

Science Fiction/San Francisco

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Page 7 - Russell D. Campbell

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News and Notes

By Christopher J. Garcia
Editor

The phrase that rings through my mind right now is, “Screw you, *Locus*!!” Yes, I’ve screamed that before, but this time I have a very good reason and I don’t think folks will argue with me on why. It all starts last weekend with a terribly scary event: Forrest J. Ackerman’s heart attack.

You see, Uncle Forry had a serious heart attack and word flowed through fandom like high school gossip. I was happy to hear that he’d survived, but deeply saddened to hear that he was not expected to make it. Every report from folks Down South made me sadder and more worried that we’d be losing the single most important fan to my Fannish Way Of Life. I was worried about getting a text informing me of his passing much like the one I got during a BBQ announcing Jack Speer’s final breath. Word went around the Steampunk Convention very quickly, largely because I was letting people know, and concern was expressed.

Luckily, there was no word over the weekend, and I started to feel like I did in 2001 and 2002 when there was another serious threat and many thought he wouldn’t make it. He beat the odds then, and even though most had been figuring this for the Last Stand of Ackerman, it was just another moment of terror.

Then, Thursday night, while still licking the wounds that the passage of Prop 8 had inflicted on my belief in the Genuine Goodness

of Man, I came across JohnO’s LJ, where he said that it had been reported that Forry had died. I was crushed, and went to look for references, and came across a link to a report on Locus On-Line. There it was, notice of the death of Forry, blaring pixels across my screen. For the second time in as many days, I cried myself to sleep. Anyone who knows how much I idolized Forry when I was younger will not be surprised. I got up a while later and wrote an LJ post talking about the death.

The only thing is, he wasn’t dead.

As I understand it, and I may be somewhat confused, someone in the UK had posted on their blog that Forry had died. This happened the day after *Ansible* ran news of his heart attack. I think it got picked up by a bunch of folks and added to their blogs and so on. That led Locus On-Line, always trying to be on top of the news that matters (unless it’s the least bit fannish, but that’s another complaint that will take much longer to explain), to post that he’d died. Many folks had picked up on it, including JohnO, I think Nick Mamatas, myself and GVDub on LJ.

The morning came and I sluggishly got out of bed. When I checked my LJ, I saw that they’d retracted their story. I was quite pleased, but still very much wasted from the news that turned out to be false. I’ve had a thing against *Locus* for a long time, and this just added to it. It’s a shame that it’s the same publication that I consider to be the defining zine of the 1970s

(along with *Seamonsters* and *Stop Breaking Down* in the UK) .

So, Forry, the man who influenced everyone from Peter Jackson and Tom Savini to Marion Zimmer Bradley and Ray Bradbury, is alive. Not well, but still with us. Thank you.

And I mentioned the Steampunk Convention, Steam Powered. It was a great con. It might be the second or third best time I had at a convention this year. It had some minor inclusions, but mostly, it was a multi-carated gem. There were the size of the program book, the slight lack of a social space where you could park and have things flow o’er you (think the Coffee Garden...I mean Sprigs), and a few minor glitches that led to the lack of an art show. It had some really fun programming (I had a blast talking about Babbage and then on a panel about Victorian technology) and a packed and well-settled Dealers’ Room. Everything was Steampunk-themed and it worked lovely. The concert with Abney Park was really fun, and AP put on a helluva show. The entire weekend was a blast and I was as exhausted as I would be after a BayCon...and I didn’t even run a Lounge or anything.

There’s a little concern about next year with the group planning on moving to SF and parking in the weekend before Comic-Con (there’s another Steampunk Con, SteamCon, happening the weekend of the 24th of October in Seattle), and perhaps growing too quickly and in a dirrection that’s not quite what folks were

hoping for. I'm sure it'll be a great time, and I've even offered to do a Victorian Game Show (think the UK's "Technobabble Quiz") and I'm hoping I can give a panel about the strange innovations of the American 19th Century.

Not a lot has happened on eFanzines.com lately, I think because Bill has spent much of the last couple of weeks in the UK on vacation. Still, if you haven't read *Journey Planet* Issue 2 yet, you're missing out. It's got some great names up there!

Also, the Nova Awards have happened: *Prolapse* was named best fanzine. Claire Brialey got her sixth Nova for best fanzine writer and Alison Scott got her third for best fanzine artist. Congrats to all those winners.

Loscon is on the way! That's a big deal. There's a TAFF auction, a Fanzine Lounge, John Scalzi as the Writer GoH, and so much more. It's the number one con in LA as far as I'm concerned.

Plans are afoot. That's all I'll say.

With a busy Bay Area 2009 coming and the economic situation turning people who once had mighty reserves into Chris Garcias, I'm worried whether more than a few people will be skipping Worldcon this year. It's a shame because it's in Montreal, but that is an expensive place to fly into and it's not any cheaper to stay there. I've found myself a cheap hotel a few blocks away since staying in the official hotel would likely bankrupt me, but it's still not cheap. Luckily, the US dollar is strong against the Canadian now, which is nice.

Yes, you heard right: I won a writing contest! Here's what happened: Steam Powered had a contest for Steampunk short stories. Back

when I was still sharing the pseudonym Johnny Eponymous (before it was my LJ handle and M Lloyd and SaBean MoreL stopped writing under it), I wrote this little story about a professor who finds the finest work of her grandfather and such. Well, I had it around and there was the contest that only had one submission at the time. I read it and it was pretty good, so I figured I'd submit. I figured it'd get an honorable mention or something and that'd be that. It turned out that

it won. 250 bucks! It was made of win!

I totally need a Monkey Butler.

I've been pimping for them for the last couple of weeks, but you really should try giving SteampunkSpectacular.com's podcast a listen. That's the best of the podcasts out there, though the Chapel Hill Radio Show Clockwork Cabaret (clockworkcabaret.com) is a great radio show with wonderful music and funny DQ interaction.

SFSFC Awards SMOFCon Scholarship

San Francisco Science Fiction Conventions, Inc. (SFSFC) has awarded a scholarship of \$500 to Heather Stern to attend the SMOFCon convention-runners convention in Columbus OH this year over the weekend of December 5-7, 2008. Heather has been attending conventions for more than twenty years, and has worked on conventions of different sizes and responsibility levels, including BayCon, Loscon, Equicon, Consonance, and others. She has held a staff position on a Worldcon and was a NASFiC division head. She says that she is interested in increasing her knowledge of areas in which she has not worked as much, including Main Programming and Dealers.

SMOFCon is an annual convention about organizing science fiction conventions. Subject matter ranges from managing small conventions up to the unique challenges of World Science Fiction Conventions. The convention is held in a different city each year. The 2008 SMOFCon will be in Columbus OH at the Drury Inn, December 5-7, 2008. More information about this year's SMOFCon is available on their web site, <http://www.midohiosf.org/>.

This is the fifth year that SFSFC has issued scholarships to allow promising convention runners to attend SMOFCon. SFSFC issued two SMOFCon scholarships to attend SMOFCon 25 in Boston in 2007. Applications were judged by the scholarship administrators, who for 2008 were the three directors of SFSFC who have chaired Worldcons: David W. Clark, Kevin Standlee, and Tom Whitmore.

The name "SMOF" stands for "Secret Masters Of Fandom," and is a humorous reference to the people who organize and manage science fiction conventions. Another term sometimes used for such people is "conrunner." SFSFC was the parent non-profit corporation of ConJosé, the 2002 World Science Fiction Convention, and ConFrancisco, the 1993 Worldcon.

Letters of Comment

It's massively important that we start with...

Lloyd Penney!

Dear Chris and Jean:

I will try to make this loc on *SF/SF 75* a fast one...it's probably close to your deadline, which makes it close to MY deadline.

Chris Garcia replies: *Well, things worked out that we had more time for this one than we thought, so we can spend a little extra time in regards to your Letter of Comment, which I will spend a little extra time responding to by writing a more thorough and complete response so that you will feel that you're getting the best bang for your proverbial buck, or so the elders would say in those times of sepia-toned photographs.*

It is always difficult to find and keep good hotels for conventions. Finding a suitable layout, a suitable size, suitable services, a sympathetic sales and banquet department...getting that balance was tough to do when I ran cons, and seems to be nigh unto impossible to do today. I know lots of people on the local concons in town, and they are always looking for new facilities, new deals, and more. The local media SF convention, Polaris, was forced to relocate into a far northern suburb for 2009 because their usual hotel on the Toronto airport strip announced they'd be undergoing massive renovations. I know SMOFcon exists to trade fresh ideas back and forth for conrunning, but I also know that many of them gather to commiserate on the problems they all share.

Con hotels in the BArea are not in

short supply. The list of ones that haven't had some trouble with one con or another is getting slightly smaller. For example, the DoubleTree had BayCon, which seldom caused too much distress, while other cons held there, such as the Conspiracy Con, proved to be more difficult. The funny thing is they still like the business our kind brings in. The Domain is a relatively new entry into the con world (though Erik Anderson tells me they had a couple of gaming cons there), and the San Mateo Marriott had troubles with a couple of cons last year (including Con-X-Treme). I really should try to get to SMOFCon someday, but it's at the absolutely wrong time of year for me to make it.

Greg Pickersgill might get more locs on his fanzine if he'd distribute it a little more. I'd never heard of *Island*, and now, I'd like to get the next issue, if he's willing. This weekend was the big steampunk convention...how did it go? We are continuing to work on our own costumes, and hope to premiere them some time in the new year. We are also floating the idea of a steampunk event at one of the local cons.

