, and I've decided not to spend money on stuff I don't really need. Besides, I already have a Tardis coin bank and



Trying to get into Torchwood.

Photo by Malibu Burns



David Tennant Exhibit.

Photo by Jean Martin



Christopher Eccleston Exhibit.

Photo by Jean Martin

in "The Christmas Invasion." Then came four stations commemorating the first eight doctors, then Christopher Eccleston's costume with his trademark leather jacket as well as Rose Tyler's and Martha Jones's costumes. And, of course,

a photo of Billie Piper that said "Goodbye," as she left at the end of Season Two. I was sad to see that, as I really miss her Rose.

After the exhibits was a huge *Doctor Who* store with all sorts of merchandise from

calendar at home.

I was so happy on the way back to Cardiff and went to the Cardiff coach station, passing the massive Millennium Stadium and the Brains Brewery, to head back to my friends' home.

The next day, we were on our way to Aberporth, a seaside town on the southwest coast of Wales, where we would spend the next five days. Talk about a remote hideaway! It seems like the West Coast of Wales is a holiday getaway for Welsh and British residents. There weren't very many foreign tourists, especially from the U.S., and there were hardly any Asians there, which felt really unusual to me. The West Coast is also very Celtic and rural — not developed much at all. Most of the locals spoke Welsh and the signs had Welsh before English.

The coast is very rugged, and Cardigan Bay, where Aberporth is, opens out into the Irish Sea. The landscape is hilly and craggy, not lush and green like England. More like what I imagine Scotland would look like based on photos. There were some quaint British houses but West Wales was less Anglicized than East Wales. This is the land of myth and legend as well as poets and bards. And one can believe it, as the place seems frozen in time and closer to nature and the gods.

Being so far away from civilization, there was very little light pollution and you could see stars and objects in the night sky very easily. That evening, using a satellite tracking program, I watched two silver satellite globes sail across the sky, one Iridium Flare satellite (it bursts into a bright flare for a second and then disappears), and a meteor or two. But the pièce de résistance was seeing the International Space Station (ISS) gracefully and slowly glide by. It was quite a treat as we can't really see this well, if at all, in

the Bay Area. It was like a star but brighter and bigger. Quite spectacular, especially as I thought about the actual people in it! I saw the ISS again



Jean in "The Village."

Photo by Malibu Burns

the next two nights and it was exciting each time, even though I had to wait till really late because in that latitude so close to the Summer Solstice, it was still light out at 10:30 p.m..

I wandered around Aberporth the next

day. This was my first slow and relaxing day since I got to the U.K. The day after that was going to be a big day: a trip up the West Coast to North Wales.

First stop was the university town of Aberystwyth. I've wanted to go there for a while because I wanted to take a summer class there years ago. The wharf and downtown areas are Victorian, the University of Wales at Aberystwyth is medieval Gothic, and the romantic ruins of Aberystwyth Castle are Iron Age and Norman.

Then we continued to drive north until we reached the southern portion of the world-renowned Snowdonia National Park. We didn't venture farther north as we didn't have time, so we missed seeing Caernarfon Castle, where Prince Charles was investitured as the Prince of Wales, and the highest peak in Wales, Mount Snowdon. I would love to see both next time I visit, as well as the island of Anglesey, or Ynys Mon. Ynys Mon was a Druid holy island until the Romans attacked and killed them. This story figures quite prominently in the Avalon series by Marion Zimmer Bradley, one of my favorite authors. We did get to see Cadair Idris; at least I think we saw it. We saw lots of tall mountains in the general area of where it's supposed to be. Legend has it that whoever sleeps on its slopes will awaken either a madman or a poet.

Around 2:00 p.m. we finally reached "The Village." Portmeirion is a surreal fantasy Italianate village with lots of turrets, domes and towers all painted in pastel colors. It took its creator, architect Sir Clough Williams-Ellis, 50



Portmeirion Hotel.

Photo by Jean Martin

years to finish his masterpiece on a cliff next to an estuary and surrounded by Snowdonia National Park. I had first heard about Portmeirion for its expensive and beautiful botanical dinnerware and pottery, which one of my aunts collects. I didn't know it was an actual place until some friends of mine showed me some photos from when they visited there a few years ago and told me that it was where the TV show *The Prisoner* was filmed. I enjoyed watching that show but I didn't see it until it came out on DVD recently. And when I found out that it was in Wales, I

knew I had to get there somehow, someday. I even toyed with the idea of staying there for a night or two as some of the rooms in "The Village" as well as the nearby Castell Deudraeth (used as the hospital in the series) are actually hotel rooms. But the prices were quite steep.

I took lots of photos in the main square with its pond, flowers, and Greek columns. I also bought a few *Prisoner* souvenirs in The Prisoner Shop, located in the room that Number 6 occupied. I got a Number Two pin from the shop and pinned it on my sweater. We had afternoon

tea in one of the cafés after we got of tired walking around. There was so much to see! All the buildings were different and the landscaping was quite lovely. There were many little touches, from gargoyles to murals and embellishments and statues. The sights and scenery were quite breathtaking. I saw practically everything including the hotel building right next to the estuary. It had a Mediterranean-style pool area and a fake ship on the dock. I then went on the estuary itself, and as it was low tide I pretended I was being chased by the big white Orb. Then I went to the discounted pottery store and bought a few gifts for my family. And myself, of course!

The drive back to Aberporth took a long time but since the sun was still up, it didn't seem that late. We had delicious Chinese curry from a takeout shop. It was the best curry I've ever had, and it was served by ethnic Chinese with Welsh accents. They were quite happy to see me and thought I was Chinese too. I'm sure they don't see that many Asians in this secluded part of Wales.

On my last full day in Wales, I saw a variety of places. The first was Fishguard, a seaside town whose claim to fame is its women imprisoning Napoleon's invading French soldiers with pitchforks after the aforementioned Frenchmen decided to get drunk to celebrate taking the town.

On a more serious note, our next stop was the impressive St. David's Cathedral. St. David is the patron saint of Wales and the gothic cathedral was built on St. David's 6th-century monastery. Inside the cathedral was a huge pipe organ, beautifully ornamented choir stalls, a decorated tomb of an important king's brother,

the graves of several knights from the 12th and 13th centuries and a bishop from the 14th century, and of course, the shrine of St. David. Unfortunately, his bones were taken during the Reformation and all that's left is an undecorated shrine. Outside was a renovated cloister area and a very modern, gourmet cafeteria. Then it was on to Whitesands Beach.

I was quite amazed to find a spectacular beach in Wales. Apparently, Wales has a lot of nice beaches and you can actually go in the water. It's cold, but probably just like the temperature of the water here in the Bay Area. And the sand was soft and smooth and stretched out for quite a distance. It was quite sunny and warm while I was there. Unusual, I was told, but I guess I lucked out with the weather on this trip. It only rained on the day I traveled from London to Cardiff and only while I was on the coach.