Island is actually a one-off tribute zine. I liked it a lot. The Steampunk Con was great, as I'm sure everyone in this issue will say. I'm happy to say that I've got a plan for next year's. I might even have to dress up a bit. I know, when you look like this regularly, wearing a costume is at least somewhat redundant, but what are you gonna do?

Hugs to you, Jean...I hate to see anyone

alone, and I hate to see any couple break up. I hope there's someone in local fandom there who might have his eye on you. It's tough on the emotions, but I know exactly how you feel, and there will be someone out there for you. A friend may become more than a friend, and I hope soon for you. In the meantime, accept every hug, and you won't be alone.

Yeah, I was sad to hear of it too, especially since I still see her ex once in awhile at the museum, as he's one of our volunteers. Still, he's a nice guy. And Jean, you would have no trouble finding a guy in local fandom!

Tomorrow is the big election... as do most other countries, we ask ourselves how either potential result will affect our own country. The vast majority of Canadians would vote for Obama if they could, for his own politics are a big change from the Bush regime's, yet he may be protectionist and not much of a friend to Canada. As far as McCain goes, he may be more of the same, yet he seems friendlier to Canada, and a daughter of his lives in Toronto. I think most people are thinking that no matter who wins this election, it won't be George W. Bush who wins, and there will be a sigh of relief heard around the world.

The good guy won on the top, but the only matter that really mattered to me, Proposition 8, won, and that made the entire evening a waste when it comes to the matter of change. Of course, the coming court rulings, some promised this coming week, might make me happier.

Jean, you offer an excellent idea for an article, how our worsening economy will affect fandom as a whole, in terms of travelling, conventions, clubs and any other fannish social event, anything that requires any kind of cash flow to make happen and pay the bills. In the past, I've been a broken record on how some parts of fandom are for the rich...that may be the observation of many more fans once membership prices rise above what they can afford or choose to pay.

It's interesting to think about. I've had a few things that I'm going to cut, a few of my traveling cons I'm going to cut out, which is going to suck, but I'm not sure how easy an extra few days in T-Dot before heading to Montreal is gonna work out.

Yvonne and I are starting to plan a steampunk event for the spring, and I guess we'd probably need more than just a high tea with good food, drink and company. A discussion of steampunk would probably be required, and perhaps some costuming critiques as well. The more I read here, the more I will recommend to Yvonne and whatever committee ends up hosting the event. I am sure steampunk is more than just goggles and gears, so I am keeping my eyes open.

Take a look at Flickr because they've got a couple of great groups dedicated to Steampunkery and Steampunk Fashion. A high tea could be enough, if done right. Y'all got a Steampunk community out there too (there were a couple of folks who flew out here to attend Steam Powered).

The picture on page 12 is great! There's the senior Señor Bandito in the middle, missing

only bandaleros to make the effect complete. Shame this was born from a protest; it would have livened up any other convention. Chris, have you not kept up your Spanish? Tough to keep it up when there's not much opportunity to use it. Yvonne usually winds up with bilingual jobs to keep up her French. Et, je comprends un petit peu, but that's more from memory than anything else. (That was French for And, I understand a little bit)

OH, my bandelero! I've never actually spoken Spanish with any regularity. I picked up a fair bit of Yiddish and a little Hebrew over the years, and I took Latin and German in school, but never Spanish. My French is based entirely around being able to use a massively over-blown French accent. That's all.

Yes, the Star Trek Experience is gone. No regrets on passing it up when we were there in the spring, but I idly wonder what the LV Hilton will put in its place. It took up a substantial amount of space at the hotel. In spite of the 11th movie coming up in 2009, it does look like Trek has had its day. It will be interesting to see what Paramount will do to reverse this trend. Could another generation arise to move the franchise along the future timeline, or would the public reject this saying that it's already been done, and that the next, next generation is just a desperate attempt to squeeze even more money out of the Trek cash cow that has already yielded billions of dollars in profits? Or is this old original Trekfan just being pessimistic?

The preview I saw with Quantum of Solace was without doubt the awesomest thing ever! Only slightly better was the teaser for Angels & Demons. I loved that book and

I think that it'll make a much better movie than The DaVinci Code. I see Star Trek as a movie franchise now, and only if they get two or so more movies out of this crew will we see another series.

The BASFA Minutes of meeting 948 got me reading Cheryl Morgan's blog again... I do miss Emerald City. She menaces fandom very well, and fandom is better off with the occasional threat. The pictures of the steampunk convention on her blog were very informative. I have also found other non-SF steampunk events in Toronto, which are excuses to rave until sunrise, so we must be careful how we advertise our own event. I have found steampunk dealers on a great site called Etsy.com, and some of them are local to me. The costume continues to come together..

Etsy's a great site. Sally, our good friend from CostumeCon, is one of them. I miss EmCit too, and I keep trying to get her to revive it. It's a shame that she's not come back, but we can always dream. Wasn't there a 30 something year break in YHOS?

I think I'm done, and I should get this to you asap, see if I can make issue 76. Take care all, more hugs to Jean, and see you next issue. How many of you are coming to Montreal?

Yours, Lloyd Penney

Well, you know The Lovely and Talented Linda and I are coming up for a few days in Toronto beforehand and then to Montreal for the big show. I think España's coming, and we'll probably have Leigh Ann, Jason Schachat and others along for the ride, along with the Worldcon regulars. Now all I gotta do

LOCs, page 30

Editorial

By Jean Martin

Editor

The aspen trees behind the swimming pool in front of my balcony have turned a beautiful pale golden color. It reminds me that I've been here in my current residence for a little over a year now, as I remember that same glorious display last Fall. It actually made me feel a little nostalgic and sad thinking that I'm pretty much in the same boat I was last year. And that I won't have anyone special to share the upcoming holidays with again.

Still, I'm also reminded how great my life is otherwise. And that I've experienced so many wonderful things and met some amazing people so far in 2008, and even just in the last month or so. And looking ahead, there are already so many events and get-togethers coming up in December and into 2009.

But before I get ahead of myself, I want to look back and appreciate everyone and everything that has happened to me recently since our last issue.

The last full weekend in October was particularly eventful, most of which occurred in the South Bay. On Friday, the 24th of October, I went to a Legion of Rassilon meeting at the new location, Giovanni's Pizzeria in Sunnyvale. I liked how it was closer, and had more food and drink selections. There were lots of people in attendance, and it was great to see fellow fans of *Doctor Who* (and all its spinoffs). That

evening we saw a couple of episodes from the second season of *The Sarah Jane Adventures*. Unfortunately, the place closed earlier than the previous location, so some of us stood outside to talk while watching men in cowboy hats and women in sexy outfits lining up to get into the club next door. It was a little bit surreal... and no, they were not in costume.

At the LOR meetup I was speaking with Bryan, who told me how much he liked Facebook, and compared it with the other social networking sites. I joined Facebook when it first started and I didn't really see the point of it then. I was also worried about privacy as the site is searchable by name and email address. However, I decided to check it out again and rejoined. I have to say that I'm really enjoying it this time. Like Bryan said, it's easier than LiveJournal because people only write a few sentences instead of several paragraphs, so it's easier to keep tabs on lots of people in a short amount of time. And unlike MySpace, which mostly caters to teenagers and younger people, Facebook attracts folks who are closer to my age. I don't know if people still use Tribe regularly, but it seems not to be as popular as it used to be. So I can be found at Facebook every day now.

I'm not sure if this enthusiasm will last, but I'm enjoying connecting with lots of friends, seeing photos, and communicating with people from all over the world. One day I was chatting with friends from the Philippines, Canada,

England, Italy, Shanghai, LA and Sacramento. A friend of mine said that it's nice for people like us who live alone and don't like to go to bars to be able to keep in touch with friends on Facebook while we're at home. Still, for deeper, more personal and meaningful connections, there's nothing like face-to-face, or even individualized contact by phone or email. As long as it's in its place — as an adjunct to actually being with and doing things with people — it's a great way to be able to communicate quickly and feel connected at any time of the day or night... especially with people far away.

Anyway, the next day I went to a Halloween party at the home of my friends Joan and Richard in San Jose. They throw a party every year on or around Halloween, and their decorations — mostly Department 56 — are very classy and elaborate. I ran into several Browncoats and Black Fleet Star Pirates Guild members there. It was a lot of fun as everyone was in fabulous costumes. Joan gave out prizes for the best outfits for the evening.

The next day, I met up with my masquerade friends that I did the *Harry Potter/High School Musical* number with at this year's BayCon (and won Best Presentation), to watch *High School Musical 3*, the third in the series but the first to be shown in movie theaters.

I have to admit that I do love *High School Musical*. HSM has a lot of adult fans I think because it harkens to a more innocent time

and to the old-style musical genre. The story was formulaic and essentially the same as the previous two. The songs were even similar, and the love story was weak. But the musical numbers and choreography were solid and exciting. The waltz scene between Troy and Gabrielle was so uplifting and romantic, I wanted to dance right after. And it would be nice to find a romantic dance partner to do that waltz with! Even the opening number of the basketball game — and I'm not really into sports — was so energizing and suspenseful. We all clapped and cheered like it was a live musical. All in all, it was a high energy, wholesome, fun entertainment movie.