A couple more seaside towns were on the agenda. The colorful and lively town of Abaraeron was probably my favorite. There were lots of sailboats on the dock and an old church surrounded by pastel-colored townhouses completed the postcard perfect picture. It was a

Friday night and a high-class hotel had a fancy bar that served people outside as well. Outside was quite raucous with hotel guests and locals mixing together to enjoy the sunset and fresh air. The Brits sure know how to party. Lastly

Miller were filming *The Edge of Love*. We didn't see them, though. It would have been great to see Keira and Matthew. Keira starred in *King Arthur* with Matthew's best friend, Ioan Gruffudd, whom I mentioned earlier.

The next day, I went to Cardigan, one of the biggest towns in the county. What is left of Cardigan Castle is just the walls, and people aren't allowed inside. At least I got to see another castle! But the best part of Cardigan is a multi-level fantasy, sci fi, comic book, gaming, costuming, Celtic, historical, mythological, music, TV, movies, sports, motorcycle, pop culture, you-name-it store called Shire Hall or Middle Earth Enterprises. One of the floors was called Helm's Deep, where they sold swords.

There were so many collectibles and memorabilia there I could have spent hours browsing. I only had maybe 20 minutes and so I basically just looked around and enjoyed the displays like a museum. I wound up not buying a single thing, even though I wanted so many items! Across the street was Gandalf's Garden. We then went to an army surplus store that had cool British army clothes and supplies as well as camping gear.



Sci Fi and Fantasy Store in Cardigan.

Photo by Jean Martin

we drove by the town of Newport, which is a popular and more mainstream destination for weekend holiday makers, as they're called in the U.K. One of the pubs is where Keira Knightley, Cillian Murphy, Matthew Rhys and Sienna

Then we drove back to Cardiff.

That night, I got to see the first airing of the *Doctor Who* episode “Blink,” one of the best I’ve seen in a while.

After that, I got to see the finale of *Any Dream Will Do*, an *American Idol*-style live contest that has John Barrowman from *Doctor Who* and *Torchwood* as one of the judges. The winner gets to star in Andrew Lloyd Webber’s upcoming revival of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Unlike *American Idol*, however, the guy I voted for won!

I was busy packing that night because I had to go to sleep and wake up at 4:00 a.m. to catch the coach that would take me back to Heathrow for my flight back to San Francisco. So I missed seeing the ISS, which I would have liked to see because the Space Shuttle Atlantis docked on it that day.

Rushing to the coach station early that morning, I was sad to leave Wales and would have liked to see more of the country. But I had already seen so much my head was reeling! I guess I can come back again to see more.

The last bit of a sci fi connection was at the coach station, where a scene from *Torchwood* was shot. Making memories until the very end!

The coach took the Old Severn Bridge back into England, which I’d also already seen. But the driver took an unplanned and unexplained hour break at a rest stop. I would have missed my flight if my plane wasn’t delayed an hour too!

It was quite stressful catching all these transports and timing them all correctly, but I made it home safe and sound, with lots of photos and stories to tell.



Image courtesy John Barrows - www.cre8vision.net

BASFA Minutes: Meetings 887-888

Meeting 887

July 30, 2007

Meeting 887 of the Bay Area Science Fiction Association was held in the meeting room of Giovanni's Pizzeria, Sunnyvale, California. The meeting was called to order on July 30, 2007 at 8:01 p.m., Vice President Chris Garcia presiding and an increasingly grumpy and argumentative President Emeritus, etc. Kevin Standlee acting as Secretary. At least 28 people attended. Officers absent: President Trey Haddad (week 2), Secretary Barbara Johnson-Haddad (week 3).

On a motion by (Evil) Kevin, a party jar was established on a vote by show of hands.

Previous Minutes:

The minutes of meetings 883, 885, and 886 were, after much blank filling, accepted as "Dude, where's my con?"

Officer Reports:

President

Trey and Barbara have been called out of town unexpectedly and send their regrets. They will be gone through August 5. Andy moved to reset Trey & Barbara's absence counts to zero (Actually a motion to suspend the rules and forgive their absences; 2/3 vote required, and as an incidental main motion, objection to

consideration is not in order.). After spirited debate and attempts to amend the motion in strange ways, the motion failed, 10-10.

Treasurer's report

Last week the general fund collected \$7.50 bringing the total to \$9912.50 (before payments approved last week). The Party Fund took in \$19.75, for a total of \$630.31. The Treasurer noted that the Party Fund total does not include any expenses from Westercon or Con-X-Treme.

The Bob Wilkins jar took in \$106.55. The Kaja Foglio jar took in \$142.22. These amounts will supplement our donations to those two people approved last week.

Vice President

When will Trey come home and rescue him from this madness!

New issue of The Drink Tank is out, featuring articles by Spring and (Tall) Kevin. Next issue will be out next week.

A new layout editor is coming on board SF/SF. Expect a new issue next week.

NASFiC is next weekend in St. Louis.

Committees:

Site Selection Committee

Dave Gallaher reported that the Site Selection Committee had secured sites for the next two meetings:

Monday, August 6 – Coco's, 1206 Oakmead Parkway (at Lawrence Expressway), Sunnyvale
Monday, August 13 – Round Table Pizza, 5544 Thornton Avenue, Newark

The Carrow's that has been previously suggested is not available on Mondays. There was discussion of what nights would be optimal for meeting. The sense of the meeting was that if Monday is not available long term, we shouldn't try a location.

Party Committee

Ed Stokke reported on BASFA's parties at Con-X-Treme. Although both parties seemed small, Ed thinks maybe fifty people, including lots of ghosts, passed through. Per the deal with the con organizer, we'll only pay for one of the two room nights. Our next party will be at SiliCon.

New Business:

None

Announcements:

Evil Kevin invites anyone working or wanting to work on Costume-Con 26 to meet at Carole and Bills' home August 11th, starting 2 p.m.

Next week's meeting at Coco's will give members a chance to visit the local computer bookstore.

Carole Parker announced that she is hosting a "First Wednesday" event for doing crafts

and such at her house this coming Wednesday evening.

Adrienne announced, for the benefit of people who claimed that there was nothing to see or do in South Dakota, the existence of the South Dakota Air & Space Museum and the International Museum of Vinegar.

Lisa Harrigan reminded people that there's a convention coming up this weekend: MythCon in Berkeley.

Reviews:

Joe: "I did not attend Con-X-Treme, and it was a blast!"

Chris followed on that he did pay for his membership, and the only thing good about it was the parties and the picture of him on his badge.

Harold reviewed the new "Hairspray" movie. It's bouncy and fun; worth bargain matinee. Chris followed on that it's the best movie he's seen so far this year.

Carole reviewed Con-X-Treme. If it had announced itself as a relaxacon, it would have been a success. The martial arts tournament that was supposed to last all day didn't even last an hour, having received only five entrants. Once the martial arts tournament was over, all the martial-arts-interested people left. Not that there was much to stick around to see anyway. You could have rolled a bowling ball

down the hall and not hit anyone. The dealers' room had maybe 6-8 dealers, but nobody was selling anything; more dealers than customers. Art Show was all lithographs, no original art. The "professional models" seemed quite out of place, expecting a trade-show type atmosphere. The Taiko drums were pretty good. There was quite a bit of mismanagement. (There were BASFA members at this point who said they hadn't even heard there was a convention going on.)

Con-X-Treme Follow-Ons: David Clark's one-word review: Uuuuuuhhhhh (said à la the Addams Family's Lurch). David was astonished at how barren the place was. Considerable hotel facilities neepery followed. It appears the organizer was expecting 2,000-5,000 attendees with pre-reg of "somewhat less than 1,000" (at least that much must have been true). Ed Stokke spoke positively about Robert Picardo having attended and being able to walk the halls without being mobbed. Ed talked about some of the other convention guests: C. Andrew Nelson and Bob May. Joe: I have never ghosted a con, and would urge people not to do so. Tall Kevin: Ditto; if you're not going to pay, then don't attend. Further discussion of convention management and dissection of this train wreck followed.

Adrienne reviewed the Gilroy Garlic Festival which was wonderful, with lots of vendors, all doing well, everyone having a good time, and the weather was good for a change. This degenerated into discussion of what the various dealers in the crafts fair area were selling. There

was lots of food – obviously mostly with garlic, including the famous garlic ice cream. "I got full very fast." She was not at all sad to have missed Con-X-Treme.

David Clark reviewed The Greatest Comic Book Ever: Stephen Colbert's "Tek Jansen." A rather sardonic review followed, the details of which are best not revealed to mortal fen.

Julie Porter reviewed the movie "Goya's Ghost" at an older theater that has been repositioned as an art house. The Secretary fell behind and did not get the details of the review, and came back in at, "The movie seemed somewhat incomprehensible." It's straight old-fashioned art-house filmmaking. Recommendation: Matinee or maybe DVD if you like films likely to become "cult" films.

Dave Gallaher reviewed the San Jose Grand Prix, for which he had two standing-room-only tickets courtesy of his employer, and Tall Kevin came along for the noise. Dave did his work obligations while Kevin wandered around the track perimeter. Dave reviewed how much his ears hurt as the cars went past. Tall Kevin reviewed the amazingly loud sounds, how his noise-cancelling headphones earned their keep (along with foam ear plugs), and explained how with general-admission tickets you get no seats and have to stand all day, and most of the places you can stand you can't see the best parts of the race. Dave G. pointed out that there are big TV sets where you can watch the race, but if you stand where you can see those, you can't see much of the racecourse. Their consensus: worth

getting free tickets and free parking, but don't pay \$45 for this experience.

Chris Garcia reviewed "The Simpsons Movie." He said, "It's as good as the pink donuts for sale at Kwik-E-Mart. I laughed so hard, I think I'm dead in seventeen states."

Auctions:

Auction items included "Set the Seas on Fire" by Chris Roberson (\$1), "Fortune's Bastard" by Robert Chalmers (\$0.25), some paperback books (\$0.50), three Twinkies (\$1), a stack of videotapes of "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" episodes (\$1.50, probably for their value as blank tape more than for what they currently contain), and Linda Wenzelburger for her birthday (\$24)

Announcements Redux:

Hugo voting deadline is just after 23:59 PDT tomorrow, Tuesday, July 31. (That's a hard deadline, unlike site selection voting below.) You can still join Nippon 2007. Remember that Frank Wu is nominated for Best Fan Artist, Chris Garcia is nominated for Best Fan Writer, and Chris's zine "The Drink Tank" is nominated for Best Fanzine.

The Site Selection voting deadline by mail is officially tomorrow, but you can give your ballot to someone else to carry to Japan, and the administrator has said that if he receives your ballot in time to take it to Japan, he'll count it.

Rumor of the Week: "Con-X-Treme has beaten out Awahneecon as Best Hoax Bid Ever" (adopted 28-26 after a lot of money tossed around).

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:37 PM.

Kevin Standlee
Emergency Holographic Secretary

Meeting 888

August 6, 2007

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

Began 7:59, with Bruce dissing Sinatra.

28 people attended.

We established a party jar.

Secretary's report: the minutes of meeting 887 were accepted as "better attended than Con-Xtreme."

Treasurer's report: last week we took in \$50.65 in the regular jar [total \$9,963.15] & \$14.50 in the party jar [total \$644.81].

The VP reported there there'll be a "Drink

Tank" out in the next 2-3 days & he's still looking for cocktail stories for the issue after that & a new SF/SF is out & that "Chris for TAFF" is now redundant [3 of 4 candidates are named "Chris"].

The President said "hi" to new attendees & that Southern California remains mostly paved-over.

The Site Selection Committee reported that Barry popped out at his first at-bat & next week [August 13] we will be meeting at the Newark Round Table pizza place on Thornton - & then in 2 weeks [August 20] we will be at the IHOP on Great America Parkway.

The BASFA Times 'Zine Committee reported that the preliminary cover is done, but that it needs more content ["all the news that fits"], so send articles to garcia@computerhistory.org.

Bruce moved that for the duration of the meeting everyone be referred to as "Chris for TAFF" & it failed.

[tall] Kevin proposed that Yokohama be annexed as part of the Far East Bay Area, with a meeting to be held at Worldcon & this passed [lots to 2].

Announcements:

Julie announced that BASFA was founded in this very room [at this Coco's].

Chris announced "hello!" and that the TAFF ballot is out - and there are 3 people with the first name "Chris" on the ballot [out of 4] & to

go vote now, or to check www.chrisfortaff.org; there were follow-on's - and Frank mentioned that if you want to vote for TAFF and need a fannish reference, to use him - and Dave Clark suggested he could also be used as a reference.

[evil] Kevin announced that there will be a CostumeCon 26 "swim and meet" at Carole and Bill's place this Saturday, August 11 - and anyone who is interested should attend - and inquiries can be sent to gatherings@cc26.info.

Bill announced that the Round Table Pizza place at Saratoga and Moorpark is now closed.

Ed announced that there will be a meteor shower this Saturday night [the Perseids].

Reviews:

[evil] Kevin reviewed Costume College 2007 as a 3-1/2 day slumber party where all the girl costumers got to dress up and act silly - and that he had a good time; Andy follow-on'd that it was worth not going to Con-X-Treme for and he had a blast = good party, crazy people, lots of functioning.

Joni reviewed "Die Hard 4" as the kind of cartoon violence she was hoping for & the best comedy she's seen this summer - and worth Costco discount tickets.

Dave C reviewed NASFIC as he had a good time, but bait/switched him from St. Louis to Collinsville - not even in view of the Arch; about 1600 attended, he saw a few panels, there

were few parties and it was worth a discounted price - then there were lots of follow-on's, especially about the food available in the near region.

[tall] Kevin reviewed the Great Oregon Steam Up - as for \$8 you got to see the contents of 6 museums turn their steam equipment out, including an old locomotive steam crane - and was definitely worth it.

Julie reviewed "Becoming Jane" as it lived up to the designation of "chick flick," but she enjoyed it, it was lavishly photographed and worth full price.

Dave C reviewed "Show Business," a documentary, as fun & worth full price, then proto-reviewed "Xanadu the Musical" as he read it may be too gay for Broadway.

I reviewed "Pirates 3" as it still makes me happy, then reviewed Disneyland as it was an entirely joyful experience this visit - and I got a great pocket watch there, worth full price - then reviewed "The Bourne Ultimatum" as very exciting, worth seeing twice and worth full price.