The week after, I got vampire-style blue/yellow contact lenses and custom-made vampire fangs from Alejandro, a full-time fang maker from LA who was in town for a few days before the PEERS Bal des Vampires. Alejandro, who goes by the name Lord of the Fangs (www.lordofthefangs.com) was very friendly, intelligent and very proud of his craft. As I watched him work on my fangs, he told me about the artistry involved, and we talked about everything from dancing to Stonehenge.

Halloween itself, of course, was a blast. I think this holiday is tailor-made for fannish types. There's the supernatural aspect as well as the opportunity to costume and party. I, unfortunately, was unable to attend the PEERS Vampire Ball as I was at the Steampunk Convention all weekend. However, Stacy Meyn helpfully covered the ball for *SF/SF*.

More recently, I went with Browncoat, Black Fleet and dance friends (and my sister) to the premiere night of the latest James Bond movie, *Quantum of Solace*, at the Kabuki

Sundance Theater. We all dressed up for the occasion, and it was a lot of fun. I loved all the previous James Bond movies (and am watching all of them again in order of their release), but I have to say that this one didn't feel like a James Bond movie at all: It seemed more like a Bourne movie, and lots of other people have been saying that as well.

So the movie was largely forgettable, but the drama after the movie was more interesting and entertaining. We saw the movie in my most recent ex-boyfriend's neighborhood, and we even went to a restaurant two blocks away from his apartment. There I was, bracing myself in case I ran into him, but I didn't.

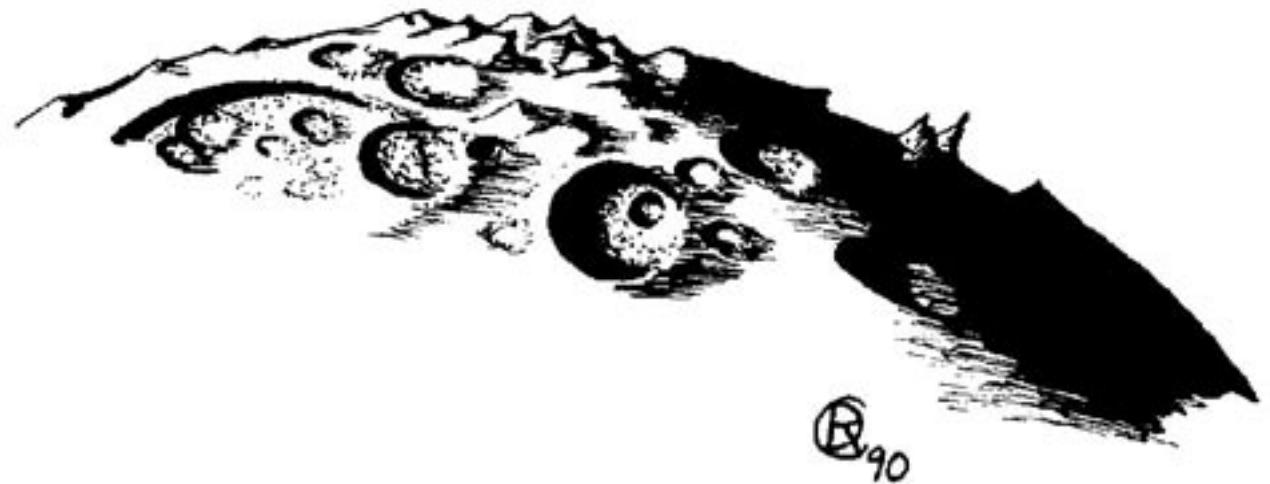
Instead, I ran into the ex-boyfriend before *that* one, when we all went to an Irish bar in the Richmond. I won't go into the details for the sake of my and his privacy, but I just have to say that I was very thankful that this happened at the best possible time and circumstances for me. I hadn't seen him in over a year since I moved out, so I've had a chance to recover, and also

have already had a relationship afterwards. Plus, I was surrounded by friends and family who rallied around me, and I looked happy and at my best.

So yes, it's Thanksgiving and I'm very grateful for my friends, family, work, hobbies, health, etc. Also, on a more global scale, I'm very thankful that the elections are over. It's time to put the past behind us and build a stronger and more united America. Despite the current dark times, I believe that the fact that Obama won is a sign that the nation is ready, finally, for change. A change for the better.

I cried when Obama made his victory speech. And as the crowd in Chicago's Soldier Field cheered, "Yes we can," I felt goosebumps and was reminded of the crew of the *Galactica* chanting "So say we all" back to Adama. Obama, Adama... that sounds similar too!

Now the burning question is, is Adama a Cylon? I suppose we'll find out in the last half of the season that comes out next year. I can't wait.



This Old Fanzine

20th Annual San Diego Comic Convention Program Book

By Christopher J. Garcia

Editor

1989 was a big year. It was the re-introduction of Batman to the movie theaters, and the year I bought a big collection of Justice League comics dating from 1976-1988. It was the year that I started my subscription to *Omni*, wrote my first fiction pieces, met Allen Ginsberg and Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and then managed to somehow read three different books that changed the way I thought: *Stranger in a Strange Land* (the only Heinlein I can tolerate), *Player Piano* by Kurt Vonnegut, and *The Pope of Greenwich Village* by Vincent Patrick (my all-time favorite crime novel). It was also the year I didn't go to Comic-Con.

In fact, I've never been to San Diego Comic-Con. Not before 1989, which was the 20th anniversary of Comic-Con, and not after. Yes, I've never been there. I've always wanted to go, but it's never been an option because of money and time and the time of money. It's a shame, as I've always read the reports, watched the YouTube videos, looked through the photos. I could tell a few stories like I was there even though I was no closer than Santa Clara, California. There are things that happen.

In the box of stuff that was dropped off to me at SiliCon, there was the program book from

the 20th Anniversary edition, and it's amazing. It really makes me wish I had gone, and it also gave me a fair idea of what the history of the con was really like.

Let me first say that one of the films I've loved since I first watched it is *Comic Book: The Movie*. It's all about Comic-Con and it stars folks like Hugh Hefner, Mark Hamill, Tom Kinney, Rob Paulson and various others. According to folks who have been and have seen it, it gives a real feel for what the con is like.

The whole program book is really an amazing piece of work. It's incredibly close to a Worldcon program book. It reminded me of the great program books of the 1970s and 80s. It had an incredible amount of info about the history not only of the con, but of comics themselves. There's a great article from Jerry Robinson about "Comic Strips as the American Artform." It's really good reading and I thought I knew a thing or two about the history of the strip. Apparently, I had no idea.

Ron Goulart, one of the most knowledgeable people in the world on the history and mythology surrounding comics, does a one-pager called "Some Comic Book Firsts." It includes the stories of the first Comic Book Masked Hero, first Heroine (the Black Widow, in an appearance that I've got a reprint of), and the first Super Kid. It's a wonderful short article and I'm the kind of guy who likes it short and sweet.

A "Fifty Years of Batman" article from Mike W. Barr is great too, especially if you add

the great Charles Vess drawing of Batman and Joker together that ran with it. I really loved that period when Batman and Joker were THE comic icons. Superman would take back over a few years later, but for at least two years, it was Batman that represented comics to the masses. There's also a beautiful series of Batman cartoons that follow. The names of the artists are awesome, including SS Compton, Erik Larsen, Scott Shaw!, Marc Bode and my fave, Gahan Wilson. It's a great selection. I have to say that I'm thinking I should unbind the pages and scan them all to make a rotating screensaver for one of my computers.

The next section is the most significant for me, the never-attended. It chronicles the first 19 Comic-Cons in order. The growth from con to con is amazing. 300 the first year, 800 the second, more than a thousand for the third. It's amazing. There was a much larger focus on science fiction in the early years, especially with guys like Theo Sturgeon, A.E. van Vogt, Robert Heinlein and others showing up. Greg Bear turned out to be one of the big guests for the 1989 version of the con. He's a great guy and he wasn't as big a deal then as he is today.

There's a really long segment with memories from guys like Fred Patten, who is an awesome guy and the founder of American Anime fandom, Bill Mumy, and Donna Barr. There are some great stories, including one about Harlan being Harlan. That's always a good thing. Scott Shaw! even does a wonderful thing where he talks about his interaction with the con.

It's even accompanied by a wonderful Before-and-After cartoon about Scott.

The most eye-opening thing is the great article, "Growing Up with Comics in Mexico," by Carlos Tron. It's two pages of writing and two pages of art, including an amazing piece from Oscar Gonzalez Loyo which makes me smile. There's a guy whose stuff I can not get enough of.

There's a Happy 20th Con art piece from Rick Geary that's amazing. I think Rick's one of the guys who is not as recognized as he should be. His *A Treasury of Victorian Murder* is absolutely awesome. He hasn't come to the world's major attention, but he's a guy whom people in the industry really enjoy. He was great in the old Paradox Press Big Books.

The thing that I noticed was that Forry Ackerman was a featured guest at the first Comic-Con and then again at the 20th edition. I was Forry's biggest fan when I was a kid, and the two short pieces about him were wonderful. In these tough moments, I have to say: it reminded me of exactly how important he is to all our fandoms.

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

Dreams of the City

A Column by España Sheriff

Last year, when the early election coverage threatened to take over all other news, I promised myself I wouldn't bother with any of it until January at the earliest. Around March or so I started watching in earnest and became engrossed in the process, checking Sadly, No and Balloon Juice all day, as well as a whole network of sites like Huffington Post, Andrew Sullivan, Daily Kos and the essential FiveThirtyEight on a frequent basis — plus humorous blogs like PunditKitchen and all the various incredibly creative YouTube offerings, as well as the political discussions cropping up on my standard haunts like Whatever and various Livejournal accounts and feeds.

So when November 4th finally rolled around I was a nervous wreck. As is my habit I voted on the way to work in the morning, waiting no longer than I usually do but noticing somewhat higher attendance. One of my co-workers had been equally obsessed as I, analyzing every bit of data, gossip and scandal and trolling the web for lulz during the past months. We had both requested Wednesday off, figuring that win or lose, we were likely to be in no shape to work the next day — I would be either hung over, still drunk or possibly in jail. As my coworker added, "or in Canada."

There were tons of watching parties

organized throughout the city, but most of my friends were either esconced in their own caves or across the bay for the night so I checked my options and decided on the Edinburgh Castle. However, as the afternoon wore on and I found myself obsessively reloading FiveThirtyEight and the CNN electoral vote map, I realized that being at a bar waiting for the cautious updates from the news anchor, unable to change the channel, I would go completely insane.

As luck would have it, Borderlands Books was having a reading that evening. Apparently they decided they felt similarly to the way I did. The reading was for the Steampunk anthology and featured the editors, Jeff and Ann VanderMeer, and Richard Bottoms, CEO of the recent Steam Powered convention. I had bought the anthology in the dealer's room at Denvention and only just begun reading it a few days previously so it was providentially in my bag, clearly a sign from the geek gods.

I arrived at the bookstore shortly before the reading started, which gave me a chance to visit with the new store kitty, Ash. Last time I was there he was hiding in the back so this was my first glimpse of him. It turns out he is incredibly playful to the point of frenzy — running around all over the place and gleefully attacking toys and hands.

I enjoyed myself with that for a bit, then

perused the shelves once my hand couldn't take it anymore. Since I'd be getting my own copy of the anthology signed, I figured I should find something to buy — not usually much of a problem. Using the employee recommendation shelf talkers as a guide I soon found *Mortal Engines*, by Phillip Reeve, which looks just ripping and has wonderfully classic looking cover art by David Frankland.

The reading started about then and was mostly an enjoyable back and forth with the panelists interviewing each other, and testing the audience to see if we could identify the excerpts provided from the book's contents. Jude rewarded correct answers with leftover Halloween candy and everyone seem to enjoy themselves.

The stories in the book appear to have quite a range of styles and there was quite a bit of enthusiasm for Steampunk in general from both sides of the room. At around 7:45 the panelists started wrapping it up with some final Q & A.

During the evening a large open-top bus full of supporters for some Supervisor up for election had been driving around the neighborhood, honking and playing music and so on, so when we heard some honking and hollering start up as the panel wound down most of us glanced at our watches and figured it was just them again. Soon there was more honking and noise from outside. I looked behind me and saw people running down the street and saw Jude wander over to the computer at the counter and start typing. I tried to focus on what the panelists were saying, but as it got louder and I finally couldn't resist, I snuck over to Jude to ask her if Obama had won.

"CNN just called it with 284 electoral votes," she said.

I sat back down with a huge grin on my face and a few minutes later everyone was talking about the news coming in. Someone mentioned that they were planning to close off Castro for a party. After getting my copy of the anthology signed I left and wandered down Valencia and over to Castro to check it out and find someplace to watch Obama's victory speech.

As I walked down Valencia and then Dolores Streets, people were hollering, banging

It was a great experience watching Obama's speech with a bunch of strangers who really weren't, for that moment in time.

pots and pans together, waving flags, honking their car horns and just generally rejoicing. At the corner of Church and Market there were small crowds gathering, and up at Castro the crowds were large.

The bars were all packed with their TV screens tuned to election coverage, the city was closing off the street between Market and 18th to traffic, and the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence were milling about with a mix of people, including an amused looking couple walking their dog. I wandered a bit savoring the atmosphere and then saw on the TV in the Cove,

which was just closing down for the evening, that Obama's speech was starting shortly.

I lucked out by finding that the Marcello's Pizza had a TV and only a handful of people so I bought a slice and a beer and got a place at the front as the speech started. After some grumping, the woman at the counter cranked the volume on full and the place was soon packed with the kitchen staff watching as well.

It was a great experience watching the speech with a bunch of strangers who really weren't, for that moment in time. There was a lot of clapping, cheering and a little crying. When it was over everyone dropped something in the tip jar before heading out to the party outside.

I decided to leave before things got too crowded. As I waited for my train a bunch of folks disembarked from a downtown train and hollered OBAMA! I laughed as did the young redheaded girl sitting beside me. She mentioned that Proposition 8 was looking to win, unfortunately, but at least we got Obama. We both agreed that the marriage battle will get won eventually and it was hard to stop grinning even with that news.

For that night at least there was dancing in the streets of San Francisco.

Haunted Hornet Hosts Halloween Bash

By Stacy Meyn

Contributing Writer

On October 25th, the USS Hornet Museum held its infamous annual “Monster Bash” pre-Halloween dance featuring tours, open bar, tasty vittles, activities for the wee ones, jumping to the grooves of The Cocktail Monkeys, and of course, costumes costumes costumes! Naturally, Tracy and I had to attend an event on a retired aircraft carrier by sporting our New Series *Battlestar Galactica* togs. We had been volunteers on the *Hornet* for years until work, school, life, the universe, and everything drew us away, so we were thrilled to be back to visit our pals on the ship.

The *Hornet*, nicknamed the “Grey Ghost,” has a reputation for being haunted (*Ghosthunters* came through in September and they encountered nearly everything we have), so it was a perfect venue for a Hallow’s party. There was the delightful “Haunted Hospital,” in which



Above: Costumed “Gray Ghost” crew members. Left: Stacy points the way to Earth.

Photos by Stacy Meyn and Tracy Newby

Medical was decked out and staffed to scare the knickers off brave party-goers (all to be cleared away with no evidence remaining by the next day). I took a zillion pictures of planes, space capsules, cool costumes, and Tracy and me in CIC (Combat Information Center), which looks very much like that of the *Galactica*. We got to hang with Imperial and Rebel denizens, a Roman centurion, pirates, and even a brain monster complete with zombie attached. While the only paranormal activity we encountered was provided by toasted adults in costumes, we had a bash at the Bash.

For more info about the venerable *Hornet*, set a course for www.uss-hornet.org.

Spooky Soiree at Le Bal des Vampires

By Stacy Meyn

Contributing Writer

The fabulous Elks Lodge in Alameda was once again home of the 15th annual “Le Bal des Vampires” on November 1st.

As Tracy Newby and I dwell on the island, we are always thrilled when a PEERS (Period Events and Entertainments Re-Creation Society) event is close to home. Admittedly, we had been torn due to the Steampunk Convention being held the same weekend, but as day passes were not offered at Steampunk Con and the Lodge is nearer, we opted to support PEERS.

Halloween is our favorite holiday and decking ourselves out for the ball took a slightly different turn this year. Tracy chose Victorian-era finery with color-coordinated goggles (a tip of the hat to all things Steampunk) and I had decided to take my mad scientist for a test drive in preparation for the upcoming Girl Genius Victorian Mad Science Ball, and had wild hair and goggles of my own.

So with good Hallow’s vibes still flowing through our veins, we made for the Lodge. We were pleasantly surprised to see that Le Bal was already well-attended and the number of Steampunky outfits had us wondering if more than a few folks were commuting between events. While crowded, it was not at the typical “ohmigawshcan’tbreathe” level and that was a delight.

Soon we were found by our friends



Nosferatu and his Date.

Photo by Stacy Meyn

Christopher and Mary, who were first-time attendees and resplendent in their vampiric finery. We orbited between the upstairs ballroom, Dracula’s Daughter Discotheque with

gothic dance tunage down below in the Rathskeller, the Edwardian staircase for many photos, the stately lounge in which tarot readings and lovely conversations were taking place, and outside for fresh air and cooler temps.

We all made new friends, traded cameras for more pix, and enjoyed the earthly repast provided by PEERS. Odd how many children of the night dug into the platters and plates of nibbles and hit the open bar, which did not appear to be serving blood of any sort. The costumes were astounding as usual, and many folks were creative in their presentations. Vampires from all ages reveled in a variety of waltzes such as the Congress of Transylvania, as well as immortal classic

The Time Warp, with music provided by the inimitable Bangers & Mash. Intermission shows were also immensely enjoyable, featuring Le Theatre des Vampires. Before we knew it, the

midnight hour was swiftly approaching, so we bid our farewells and slipped off into the night, plotting and hatching for future Balls.

The next “Bal des Vampires” will be held on November 7, 2009. More information on PEERS and all of the upcoming events can be found at www.peers.org.



PEERS ball guests show off their finery.

Photos courtesy of Vivien Lee (left and above) and Stacy Meyn



Full Steam Ahead for Steampunk Con

By Jean Martin
Editor

The first California Steampunk Convention, held during Halloween weekend at the Domain Hotel in Sunnyvale, was an unqualified success. No one knew what to expect as nothing like this had been done before. But riding on the wave of the hottest trend of the moment, there was no doubt that it would at least be interesting. However, it was more than that. The con was run like a high-caliber, older con, and it seemed like everyone had a good time.