Joe reviewed the pink doughnut at the last night of the Kwik-E-Mart as it was hard to describe what pink tasted like and said Spring for the VERY last one there [there were follow-on's] and reviewed our waiter as excellent.

Chris survived his flight from hell & reviewed "Problem Child" as it amused him & reviewed

"Elf" as every child in the movie was throttle-worth - and both were worth seeing.

Then we birthday auctioned off Bill to Frank for \$12.00 & birthday auctioned off Ken to Jerry for \$35.00; plus auctioned off books for \$5.00, fanzines for \$2.00, travel books for

Join our crew:

We are looking for writers to cover local events, conventions, fan groups and the fannish scene in general.

Contact Jean Martin and
Chris Garcia at
SFinSF@gmail.com

Bay Area Fannish Calendar

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

New listings are in red.

Ongoing events are toward the back.

Wednesday, August 15

SF in SF: Kevin Anderson, Brian Herbert, Richard Kadrey

Preview Room

Variety Children's Charity

582 Market Street

San Francisco

www.sfinsf.org

7 p.m.

Free

SF in SF is a regular series of sci fi author readings with discussion and book signing after, and a clever name. Cash bar opens at 6:30.

Wednesday, August 15

Silent Running (1972)

Pacific Film Archive

2575 Bancroft Way

Berkeley

www.bampfa.berkeley.edu

7:30 p.m.

\$8

Part of PFA's eco-disaster film series, Eco-Amok.

Thursday, August 16

Author: Austin Grossman

Books Inc.

301 Castro Street

Mountain View

7:30 p.m.

Free

Thursday, August 16

Author: Steve Berman

Books Inc.

2275 Market Street

San Francisco

7:30 p.m.

Free

Thursday, August 16

*Ichi the Killer (2001) and
The Great Yokai War (2005)*

4 Star Theatre

Clement at 23rd Avenue

San Francisco

www.4starmovietheatre.net

\$8.50

Two films by Takashi Miike, part of the 4 Star's "Asian Movie Madness" series.

Friday, August 17

The Deep History of the Information Age

Cowell Theatre

Fort Mason Center

San Francisco

www.longnow.org

7:30 p.m.

\$10 suggested donation

A talk by writer and information architect Alex Wright, presented by The Long Now: Seminars About Long Term Thinking.

Friday, August 17

Midnight Movie: Buffy the Vampire Slayer

Camera 7

1875 S. Bascom Avenue

Campbell

www.cameracinemas.com

Midnight

\$7.50

Two episodes of *Buffy* (the TV series), including the sing-along "Once More with Feeling."

Saturday, August 18

Debardchery

Society for Creative Anachronism Event

Golden Gate Park Archery Range

47th and Fulton

San Francisco

www.cloondara.org/Calendar/546.aspx

Site opens at 10 a.m.

Free/potluck

An event combining archery with a bardic competition and silly games of skill.

Saturday, August 18

Midnight Movie: Buffy the Vampire Slayer

Camera 12

201 South Second Street

San Jose

www.cameracinemas.com

Midnight

\$7.50

Two episodes of *Buffy* (the TV series), including the sing-along “Once More with Feeling.”

Saturday-Sunday, August 18-19

Ani-Jam

Radisson Hotel

2233 Ventura Street

Fresno

www.ani-jam.com

\$25, one-day passes available

Central Valley anime convention with a cosplay contest, videogame tournament, guests, more.

August 18-September 2

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Theatre in the Woods

2170 Bear Gulch Road

Woodside

www.atmostheatre.com

Saturdays & Sundays at 1 p.m.

(picnic from noon on)

\$20

Atmos Theatre presents the opportunity to experience Shakespeare’s play as part of a leisurely hike through a redwood forest.

Sunday, August 19

Authors: Steve Berman and Kat Richardson

Borderlands Books
866 Valencia Street
San Francisco

www.borderlands-books.com
3:00 p.m.
Free



A total lunar eclipse will be visible from the Western U.S. in the early morning hours of Tuesday, August 28 (reaching midpoint at 3:37 a.m. PDT). Oakland’s Chabot Space & Science Center (www.chabotspace.org) will be holding an all-night “Once in a Red Moon” eclipse viewing party. At totality, the moon takes on a dark red color, caused by sunlight passing through Earth’s atmosphere. [NASA Photo]

Sunday, August 19

Bad Movie Night: Superman IV: The Quest for Peace (1987)

The Dark Room Theatre
2263 Mission Street
San Francisco
www.darkroomsf.com

8 p.m.
\$5
What’s so funny about peace, love and understanding?

August 19-31

From the Tsars to the Stars:

A Journey Through Russian Fantastik Cinema
Pacific Film Archive
2575 Bancroft Way
Berkeley

Wind demons and crystal palaces... shimmering aquatic gill-men and limitless vistas of outer space: For over eight decades Russian cinema has had an inspired filmmaking tradition that encompasses science fiction, folkloric fantasy, and absurdist humor, producing wildly entertaining movies that are only now being seen by American audiences. See schedule at www.bampfa.berkeley.edu.

Monday, August 20

Ask a Scientist’s Anniversary Trivia Party
The Bazaar Café
5927 California Street

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

San Francisco
www.askascientist.com
7 p.m.
Free
With Trivia Mistress Robin Marks of the Exploratorium.

Wednesday, August 22

Meet the Applegates (1991)
Pacific Film Archive
2575 Bancroft Way
Berkeley
www.bampfa.berkeley.edu
7:30 p.m.
\$8
Director Michael Lehmann in person. Part of PFA’s eco-disaster film series, Eco-Amok.

Wednesday-Friday, August 22-24

Creature from the Black Lagoon (1954)
Stanford Theatre
221 University Avenue
Palo Alto
www.stanfordtheatre.org
7:30 p.m.
\$7
On a double bill with *The Jungle Princess (1936)*.

Thursday, August 23

Wallace & Gromit in The Curse of the Were-Rabbit (2005)
Milpitas Public Library
40 North Milpitas Blvd.
Milpitas
408-262-1171
7:30 p.m.

Free outdoor screening on the lawn behind the library.

Thursday, August 23

Buffy Night
Parkway Speakeasy Theater
1834 Park Blvd.
Oakland
www.parkway-speakeasy.com
9:15 p.m.
\$6

Three episodes of *Buffy* on the big screen including “Once More with Feeling,” “Doppelgangland” and “The Replacement.”

Friday, August 24

Midnight Mass: Creature from the Black Lagoon (1954)
Bridge Theatre
3010 Geary Blvd.
San Francisco
www.peacheschrist.com
\$12
Hosted by Peaches Christ as part of her summer midnight movie series, with guest host Cassandra Peterson (Elvira, Mistress of the Dark).

Friday, August 24

Midnight Movie: Donnie Darko (2001)
Camera 7
1875 S. Bascom Avenue
Campbell
www.cameracinemas.com
Midnight
\$7.50

August 24-30

The King of Kong: A Fistful of Quarters (2007)

Lumiere Theatre
1572 California Street
San Francisco

www.landmarktheatres.com

\$9.75 (bargain matinee \$7.75)

A middle-school science teacher and a hot sauce mogul engage in a cross-country duel for the Guinness record highest score in the “Donkey Kong” arcade game.