The web site, which looked colorful and impressive by the way, had announced that registrations were almost sold out before the con even began. The small boutique hotel was completely packed with attendees in amazing, varied and elaborate Steampunk costumes. I got there a little later than I planned, owing to the weather being gloomy and wet. It was the first heavy rain of the season and I felt like I just wanted to stay in bed in pajamas and sleep. So it took a lot of motivation to dress up in my new red Victorian Goth gown and don my Ruby Raven Lolita feathered top hat. And seeing as it was Halloween and I was going to help promote PEERS Le Bal Des Vampires, I also put my new custom-made vampire teeth and blue and yellow contact lenses on. This is the first time I've worn colored contacts and I have to admit that I loved having blue eyes. The lighter color gave me an ethereal look.



Jean and España both filed reports on Steampunk Con.

Photo by Deborah Kopeck

So I drove to Sunnyvale, which actually didn't take as long as I had thought given the weather conditions and the fact that it was Friday night rush hour. I decided not to get a hotel room as I've already spent too much on con hotels this year. As soon as I got to the hotel, I ran into my

friend, *SF/SF* contributor Diane Rooney. Diane was celebrating a significant milestone birthday that weekend and I wished her a happy birthday. Then we both ran into Chris Garcia who was holding court in the hall area outside the main ballroom.

I said hello to a few people and discovered that English tea sandwiches and tea were being served right across from the ballroom's doors. This was one treat that I didn't expect, and as it was close to dinner time, it was quite welcome. I didn't want to get my vampire teeth dirty so I took them out to eat and drink tea.

I also went to find my friend Thad, who generously allowed me to stash my stuff in his room. Once I got all settled, I finally went into the ballroom just in time for the Steampunk Ball to start.

The evening started with the obligatory "Rule, Britannia," which I know the words to but always seem to forget when I actually have to sing it. No worries as lots of other people knew it too and I just followed along. Then the a capella singing group Brass Farthing went on stage to sing several Victorian-style tunes. I'd seen them before at Dickens Fair and they are quite entertaining.

After they were done, the dancing commenced. Cathleen and James Myers from PEERS announced and called the dances. The band playing that night was Brassworks, the regular band for the Gaskell Balls in Oakland. There were several people I recognized from the vintage dance scene and there were lots of friends I knew from the science fiction convention community. Just like at Costume-Con, it was great to see friends from both at the same event. And as I've mentioned before, there is quite a lot of overlap. Arielle, Ray, Jade, Erik, Maimone and others I know from both dancing and cons. It was also good to see Cathleen, one of my masquerade friends, there. España showed up later but I didn't get to hang out with her and



Diane and Jean at the Steampunk Ball.

Photo by Thad Gann

her group as they went to dinner and didn't come back till later.

During one of the band breaks, a costume contest was held. The judges were three ladies from Dark Garden, the popular corsetry store in San Francisco. Autumn, the owner, was among them.

The first round of the costume competition was the group division. There was a group of youngsters who were all geared up in different costumes that had something to do with aviation, and there were characters from the *Girl Genius* graphic novels. But the winning entry was the Steampunk Ghostbusters, whose equipment had electric currents and spewed out steam to drive away two female ghosts in 18th century attire. It was original, funny and exceedingly creative. There were a lot of participants in the individual category and that took a long time for the judges to evaluate, so I stepped out to get some fresh air. The room was small and crowded and after dancing several polkas and waltzes, and photographing the contestants, I needed to catch my breath.

I went to check out the Dealers' Room, which I was told was still open. I didn't really want to buy anything but I was tempted by all the amazing wares on display. The quality of the vendors was extremely good. I got to meet Greg Broadmore from Weta Workshop who had a booth displaying Dr. Grordbort Ray Guns. I told him that I was able to go inside the Weta office while I was in New Zealand a couple of years ago. The band Abney Park also had a table where they were selling their merchandise. I didn't get to meet them as they were quite busy but I was looking forward to seeing their concert the next day.

I went back to the ballroom and danced some more. I haven't really been dancing as much this year as I have in past years and I really miss it a lot. After the ball ended and it didn't seem like there were any room parties, I joined up with Ray and his friends when they went to

Denny's a couple of blocks away. I'm always ravenous after dancing and midnight is really to early to call it a night at a convention.

Our big group of Steampunk-attired ladies and gentlemen strode into Denny's and made a big splash. A lot of people were in costume as well since it was Halloween, but I guess our costumes were more unusual and really not very "costumey." Other than Ray and Maimone, I didn't really know anyone else. It's nice to meet new people. Our group included one of the singers from Brass Farthing. Unfortunately the food wasn't very good, even though I ordered the same thing as I did at the Denny's across the freeway from SiliCon last October. I suppose each location is different.

I drove home around 2 a.m. and it wasn't too bad as there were very few cars on the road, so I got home in less than 30 minutes. But I was already thinking that I probably wouldn't get up early enough to see Chris's talk on the Babbage Difference Engine at 10:00 a.m. I would have liked to see Chris's presentation as he's quite an entertaining speaker and he's a subject matter expert. But I decided to get enough sleep and go to the con when I was ready. There was still more to come and I didn't want to burn out on the first day.

On Saturday, I didn't get to the con until the afternoon. There were only two tracks of panels but it was still difficult to choose between panels that were held at the same time. The one I did manage to go to (I often don't go to panels at cons unless I know someone in the panel or if I'm one of the panelists) was probably the one I was most interested in anyway. It was Jake Von Slatt's talk and demo of his Steampunk

creations.

Jake, the "proprietor" of the Steampunk Workshop web site, is the guru of do-it-yourself Steampunk machinery, props and the like. I missed his opening speech (but fortunately Chris got his permission to reprint it here in the zine — see page 24). I did catch his parting words after someone asked him why Steampunk is so popular nowadays. He said that it was because people want to recapture the elegance and romance in technology that was in evidence during the Victorian era. I think it's great that we're part of a movement to make technology aesthetically pleasing as well as practical. Beauty and artistry are what makes us humans special. Also, I think there's a trend toward regular folks creating one-of-a-kind things and not just relying on what's mass produced by big multinational conglomerates. We all want to express our creativity and this is a great outlet for people who have the aptitude for design and construction.

Jake is certainly a genius when it comes to designing and constructing. I saw him explain how he created one of his machines, though I can't remember what it was called. It looked like an antique

fan that created little lightning bolts that went from one gold metal ball to another. After that, the publisher of the *Steampunk Anthology*, Jeff VanderMeer of Tachyon Publications came on stage to meet Jake in person for the first time. They announced that they are working on a book project together. This was greeted by an enthusiastic round of applause.

Afterwards, I went to the Dealers' Room and spent more time really checking out each table. I found the Arcane Objects booth, which was run by *Ringers* producer Carlene Cordova and her fiancé John Welch. Diane introduced me to Carlene the night before at the ball. I told Carlene how much I enjoyed *Ringers*, the documentary about fans of *The Lord of the*



Weta Workshops' Greg Broadmore.

Photo by Jean Martin

Rings. I also told her that it was fun for me to watch it because not only was I a big LOTR fan, but several of my friends were featured in it. I would have wanted to be in it as well but I wasn't a part of the scene then. I didn't even know fandom existed until 2004!

I was still good and didn't purchase anything. But I admired several corsets and skirts by Dark Garden. There were also lots of other costumes, accessories and props for sale. They were all beautiful and I guess it was good there were so many items to choose from so I just couldn't choose. There were also books, t-shirts and collectibles. One interesting display was by the Neverwas Haul group. Neverwas Haul is a Victorian house on wheels. I've seen photos of this spectacular art car but I've never seen it myself. I wasn't quite sure if they were selling anything or not but there was one man who had a digital camera and printer inside an old-style camera box. He took photos of people and printed them out all from the box. The photos were, of course, in sepia tone.

The Dealers' Room was about to close, really early this time compared to the previous evening, and I was the last in line for photos. I really wanted one because I had another new Steampunk costume on. This time, it was a black sleek bustle dress with a new bowler hat with



Abney Park put on a memorable concert.

Photo by Jean Martin

ribbons and a black veil.

As it was dinnertime anyway, I went to a Japanese restaurant across the street. It was so-so. Not doing good with food at this con. I would have wanted to eat at the hotel's restaurant but it was packed and the wait was long. The hotel staff were all nice and accommodating but the restaurant and bar were just not ready or equipped to handle the volume of people that

showed up.

After dinner, Thad and I waited for a shuttle bus to take us to the Abney Park concert at the San Jose Civic Auditorium. We waited almost an hour (the shuttles were supposed to be running back and forth every half hour) but it was great that a shuttle was available at all. I really didn't want to drive and look for parking in San Jose. The auditorium was too big for the crowd but it was a nice venue. I was there last year for another concert party for a big telecom trade show. We got there just in time to see the opening band perform their last song.

During the intermission, I was able to mix and mingle. I found Dr. Noe, Rackstraw, España, Erik, J.P., Ant, Chris and Linda. It wasn't long before Abney Park took to the stage. And it was interesting to note that they had quite a following. Lots of people, mostly female, flocked to the front of the stage, so I did, too. I'd never seen them before but had

heard good things about them. They're probably the quintessential Steampunk band. (Are there even any others?)

From the first song, they had me hooked. Abney Park's music is heavy industrial rock with a twist of mystery and exotic flavor. I used to be a rock music journalist and photographer so it was great to be covering a band again. I was right up front taking photos and notes. I had a lot of

fun dancing to their tunes as well. Their music is unique and they are a great live band. They're very entertaining, musically tight and visually appealing.

Each band member had a different look to them. Singer and drummer Captain Robert looked like a post-apocalyptic punk, guitarist Nathaniel was in Burning Man-style attire complete with a kilt and spiky dreadlocks, keyboard player Kristina was in a 40s sexy army outfit and bassist Daniel seemed to have an aviator theme going. But my favorite band member was backup singer and dancer Finn Von Claret, who looked like a silver screen siren. She was so gorgeous I couldn't take my eyes off her. She moved so confidently and gracefully and she had the most beautiful costumes. Her first attire looked Playa ready with a long ruffled skirt in shades of red and pink. She did a lot of belly dancing moves when she wasn't singing.

Actually, it was surprising to me that several of the band's songs had Middle Eastern melodies. It was unusual but used to good effect. There was one song that stood out to me that seemed very Steampunk: *Herr Drosselmeyer's Doll*. With this song, Finn changed her skirt into a ballet tutu and wore pointe shoes. Then she danced like a music box doll while Captain Robert sang about selling his mechanical creation. Another Steampunky song that I liked was *Airship Pirates*. For this one, they called a volunteer from the audience to hold Nathaniel's violin so he could switch from guitar to violin instantly. The girl was in a beautiful outfit herself and she sang along to the song like she was part of the band. I was very impressed. It seemed like everyone was dressed well that evening.

Nathaniel switched not only to a violin but to different decorated guitars. One was a Steampunk guitar created by Jake Von Slatt. Kristina's keyboard and stand were also designed like they could have been Captain Nemo's pipe organ. By the way, sometime during their set, Finn brought out a little statue, which she said was an award for Jake Von Slatt from a recent convention that he wasn't there for. So she called Jake up to the stage and handed him the award.

After Abney Park's performance, a DJ played music and our gang danced until the shindig ended at midnight. The last song was a

I probably annoyed everyone, but I wasn't ready to call it a night.

Bollywood-style techno tune, and we all had a lot of fun attempting to dance Bhangra.

Right before the event ended, I finally was able to buy Abney Park's latest CD, *Lost Horizons: The Continuing Adventures of Abney Park*, which everyone from the band autographed. There was a long line for their merchandise, and the band members were the ones actually selling them. I was not surprised how popular they are as they are really good. I waited until the crowd thinned out, and also bought a t-shirt.

I probably annoyed everyone, but I wasn't ready to call it a night at that point so I kept asking if there were any room parties. I mean, this was a convention! We finally found

one back at the hotel, and so we all went to Merv and Judith's room. It was a good group of friends and there were drinks and snacks. We stayed until we were asked to leave. Then a few of us die-hard partiers went to Mette and Bryan's place as they lived close by. I stayed for a little bit but I was starting to get tired and I still had to drive home. It was almost 4 a.m. at that point. The entire day was a lot of fun and it was great capping it off just hanging out with friends. That's the best part of conventions for me.

When I got home, I had to decide whether I wanted to go back to the con on Sunday or not. I knew I wouldn't get much sleep if I planned on going and I wasn't sure if there was anything too exciting planned. I was thinking it might be better to just end the convention on a high note. Besides, I had to be at a friend's baby shower in the afternoon so that would mean I wouldn't really have much time at the con, especially since I would have to drive quite a distance and back for just a few hours.

Still, I didn't want to miss out and I wanted to experience as much of the convention as I could, as this might be the one time this would be happening. Well, I got to the con around lunch time and the word was that Steam Powered was planning on doing this again next year, but probably in July and maybe in Japantown. I'm not too thrilled about the proposed location for personal reasons and because driving and parking in San Francisco is so much more difficult. However, that's next year, and I still had the current one to enjoy. As soon as I got to the hotel, I ran into friends and we went for lunch across the street to another Japanese restaurant. The food was really good at

this one but the service wasn't.

I went back to the Dealers' Room for one last look, and that was when I bought a lot of things during the last half hour of the con. I bought a couple of purses and playing cards. I said hello to Phil Foglio, the creator of *Girl Genius*, and bought one of his t-shirts.

Afterwards, España, Deborah, Ant and I took photos of each other in the lobby where there was a Steampunk room set. There was also a steam carriage and various other machines. I wasn't planning on costuming for that Sunday as I was going to a baby shower afterwards but at the last minute, I pulled several items from my closet together. My outfit looked Steampunk but was still appropriate for a party. That's what's great about Steampunk, it looks almost like normal clothing. Well, normal at least for me and people in fandom. All I needed to do was wear an aviator cap and goggles and I was an aviatrix! It was great to be able to have photos in another new Steampunk costume.

I drove off with a sense that I had enjoyed a good con. It was well organized, registration went smoothly, there were lots of people and lots of things to do, there were notable speakers and guests, the hotel was very nice, and there was great entertainment. Major kudos to Richard Bottoms and the Steam Powered team. I hear they're planning on taking their con to different cities in the U.S. so I guess it's full steam ahead for them and for the Steampunk phenomenon.

For more information, here are some links:

steampunkconvention.com
steampunkworkshop.com
www.abneypark.com

Old is New at Steampunk Con

By España Sheriff
Staff Writer

Steam Powered, the California Steampunk Convention held in Sunnyvale over Halloween weekend, was apparently the first convention of its kind. I was pretty excited about it going in, but not knowing any of the people involved behind the scenes, I wasn't sure quite what to expect. A new hotel for me, and I knew there would be at least a few Bay Area convention stalwarts including Mette Hedin and Bryan Little who live just yards away from the convention site, plus Chris Garcia, Jade Falcon and Erik Anderson who were all scheduled on panels and therefore guaranteed to be there. But beyond that it was hard to guess whether I'd be enjoying myself at a regular fannish con, a comic-con for steamers, or suffering through "Con-X-Steam," as Andy Trembley suggested.

I was fiddling with costume bits and accessories right up until the day of the convention and therefore still tossing things into bags when Anthony and Deb arrived to pick me up. They waited patiently while I scrambled around shoving what appeared to be every last item of clothing, piece of jewelry and likely accessory into my suitcase, and we finally got on the road at around 8 p.m.

As we sighted the hotel we felt some trepidation. Although The Domain is a Joie de Vivre hotel and I'd heard good things about it,

from the outside it looks like nothing so much as a public housing project. We parked in the underground garage and immediately spotted a few steamed-up folks wandering to and from their cars so, suitcases in hand, so we took the elevator to the lobby and hoped for the best.

When the doors opened it was like exiting a transporter into a whole different world. There were dozens of elaborately costumed people within sight and the hotel design fit perfectly. The lobby is dominated by a large staircase descending from the second floor, which in turn surrounds an open atrium with a white slatted wood balcony along which folks were leaning and chatting and taking in the scene. In the center on the lobby in front of reception, the convention had placed a freestanding room with a small bar and Victorian decor. Off to the side of that was registration, some couches for lounging, and the wide front entrance. Registration was closed for the night, but the Dealers' Room was open and there was a lot of activity for a Friday night.

The inestimable Joe Price joined us just a few minutes after we arrived at our second-floor room and we all set about poking and prodding at our exciting new environment. The rooms were cute, in an Ikea-nerd sort of way, and the most popular feature was definitely the Sleep Number beds while the least favorite for most was the baffling poetry snippet on the wall. There were a bunch of little touches clearly aimed at the

Silicon Valley demographic, but some worked better than others — for one thing, the toilet flushing mechanism was far too high tech for our 21st-Century-playing-at-19th-Century brains. Two buttons are apparently one too many when talking about plumbing.

After a quick freshening up we were joined by Jade Falcon and Erik Anderson, who like the rest of us were famished, so we all set out to find food. First we poked our heads into the hotel bar/restaurant area. The restaurant was closed for the night and the bartender was trying to do the same and looking a little overwhelmed. Luckily the Domain is located right in the middle of a nice little area full of shops and restaurants so we wandered out into the night and ended up at a delightful Thai restaurant, Thai Chili, which was about to close for the night but let us in anyway after we begged politely, hats literally in hands. The staff was lovely and the food delicious, I ordered the crispy fish, and even though we were the last people there holding them up from closing they gave us free desserts; marvelous lemon and pineapple sorbets and a very tasty vanilla ice cream.

We were feeling pretty good when we made it back to the hotel around 11:30, just in time for the folks to begin wandering in from the Halloween Famous Dead Persons Ball, which quite a number of Steam Powered members had attended. Kevin Roche was dressed as the “real” Captain Jack Harkness and Bryan Little was the *Torchwood* Captain Jack Harkness — leading to one of the slashiest photographs of the weekend. Merv Staton was dressed as Number 2 from *The Prisoner*, Andy as a Harry Potter spoiler (what’s the statute of limitations on that sort of thing?),

and there were several other clever costumes which now escape me. By this time it was nearly midnight and unfortunately the hotel rules stated that non-guests were not allowed past then, so as the lobby areas emptied out we retired to Kevin and Andy’s room for drinks and conversation until we were all exhausted and ready for bed.

Saturday morning I managed to rouse myself early enough to make the breakfast buffet for which the hotel and/or the convention had thoughtfully provided discount coupons, but

which ended at 10 a.m. Seating was limited and the staff clearly overwhelmed, but I desperately needed coffee and bacon and was not up to trying to make it to Denny’s. I eventually occupied and held a four person table until my companions joined me, fighting off advances from hungry circling ladies and gents already bright eyed and dressed in their finery. The buffet was basic but serviceable, with self-serve coffee, which made all the difference to my well-being.