Saturday, August 25

AOD (Animation on Display)

Cathedral Hill Hotel
1101 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco

www.aodsf.org

\$12 in advance, \$15 at the door

SF’s animation convention (once known as Anime Overdose) returns, with seminars and workshops, dealer’s room, art show, costume contest, more.

Saturday, August 25

Summer Concert

Wadaiko Newark Dojo
35777 Cedar Blvd.
Newark

510-818-4266

1-7 p.m.

Free

Bring food and (non-alcoholic) drink and enjoy an outdoor concert of Taiko drumming, martial arts dance from Taiwan, Polynesian and Middle Eastern dance.

Saturday, August 25

Super Toy and Collectible Show

Santa Clara County Fairgrounds
344 Tully Road
San Jose

www.timetunneltoys.com/toyshow.html

\$5 (early bird \$15 before 11 a.m.)

60 tables of vintage to modern toys, dolls, comics, and other stuff you must have.

Saturday, August 25

Midnight Mass: Dead Alive (1992)

Bridge Theatre
3010 Geary Blvd.
San Francisco

www.peacheschrist.com

\$12

Hosted by Peaches Christ as part of her summer midnight movie series, with guest host Cassandra Peterson (Elvira, Mistress of the Dark).

Saturday, August 25

Midnight Movie: Donnie Darko (2001)

Camera 12
201 South Second Street
San Jose

www.cameracinemas.com

Midnight

\$7.50

Saturday-Sunday, August 25-26

Golden Gate Renaissance Festival

Speedway Meadow
Golden Gate Park
San Francisco

www.sffaire.com

Sat 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

Sun 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

\$15

Jousting, sword fighting, jugglers, magicians, music, crafts and food.

Saturday-Sunday, August 25-26

The Bay Area UFO Expo

Doubletree Hotel
2050 Gateway Place
San Jose

www.thebayareaufoexpo.com

\$119 (one-day pass \$69)

9th annual gathering devoted to conspiracies, crash retrievals, chem-trails and commerce.

Monday, August 27

Big (1988)

The Lawn at Wente Vineyards
5565 Tesla Road
Livermore

www.wentevineyards.com

Suggested donation: \$9 adults, \$5 children

Outdoor movie night at the vineyard. Café opens at 6:30 p.m., movie at twilight.

Monday, August 27

Once in a Red Moon

Chabot Space & Science Center
10000 Skyline Blvd.
Oakland

510-336-7373

10 p.m.

\$13

A total lunar eclipse will occur in the wee morning hours of August 28. Come take a special Full Moon hike, enjoy a Planetarium

presentation on eclipses, engage in make-and-take lunar activities, and view the eclipse through the Center's large telescopes.

Wednesday, August 29

Habitat (1997)

Pacific Film Archive

2575 Bancroft Way

Berkeley

www.bampfa.berkeley.edu

7:30 p.m.

\$8

Director Rene Daalder in person. Part of PFA's eco-disaster film series, Eco-Amok.

Thursday, August 30

Barbarella (1968)

Red Vic Movie House

1727 Haight Street

San Francisco

www.redvicmoviehouse.com

7:15 and 9:25 p.m.

\$8.50

Friday-Monday, August 31-September 3

ConQuest SF

San Francisco Airport Marriott

1800 Old Bayshore Hwy.

Burlingame

avalonconventions.com/conquestsf/

\$50, one-day passes available

Annual gaming convention includes role-playing, miniatures, card games, board games, swap meets, more.

Saturday, September 1

Mikado Ball

PEERS Event

Masonic Lodge

100 N. Ellsworth

San Mateo

www.peers.org

\$15 in advance (by August 25), \$20 at the door

A Gilbert and Sullivan cast party. Dance lesson

at 7 p.m., dancing begins at 8.

Sunday, September 2

Sac-Con

Scottish Rite Center

6151 H Street

Sacramento

www.sacramentocomics.com

10 a.m.-5 p.m.

\$6

Regular comic, toy and anime show, featuring game tournaments, cosplay contest, more.

Wednesday, September 5

Ask a Scientist: Exoplanet Update

Axis Cafe

1201 8th Street

San Francisco

www.askascientistsf.com

7 p.m.

Free

Since SF State Prof. Chris McCarthy last spoke at Ask a Scientist, astronomers have found 28 more planets, bringing the total number of known exoplanets to 236. What do we know about them?

Thursday, September 6

Buffy Night

Cerrito Speakeasy Theater

10070 San Pablo Avenue

El Cerrito

www.cerritospeakeasy.com

9:15 p.m.

\$6

Three episodes of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* on the big screen.

Friday, September 7

Music of the Spheres

Lick Observatory

Mt. Hamilton Road

San Jose

www.ucolick.org/public/music.html

7 p.m.

\$30-\$150

Part of the Observatory's Summer concert series, featuring the music of guitarists Daniel Roest & Mark Hanson followed by a talk by astronomer Sandra Faber, and telescope viewing (weather permitting).

Saturday, September 8

Other Magazine Presents

Writers With Drinks

The Make Out Room

3225 22nd Street

San Francisco

www.writerswithdrinks.com

7:30 p.m.

\$3-\$5 sliding scale

With Truong Tran, Jennifer Solow, Wickie Stamps, and David Hawkins.

Saturday, September 8

Music of the Spheres

Lick Observatory

Mt. Hamilton Road
San Jose
www.ucolick.org/public/music.html

7 p.m.

\$30-\$150

Part of the Observatory's Summer concert series, featuring the music of guitarists Daniel Roest & Mimi Fox, followed by a talk by astronomer Adriane Steinacker, and telescope viewing (weather permitting).

September 8-October 14

Northern California Renaissance Faire

Casa de Fruta

100031 Pacheco Pass Highway

Hollister

www.norcalrenfaire.com

Weekends, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

\$25/day, \$35/weekend

Hearty ale, fine foods, crafts, and live performances.

Tuesday, September 11

Café Scientifique:

Technology, Privacy and Civil Liberties: The Challenges of Homeland Security

International Building

SRI

Middlefield Road at Ringwood

Menlo Park

6-7:30 p.m.

Free

A talk by Dr. Peter G. Neumann of SRI's Computer Science Lab.

Tuesday, September 11

Groundhog Day (1993)

Parkway Speakeasy Theater

1834 Park Blvd.

Oakland

www.parkway-speakeasy.com

9:15 p.m.

\$8

A benefit for Oakland Yellowjackets "Bike Against the Odds" for Breast Cancer Research.

Thursday-Friday, September 13-14

The Mummy (1932)

Stanford Theatre

221 University Avenue

Palo Alto

www.stanfordtheatre.org

7:30 p.m.

\$7

On a double bill with *The Old Dark House* (1932).

Friday, September 14

The Historian vs. The Futurist on Human Progress

Herbst Theater

401 Van Ness Avenue

San Francisco

www.longnow.org

7:30 p.m.

Free/donations welcome

Niall Ferguson and Peter Schwartz in conversation; part of The Long Now's Seminars About Long-term Thinking.

Friday, September 14

The Phenomenauts

Slim's

333 11th Street

San Francisco

www.slims-sf.com

8 p.m.

\$15

The "Rocket Roll" band returns to SF, with the Slackers and Deals Gone Bad. Tour posters for the first 100 fans wearing Phenomenauts gear. All ages show.

Thursday, September 20

Firefly Night

Parkway Speakeasy Theater

1834 Park Blvd.

Oakland

www.parkway-speakeasy.com

9:15 p.m.

\$6

The final episodes of *Firefly* on the big screen: "The Message," "Heart of Gold" and "Objects in Space."

Saturday, September 22

The Phenomenauts

Phoenix Theatre

201 Washington Street

Petaluma

www.petalumaphoenix.org

8 p.m.

\$12

The "Rocket Roll" band plays Petaluma, with the Teenage Harlets, Maldroid, and Keyser Soze. All ages show.

Saturday-Sunday, September 22-23

Vintage Fashion Expo

Masonic Center

1111 California Street

San Francisco

www.vintageexpo.com

Sat. 10:30-6, Sun. 11-5

\$10 (early bird \$20 Sat. 9-10:30 a.m.)

Friday-Sunday, September 28-30

Salute to Star Trek, Star Wars, and Battlestar Galactica

Doubletree Hotel

2001 Point West Way

Sacramento

www.creationent.com

\$369 (less costly packages to be announced)

A Creation con. Announced guests include *Trek* stars Jonathan Frakes, Marina Sirtis, George Takei and Robert Duncan McNeill, Jeremy Bullock and Peter Mayhew from *Star Wars*, and *BSG*'s Jamie Bamber; Friday night features a concert by Warp 11.

Wednesday, October 3

The Birds (1963)

The Lawn at Wente Vineyards

5565 Tesla Road

Livermore

www.wentevineyards.com

Suggested donation: \$9 adults, \$5 children
Outdoor movie night at the vineyard. Café opens at 6:30 p.m., movie at twilight.

Wednesday, October 3

Ask a Scientist: The Science of Big Waves

Axis Cafe

1201 8th Street

San Francisco

www.askascientistsf.com

7 p.m.

Free

Oceanographer Toby Garfield talks about the geography, atmospheric conditions, and laws of physics that conspire to create monster waves. Presented in collaboration with *QUEST*, KQED's multiplatform science initiative.

Friday-Sunday, October 5-7

SiliCon

Doubletree Hotel

2050 Gateway Place

San Jose

www.siliconventions.com

\$45

Media-oriented general SF con features art show, dealer's room, panels, masquerade, swap meet, indy film festival, more. The Masquerade Ball will have a Joss Whedon-verse theme.

Saturday, October 6

Edwardian Gothic Ball

PEERS Event

Masonic Lodge

100 N. Ellsworth

San Mateo

www.peers.org

\$15 in advance (by September 29), \$20 at the door
Edwardian as in macabre illustrator Edward Gorey. Dance lesson at 7 p.m., dancing begins at 8.

Friday-Sunday, October 12-14

Vintacon

Hilton Garden Inn

6070 Monterey Street

Gilroy

<http://community.livejournal.com/vintacon/>
\$75 (designated driver membership \$10)
Alias ReeCon, the fifth Vintacon offers a unique combination of wine tasting and fannish company, and what's better than that? Reservations requested by September 15.

Friday-Saturday, October 19-21

Wrestle Fan Fest

Cow Palace

2600 Geneva Avenue

Daly City

www.wrestlefanfest.com

\$30/day, weekend VIP passes available
Chris assures us that the guest list is stuffed with pro wrestling's superstars. Wrestling matches, vendors, Q&A sessions and photo ops with the stars.

Friday-Saturday, October 19-21

Sacramento Horror Film Festival

The Colonial Theatre

3522 Stockton Blvd

Sacramento

www.sachorrorfilmfest.com

Guests include actors Tony Moran and Tony Todd, and your hosts Mr. Lobo and the Queen of Trash.

Saturday, October 20

SF in SF: Kage Baker

Preview Room

Variety Children's Charity

582 Market Street

San Francisco

www.sfinsf.org

7 p.m.

Free

SF in SF is a regular series of sci fi author readings with discussion and book signing after, and a clever name. Cash bar opens at 6:30.

Saturday, October 20

Other Magazine Presents

Writers With Drinks

The Make Out Room

3225 22nd Street

San Francisco

www.writerswithdrinks.com

7:30 p.m.

\$3-\$5 sliding scale

With Nomy Lamm, Matthew Jacobs, Rachelle Chase, and David West.

Saturday-Sunday, October 20-21

Folsom Renaissance Faire

Lions Park

Natoma & Stafford Streets

Folsom

\$12

www.folsomfaire.com

Dancers, bards, puppets, food, more.

Friday-Sunday, November 2-4

BASCon

Embassy Suites SF Airport

150 Anza Blvd.

Burlingame

www.bascon.org

\$75

A safe and fun place for fans over 18 to discuss “slash” fanfic, now in its 7th year.

Saturday, November 3

Le Bal des Vampires

PEERS Event

Alameda Elks Lodge

2255 Santa Clara Avenue

Alameda

www.peers.org

6:30 p.m.-midnight

\$25

The annual hematophagic gala, featuring vintage ballroom dancing on one floor and Dracula’s Daughter Discotheque & Bar on another.

Saturday and Sunday, November 10-11

JTAF 5

Fort Mason Center

Marina & Buchanan Streets

San Francisco

www.project760.net/jtaf/forms/

\$35 at the door (\$32 until October 31)

The Japan Town Anime Festival relocates from Japan Center to Fort Mason. Guests include akai SKY, Quarter Circle, Stephanie Yanez, The Shogunate, Eurobeat King, Alex Shen.

Saturday and Sunday, November 10-11

ConStruction 2007

Holiday Inn

1740 North First Street

San Jose

www.sfsfc.org/construction.php

\$35 at the door (\$25 through October 31, 2007)

A conference about organizing science fiction, fantasy, horror, anime, and related conventions with a focus on Northern California and the SF Bay Area.

Tuesday, November 13

Author: Rudy Rucker

The Booksmith

1644 Haight Street

San Francisco

7 p.m.

Free

Sunday, December 9

Sac-Con

Scottish Rite Center

6151 H Street

Sacramento

www.sacramentocomics.com

10 a.m.-5 p.m.

\$6

Regular comic, toy and anime show, featuring game tournaments, cosplay contest, more.

Saturday, January 5

Victorian Twelfth Night Ball

PEERS Event

www.peers.org

A.k.a. The Dickens Fair Reunion Ball. Details to follow.

Friday-Sunday, January 11-13

Sac-Anime

Scottish Rite Center

6151 H Street

Sacramento

www.sacanime.com

\$20

Anime convention featuring viewing room, manga contest, game tournaments, dealers’ room, more.