Feeling far more human, we all got our



***Girl Genius* characters encountered in the Dealers’ Room.**

Photo by Kevin Standlee

badges from reg, and the oversized magazine style program book — which was a little light on content but kinda neat anyway — and then we headed upstairs to change into our daytime outfits, mine being a real casual reprise of the previous day's and Anthony and Deb in matching overalls, with an industrial looking device attached to Ant's shoulder and a most alarming mustache curled over his lip. His costume was a great success and during lunch a wandering artist drew a great sketch of him.

However, before lunch the bulk of our time was spent in the truly amazing Dealers' Room. The convention had very wisely chosen to select vendors who somehow fit the theme, so every table was chock full of Victorian finery, Steampunk gear, re-purposable parts, and genre appropriate doodahs.

The very first thing I encountered on the way in was the Weta Workshop table with their gorgeous ray guns on display. I eagerly accepted when Dr. Grordbort's Chief Designer Greg Broadmore said it was okay to touch them. He pointed out the various moving parts and I discovered one moving part on the Victorian Mongoose prototype that really wasn't supposed to be.... oops. The larger pieces are quite heavy and really only appropriate for display but the Mongoose's Derringer-style design would probably be easily portable. I ended up getting some of the ray gun pins, which came in handy to secure my rather flimsy badge holder, plus a t-shirt, and will continue to lust after the ray guns from a safe distance.

Studio Foglio had a table in the corner where Phil was doing sketches of people in their costumes, so Anthony took advantage of



Ann and Jeff VanderMeer with Tachyon's Steampunk Anthology. Photo by Kevin Standlee

the opportunity to get himself immortalized as a mustachioed member of the steam powered proletariat. Other recognizable groups were the Neverwas Haul which was set up to take people's "digitgraphs", and Abney Park, who had their custom instruments on display. I ran into Jill Roberts over where Ann and Jeff VanderMeer were signing copies of the

Tachyon Press Steampunk anthology. I managed to find things to buy at the Etsy Steampunk group table and two or three other vendors, ending up with new bits of jewelry, a whole bunch of vacuum tubes, and various other bits and pieces.

There were two tracks of programming during the day, with quite a nice diversity of appropriate topics and speakers but mostly through sheer laziness I'd already missed several panels that I wanted to see and missed at least one more when a bunch of us crossed the street to grab lunch at a Korean BBQ joint. But the food was good and totally worth it. I was glad we made it back in time for the Jake Von Slatt panel. I was able to find a couple of free seats at the back along with Ace, Lazer and Garcia. The audience was obviously thrilled to see the man and burst into applause when he came in. He read a manifesto, which Chris has gotten permission to reprint, and then showed us his latest device, a Winhurst Machine. His public speaking was not quite polished and he could probably have used someone else up there to help him along with questions and the like, but the content was good and what I could see of the device was pretty neat.

After the talk I stashed my loot from the dealer's room and we decided to grab dinner at the hotel restaurant. We had been warned that service would be slow, but the weather had turned and we really were not dressed for it so we decided to take our chances. It did end up being extremely slow, as there was only one



Garcia gets a chance to expound upon the Babbage Difference Engine.
Photo by Kevin Standlee

cook, but our server was very nice and attentive and eventually we fed and ran off to get changed for the evening.

I had not managed to complete the costume I really wanted to, but I had most of the core of it and it looked good enough to pass. Jade and Deb pleaded exhaustion and stayed behind as the boys and I headed over to the Abney Park concert, which was being held off-site at the San

band played a pirate song that everyone seemed to enjoy immensely.

I was impressed to see that Foglio continued getting his boogie on for most of the rest of the night. Although I knew of the band I had not actually heard them before, so I was pleasantly surprised. The music was an eclectic combination of genres, Irish, Middle Eastern, a little goth-rock and a whole bunch of other stuff

Jose Civic Auditorium.

I had been misinformed as to the schedule of the free shuttle service, so by the time we checked the outgoing trips had stopped running. Erik was kind enough to offer to drive and we made it in time for Abney Park, although we missed the opening band, Platform One, entirely. We found and joined Chris Garcia and the Lovely and Talented Linda along with Kevin and Andy and a few other folks who were all seated near the front left of the room.

Although we didn't fill the auditorium by a long shot, there was a pretty decent sized crowd, most of whom were dressed up in their evening finery. Phil and Kaja Foglio were standing near the front and they, along with most of the standing crowd in front, started up a jig when the

tossed in and recombined — like Steampunk itself.

When the band was done there was an hour or so of DJ music, which alternated between okay and good and culminated with some very entertaining bhangra. The dance floor never had more than half a dozen or so folks on it but it was still a nice way to end the night. Afterwards we left the crowds still getting autographs from the band and those waiting for the shuttle home and drove back to the hotel.

Folks were trickling back in and since by this time apparently all the regular business guests were long gone the hotel was more relaxed about the rules and the lobby chairs were all occupied with people chatting away. We ended up in Merv and Judith's room for a few more hours drinking Mandarin Napoleon along with Radar, Bryan and Mette, our own Jean Martin and a few other drifters.

Sunday morning it was Deb's turn to rise early and scout out a table for us. The buffet was only slightly less discombobulated but again good enough to get us where we wanted to be. Jade and Erik had forgotten about daylight savings and were an hour early for their panel, so they were able to join us for a bit, looking quite respectable beside our bedraggled group.

After breakfast we ran into Chris, who cast a pall on the morning by giving us the news of Forry's heart attack. This took the wind out of our sails as we went back upstairs to change, but it's hard to stay down at a con and I had the bonus fun of getting to help dress Deb up, Anthony and I hovering like a geeky version of Trini and Susanna joojing and primping until we were satisfied. Anthony's own costume had an

actual steam emitting device which was a big hit with everyone and I myself got lazy again and put on various bits of other costumes ending up looking more or less like a silent movie director.

We checked out the Dealers' Room one final time looking for last minute bargains and did the traditional Sunday wandering around from group to group saying hi to the people you missed during the weekend and saying bye to the people heading out. At one point a largeish group of us had gathered and for some reason the conversation turned to who would be a good movie director for *Iron Chef*. It was a bizarre and extended bit of brainstorming and highly entertaining.

Most of the group then wandered over to a sushi place across the street and took over three separate tables. Aside from the tasty sushi the highlight was the table of loud and quite inebriated folks sitting behind me who one couldn't help but eavesdrop on (and I thought I had a filthy mouth!) and who left behind three empty sake bottles and eight beers including the bottles under the table. Loud and unruly and mostly incomprehensible, but luckily not as rowdy as they appeared upon first entering the establishment.

When we got back to the hotel things were winding down and the urge to get coffee was overpowering. Alas, the hotel itself had no espresso bar so the only option really was the Starbucks a couple of blocks away. Taking this as a sign we piled into the car and headed off into the afternoon.

Von Slatt's SteamCon Address

By Jake Von Slatt

Editor's Note: I'm very pleased to say that Jake Von Slatt gave us permission to reprint his keynote at the California Steampunk Con over Halloween Weekend in the full Creative Commons-Attribution-Non-Commercial-No Derivatives sort of way. You can also find the text, along with a bunch of other great stuff, at www.steampunkworkshop.com/. The dude's a really nice guy, above all his other geniuses.
— Chris Garcia

What sort of future were you promised? When I was young they told me I'd have robotic servants to tend to my every need, cars that would drive themselves while I read the newspaper, and vacations in orbiting space hotels. When I was a bit older they promised me ecologically friendly communities where we would all live together in geodesic domes in our white jump suits.

But by the time I had reached High School they had stopped promising the future. We were all sure that we would grow up into a post-apocalyptic tomorrow where we would be roaming a desert landscape in our jury-rigged vehicles and punk rock haircuts in search of the next gallon of gasoline.

When things started to look up again our future remained dark, we'd be human flash drives with data jacked into our skulls and our destinies determined by mysterious and shadowy entities that may or may not be human, or even "alive."

Today, the only future we are promised is the one in development in the corporate R&D labs of the world. We are shown glimpses of the next generation of cell phones, laptops, or MP3 players. Magazines that use to attempt to show us how we would be living in 50 or 100 years now only speculate over the new surround sound standard for your home theater or whether next year's luxury sedan will have Bluetooth as standard equipment.

What do you do when you are promised no future beyond the next Steve Jobs keynote address or summer blockbuster movie? What do you do when your present consists of going to work, paying the bills, and trying to make ends meet? Our society would have you put your head down, work a little longer, try a little harder, and maybe order that 50-inch wide screen TV from Amazon.com.

"If you want something done right, do it yourself." Haven't heard that much lately, have you? Except perhaps from people who want to sell you home improvement supplies. But everything else is labeled "no user serviceable parts inside," including your future.

Is it any wonder, then, that some of us have decided to take a step sideways? A step out of the corporate time stream and into one we have made for ourselves? A step into a world of adventure and romance where we each seek out our own futures on our own terms, without

having to wait for it to go on sale? A step sideways into a past that never was and a future that still could be.

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, my name is Jake von Slatt and I simply cannot express how happy it makes me to be with you here tonight.

I'm going to start off by talking a little about what I do and why I do it and where I think Steampunk is headed. Then we'll get to the unveiling.

"Maker" describes what I do and "Steampunk" describes the style in which I most commonly work. Thus calling me a Steampunk Maker is roughly equivalent to calling someone a "Jazz" "musician."