January 24-28

Further Confusion

Doubletree Hotel
2050 Gateway Place
San Jose

www.furtherconfusion.org

\$40 in advance (through December 30)
10th Anniversary Edition of the Bay Area's major Furry con is themed "The Fur East." Panels, art show, dealer's room, costume contests, more.

Saturday, February 2

Le Mardi Gras des Vampires

PEERS Event

www.peers.org

Details to follow.

Friday-Sunday, February 15-17

DunDraCon

San Ramon Mariott
2600 Bishop Drive
San Ramon

www.dundracon.com

Annual gaming convention returns to San Ramon.

Friday-Sunday, February 22-24

WonderCon

Moscone Center South
747 Howard Street
San Francisco

www.comic-con.org/wc/

Comics and media con that seems to get bigger every year. Details to follow.

Saturday, March 1

Pride and Prejudice Ball

PEERS Event

www.peers.org

Details to follow.

Sunday, March 9

Sac-Con

Scottish Rite Center

6151 H Street

Sacramento

www.sacramentocomics.com

10 a.m.-5 p.m.

\$6

Regular comic, toy and anime show, featuring game tournaments, cosplay contest, more.

Saturday, April 5

The Royal Debutante Ball

PEERS Event

www.peers.org

Details to follow.

Friday-Monday, April 25-28

CostumeCon 26

Doubletree Hotel
2050 Gateway Place

San Jose

www.cc26.info

\$85

CostumeCon will be coming to Silicon Valley in 2008. Details to follow.

Saturday, May 3

Chicago Speakeasy Ball

PEERS Event

www.peers.org

Details to follow.

Friday-Monday, May 23-26

BayCon

Hyatt Regency Santa Clara
5101 Great America Parkway
Santa Clara

www.baycon.org/2008

\$50 in advance

Northern California's largest annual general SF convention is on the move again. Diverse panels, dealer's room, art show, masquerade, anime room, hall costumes, gaming, much more.

Saturday, June 7

Gone with the Wind Ball

PEERS Event

www.peers.org

Details to follow.

Saturday, July 5

The Emerald City Ball

PEERS Event

www.peers.org

Details to follow.

Ongoing:

Through September 9

Tezuka: The Marvel of Manga

Asian Art Museum

200 Larkin Street

San Francisco

www.asianart.org

\$12

Groundbreaking show devoted to Osamu

Tezuka (1928-1989), the “God of Manga,” whose creations included Mighty Atom (known to U.S. TV audiences as “Astro Boy”), Jungle Emperor (“Kimba the White Lion”), and Princess Knight.

Daily

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

Sundays

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

Mondays

Bay Area Science Fiction Association
Currently looking for a new regular meeting location. Check the website for details.
www.basfa.org
8 p.m.
Free

Mondays

Dukefish
Jake’s of Sunnyvale

174 E. Fremont Avenue
Sunnyvale
8 p.m.
Dukefish is a bunch of people who get together to play board games and, sometimes, bridge every week.

Mondays and Wednesdays

Silicon Valley Boardgamers
Match Play
San Antonio Shopping Center
Mountain View
www.davekohr.users.sonic.net/svb/
7 p.m.
\$2
Group meets regularly to play mostly German-style strategy boardgames such as Settlers of Catan; also multiplayer Avalon Hill-style, historical wargames, and others.

Wednesdays

Bay Area Role-Playing Society
Go-Getter’s Pizza
1489 Beach Park Boulevard
Foster City
www.BayRPS.com
6 p.m-10 p.m.
Hosts a weekly game night. For club and game night details email GM@BayRPS.com.

Wednesdays

East Bay Strategy Games Club
EndGame
921 Washington
Oakland
www.michaeldashow.com/eastbaystrategy/home.html

7:30 p.m.-11 p.m.
Free

Fridays

SF Games
Muddy’s Coffeehouse
1304 Valencia Street
San Francisco
vax.hanford.org/dk/games
7 p.m. to midnight
Free
SF Games is a collective name for a bunch of people who get together and play board games and card games every week. Also has a regular cards night at Atlas Café, 20th and Alabama Streets, Tuesday nights from 6:30-10:00.

Fridays-Mondays

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

Fridays and Saturdays

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

Saturdays

Rocky Horror Picture Show

Parkway Speakeasy Theater

1834 Park Blvd.

Oakland

www.parkway-speakeasy.com

Midnight

\$7

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

Biweekly

PenSFA Party

The Peninsula Science Fantasy Association meets every two weeks for a party at the home of one of their members. They also host parties at local conventions. Email commander@pensfa.org for information on attending.

PenSFA standard party rules: bring something edible or drinkable to share, or pay the host \$2. Don't smoke in the house without checking with the host first. Normal start time is 8 p.m. but may vary depending on the host.

Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers' Group

Borderlands Books

866 Valencia Street

San Francisco

Meets the second and fourth Thursdays of each month at 6 pm. Contact Jade Livingston at sfscifi@yahoo.com for more information.

Monthly

Dorkbot-SF

Free, donations welcome

www.dorkbot.org/dorkbotsf/

Dorkbot hosts regular forums for artists, designers, engineers, students, and other people doing strange things with electricity.

Fantastic Frontiers

www.freewebs.com/fantasticfrontiers/

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

Foothill Anime

Building 5015, Foothill College

Los Altos Hills

Free

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.

Legion of Rassilon

Carl's Junior

2551 N. First Street

San Jose

www.legionofrassilon.org

7:30 p.m.

Free

Doctor Who fan group usually meets the fourth Friday of the month: Episodes of *Doctor Who*, news, discussion of recent movies, and a raffle.

No-Name Anime

Saratoga Library

13650 Saratoga Avenue

Saratoga

www.nnanime.com

Free

Anime screenings usually take place on the second Saturday of the month.

SF Browncoats

Cafe Murano

1777 Steiner Street

San Francisco

www.sfbrowncoats.com

Noon

Free

SF *Firefly/Serenity* fans usually meet up on the second Saturday of the month.

SF/SF Meetup

Mysterious Future Bookstore

531 Fifth Street

Santa Rosa

scifi.meetup.com/348/

Regular meetup for North Bay fans on the second Sunday of the month.

Silicon Gulch Browncoats

Various locations (see website for details)

www.silicongulchbrowncoats.org

Noon - 2 p.m.

Free

Silicon Valley fans of *Firefly/Serenity* meet up on the first Saturday of the month.

Tangential Conjectures: The Science Fiction Book Club

Books Inc.

301 Castro Street

Mountain View

650-428-1234

7:30 p.m.

Free

Generally meets the third Thursday of the month.

USS Augusta Ada

Round Table Pizza

3567 Geary Blvd.

San Francisco

trek.starshine.org

1 p.m.

Free

Augusta Ada is both a chapter of Starfleet International and a Linux and *BSD user group.

Usually meets the fourth Saturday of every month.

USS Defiance

Round Table Pizza

1566 Howe Ave.

Sacramento

www.ussdefiance.org

7 p.m

Free

Star Trek fan group meets the third Friday of the month.

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.

2008 TAFF Ballot — North America to Europe

What is TAFF? The Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund was created in 1953 for the purpose of providing funds to bring well-known and popular fans familiar to those on both sides of the ocean across the Atlantic. Since that time TAFF has regularly brought North American fans to European conventions and European fans to North American conventions. TAFF exists solely through the support of fandom. Interested fans all over the world vote on the candidates, and each vote is accompanied by a donation of not less than \$3 or £2. These votes, and the continued generosity of fandom, are what make TAFF possible.

Who may vote? Voting in the 2008 race is open to anyone who was active in fandom prior to April 2006, and who contributes at least \$3 or £2 to the Fund. Larger contributions will be gratefully accepted. Voting is by secret ballot: only one vote per person, and you must sign your ballot. You may change your vote any time prior to the deadline.

Deadline: Votes in this race must reach the administrators by **Midnight, PST, Saturday 17 November 2007. This is 8 AM, GMT, Sunday 18 November 2007.**

Voting details: TAFF uses a preferential ballot system which guarantees automatic runoffs until a majority is obtained. You rank the candidates in the exact order of your preference for them. If the leading first-place candidate does not get a majority, the first-place votes for the lowest-ranking candidate are dropped, and the second-place votes on those ballots are counted as first-place votes. This process repeats itself until one candidate has a majority. Your votes for second and third place are important, but you may give your candidate only one ranking on your ballot. In order to win, a candidate must receive at least 20% of the first-ballot first-place votes on both sides of the Atlantic, separately. Any candidate failing to receive this minimum percentage on either side will be dropped, and the second-place votes on their ballots counted as first-place votes in the next ballot count. Thus candidates and their supporters will need to canvass fans on both sides of the pond. You may send your ballot to either administrator, but it will be tabulated with the other votes from the side of the Atlantic on which you reside. Votes from fans not resident in either Europe or North America will not count towards either 20% minimum, but are important to the outcome of the race.

Hold Over Funds: This choice, like "No Award" in Hugo balloting, gives you the chance to vote for no TAFF trip this year, if the candidates do not appeal. Hold Over Funds may be voted for in any position, and is exempt from the 20% requirement; thus, if it receives a majority of the votes on the final ballot, no TAFF trip will be held this year regardless of how many votes Hold Over Funds received on the first ballot.

No Preference: For voters who prefer not to choose between candidates, but don't want the trip held over.

Donations: TAFF gratefully accepts your freely given money and material for auction; such generosity has sustained the Fund for over 50 years. TAFF is fandom's oldest travel fund, and one of its worthiest causes — give early and often! Please contact your nearest administrator for details.

Candidates: Each candidate has posted a bond, promising — barring Acts of God — to travel, if elected, to: Eastercon 2008, and has provided signed nominations and a platform (overleaf).

Please read both sides of this ballot before voting. Send entire sheet as your vote.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number or e-mail address: _____

(We need your full contact details. TAFF may need to contact you regarding your ballot or to send out newsletters. We do not publish this data or pass it to any other organisation.)

Signature: _____

Enclosed is _____ as a contribution to TAFF.

Please make checks/cheques, etc., payable to:

'Suzanne Tompkins' for US dollar checks mailed to Suzanne.

'TAFF' for all UK (sterling) cheques posted to Bridget Bradshaw/Claire Brialey.

If you think your name may not be known to the administrators, then in order to qualify your vote, please give, in the space below, the name and address of an active fan (not a fan group, a candidate, or their nominator) who is known to them and to whom you are known:

Active fan known to the administrator: _____

2008 TAFF Ballot — North America to Europe

Chris Barkley

In many world cultures, the pilgrimage is seen as a serious undertaking; a sacred journey to a place of personal or spiritual importance. When I first entered fandom in the 1970's one of the first (and most exotic) things I learned about was the TransAtlantic Fan Fund, where sf fans were exchanged from the far-flung corners of the United Kingdom and North America. TAFF is not only our annual pilgrimage; it is one of our most important cultural traditions. It would be an exquisite honor to visit the land that gave us such icons as Olaf Stapledon and Doctor Who.

Nominators: Johnny Carruthers (US), Colin Harris (UK), Marcia Kelly Illingworth (UK), Michaele Jordan (US), Laurie Mann (US)

Linda Deneroff

For over 35 years I've had my fingers and toes in many fannish pursuits, ranging from convention running to Star Trek and Star Wars fanzines. I've worked on many conventions including Worldcons and Worldcon bids on both the left and right coasts, in capacities ranging from volunteer to treasurer to chair, starting with Lunacon in the early 1970s, (1980 chair, James White GoH!). Today I live in Seattle, where I help produce Foolscap, a small literary-and-art oriented convention. I love reading, traveling, and attending conventions. I'm thrilled to be nominated, and I hope you'll vote for me.

Nominators: Margaret Austin (UK), Hank Graham (US), Tim Illingworth (UK), Margaret Organ-Kean (US), Kevin Standlee (US)

Chris Garcia

Stop me if you think that you've heard this one before. Chris Garcia is a fan. He's from Northern California. He writes zines like The Drink Tank, Claims Department and Science Fiction San Francisco. He's been a member of ANZAPA, FAPA and a few other APAs. In general he writes as often as he breathes. Chris does game shows at cons, likes fried food, enjoys a good bourbon, plays a mean game of poker, likes cons with Fanzine Lounges that turn into parties, and will talk and talk and talk. He also once fell down a mountain. Ask him about it.

Nominators: James Bacon (UK), Arnie Katz (US), Mark Plummer (UK), John Purcell (US), Ted White (US)

Christian McGuire

I'm a reader, conventioneer, and club fan. I was a regular contributor/first O.E. of The Gallifreyan Home Companion (a Dr. Who APA), and written for other fine fanzines. I've met many British and European fans over the years without getting to know them. My theory of conventions is that everything serves the opportunity for great conversation. If chosen for TAFF, I'd sit down to as many parts of the conversation as possible to meet new people and get to know those I've only briefly encountered before. I'd take a ton of notes, some photos, and write a great trip report!

Nominators: Chaz Boston Baden (US), Vincent Docherty (EU), Mike Glyer (US), Milt Stevens (US), Robbie Bourget & John Harold (UK)

Please read and fill out both sides of this sheet. Send in entire sheet as your vote. Do not detach this portion!

I vote for (rank 1, 2, 3, etc.):

Chris Barkley

Linda Deneroff

Chris Garcia

Christian McGuire

Hold Over Funds

No Preference

Send ballot & donation to:

North America - Suzanne Tompkins, PO Box 25075, Seattle, WA 98165 USA.
Checks payable to: Suzanne Tompkins. Email suzlet@aol.com with questions/comments.

Europe - TAFF c/o Claire Brialey, 59 Shirley Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 7ES UK throughout the voting period, or
Bridget Bradshaw, 39 (1F2) Viewforth, Edinburgh, EH10 4JE UK after 10 Sep 2007.
Cheques payable to: TAFF. E-mail bugshaw@cix.co.uk with any questions, or if you would like to use PayPal.

For more information on TAFF, visit: <http://taff.org.uk>

Reproduction of this form is encouraged. It is the official voting vehicle and must be reproduced verbatim.
Anyone doing so should **substitute** his or her name here: Suzanne Tompkins