Being a Maker is sort of like being an artist, but I have no training in the arts. It's also sort of like being a craftsman, but I don't make things for sale – though other Makers do. Tinkerer is also a good colloquial description of what I am and what I do. I make things for the sheer joy of creation. I also really enjoy sharing the things I make and the tools and techniques I use with other people.

Recently the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, an independent policy and research center, held a conference called "Tinkering as a Mode of Knowledge: Production in the Digital Age.." One of the attendees, Alex Soojung-Kim Pang – a research director at the Institute for the Future – talked

about the conference in his blog.

He wrote: "What is Tinkering?"

"You can define tinkering in part in contrast to other activities. Mitch Resnick, for example, talks about how traditional technology-related planning is top-down, linear, structured, abstract, and rules-based, while tinkering is



Robur the Conqueror and Captain Nemo.

Photo by Diane Rooney

bottom-up, iterative, experimental, concrete, and object-oriented.

"Anne Balsamo and Perry Hoberman have looked at a wide variety of tinkering activities, ranging from circuit bending to paper prototyping to open source to blogging. They argue that these varied activities are unified by a common set of principles or practices. (The following are just highlights.)

"Tinkerers improvise, iterate, and improve constantly.

"Tinkerers use materials at hand, combining heterogeneous parts and components (e.g., raw and finished materials, handmade and industrial objects, customized and personalized consumer products) in ways that push beyond the boundaries of their original contexts. As a result, tinkered objects tend to be collages, appropriations, and montages. Tinkering is bricolage.

"Tinkerers are also social animals. Their success depends in part on being able to tap into porous and ad-hoc communities. For most of what they do the manual is useless; other tinkerers are the only ones who are likely to have the information you need.

"Tinkering isn't so much a specific set of technical skills: There tends to be a pretty instrumental view of knowledge. You pick up just enough knowledge about electronics, textiles, metals, programming, or paper-folding to figure out how to do what you

want. It certainly respects skill, but skills are a means, not an end: Mastery isn't the point, as it is for professionals. Competence and completion are."

How cool is that, eh? Academics are studying tinkering and what's more, they totally get it!

Alex goes on to say some more things about Tinkering that I feel are eerily applicable

to Steampunk – and here I’ve taken some of the things he said slightly out of context to emphasize that point, and I’ve also trimmed some of his citations:

He wrote: “One of the things I talked with several people ... about was how historically specific tinkering is. The deeper question is, is this just a flash in the pan, a trendy name without any substance underneath? The answer we came up with is that this is like a musical style, both the product of specific historical forces, and an expression of something deeper and more fundamental.

“Think of the historically contingent forces shaping tinkering first. I see several things influencing it:

“The counterculture. Around here, countercultural attitudes towards technology ... are still very strong, and the assumption that technologies should be used by people for personal empowerment. Tinkering bears a family resemblance to the activities embodied in the Whole Earth Catalog.

“The EULA rebellion. The fact that you’re forbidden from opening a box, that some software companies insist that you’re just renting their products, and that hardware makers intentionally cripple their devices, is a challenge to hackers and tinkerers. Tinkering is defined in part in terms of a resistance to consumer culture and the restrictive policies of corporations.

“Users as Innovators. The fundamental assumption that users can do cool, worthwhile, inspiring, innovative things is a huge driver. Tinkering is partly an answer to the traditional assumption that people who buy things are ‘consumers’-- passive, thoughtless, and reactive,

people whose needs are not only served by companies, but are defined by them as well. When you tinker, you don’t just take control of your stuff; you begin to take control of yourself.

“Open source. Pretty obvious. This is an ideological inspiration, and a social one: Open source software development is a highly collective process that has created some interesting mechanisms for incorporating individual work into a larger system, while still providing credit and social capital for developers.

“The shift from means to meaning. This is a term that my Innovation Lab friends came up with a few years ago. Tinkering is a way of investing new meanings in things, or creating objects that mean something: By putting yourself into a device, or customizing it to better suit your needs, you’re making that thing more meaningful.

“From manual labor to manual leisure. Finally, I wouldn’t discount the fact that you can see breaking open devices as a leisure activity, rather than something you do out of economic necessity, as influencing the movement. Two hundred years ago, tinkering as a social activity – as something that you did as an act of resistance, curiosity, participation in a social movement, expression of a desire to invest things with meaning – just didn’t exist: It’s what you did with stuff in order to survive the winter. Even fifty years ago, there was an assumption that ‘working with your hands’ defined you as lower class: ‘My son won’t work with his hands’ was an aspiration declaration. Today, though, when many of us work in offices or stores, and lift things or run for leisure, manual labor can

become a form of entertainment.”

Wow, this really echoes some of the things I’ve been thinking about in the last couple of months for a new project I’ll talk about in a little bit.

I’ve long felt that making is therapy. Knowing how to create some of the things you rely on in daily life reduces the mystery, and thus the fear, of technology in general. And with each new thing you make, each idea you absorb, each tool you learn how to use, you gain power. By understanding how things work you also learn to think critically about technology in the wider world. You’ll be able to tell when our leaders or candidates for office understand the technology policy they are backing or are just repeating the party line.

Furthermore, the tools and techniques with roots in the 19th Century are often more appropriate for the individual craftsperson or small collective who does not have the resources to make huge capital investments in equipment and facilities.

So just what are we laying the ground work for here?

From a DIY technology perspective, Steampunk is a romanticized cousin to the Maker movement – and the Maker movement is the hardware-based offspring of the hugely successful and important Open Source software revolution.

The advent of cheap personal computers spawned a society of programmers and hackers who write computer programs for their own use and distribute the source code, the program’s core instructions, for free to anyone that’s interested. Over time, these hackers have

coalesced into groups and organizations that are capable of rivaling the skill and ability of huge corporations when it comes to the production of computer programs and particularly computer operating systems.

Furthermore, the Open Source movement seeks to protect the free and open nature of what they have wrought with tools like the GNU Public License that require subsequent users and modifiers of their work to make those modifications freely available to everyone under the same terms. Today you can, and many do, run even the largest businesses on what is essentially free software. What a nightmare for software and operating system companies that their chief competition comes from groups of passionate hackers who produce their programs for the sheer joy of Making and then distribute them for free!

Over the next couple of decades we will see swift advances in rapid prototyping and desktop fabrication. Already there are so-called 3D printers that can produce basic housewares such as hair combs and salt shakers. In the very near future these machines will be able to produce all manner of things rapidly, cheaply, and on demand. Self-manufacturing really isn't too far away. We'll have 3D printers or "fabricators" in our homes that can "print" objects just as we have 2D printers attached to our computers now.

The advent of personal computers has opened up digital and machine assisted graphics design to a wide community of artists. Desktop manufacturing will open up product design to hobbyists and enthusiasts that will design for fun rather than profit. What a nightmare for

manufacturers that their chief competition might come from Makers who produce designs that anyone can manufacture on demand. Makers that would produce those designs for the sheer joy of creation and would give them away for free.

Steampunk preserves the notion that we can do it ourselves, that we can not only assemble kits and flat packs from IKEA but that we can design things ourselves. Just as cheap personal computers spawned the revolution that is Open Source software, these fabricators will be the platform for the next Industrial Revolution – and this time it's personal.

Finally, where is Steampunk sub-culture headed?

I have a bit of a confession to make; I don't really know what Steampunk is. Genre, aesthetic, movement, sub-culture, style, all of these terms have been used to describe it but none quite capture the richness and variety I see in this community. Unlike past (and I'm going to use the word "sub-culture" just as a convenience), unlike past sub-cultures, Steampunk seems to have formed from the merger of multiple interests that contain within them a common thread – and that is some attachment or passion for history, for understanding the origins of technology, and perhaps a desire for the perceived romance of a bygone era.

How else do you explain a sub-culture that brings together people of such divergent experience? Why, in this very room I'll bet we have writers, costumers, electronic hobbyists, live steam enthusiasts, corset makers, artists, blacksmiths, scrap bookers, photographers, musicians, and people who engage in every

other creative endeavor you can imagine!

And Steampunk continues to attract more people. Recent coverage in *the New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and on MTV have introduced new people to our little hobby. Some of you may be here tonight because you spotted one of these stories and were entranced. Welcome!

But as Steampunk expands it will exhibit all of the characteristic of past movements and sub-cultures. Sub-cultures do have a natural life cycle. Some of you will likely find this irritating but it is natural, to be expected, and best ignored. There is no way that someone else can ruin the thing that you are passionate about by liking it too!

But as this occurs, do keep in mind the legacy that Steampunk will leave in mainstream culture. Will Steampunk be like Goth, a largely artistic and non-political sub-culture? Or will it more closely resemble Punk rock culture with its desire for radical change?

For my part, I would like to see a Steampunk sub-culture that was more like the cultural movements of the late nineteen-sixties and early seventies. A movement based on humanistic values and a desire to inject some excitement, romance and peace into our busy lives as well as a recognition that our actions have a great impact on the global environment.

We don our top hats and goggles to show the world we're different. Fashion is often the flag of a sub-culture and the most visual aspect of Steampunk is certainly its fashion. But years from now, when all is said and done and Steampunk is a historical footnote, I hope that I will look back and feel that Steampunk somehow made a difference, too.

BASFA Minutes: Meetings 954-956

Meeting 954

November 10, 2008

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

Began 8:00

23 people attended
A TAFF jar & a party jar were established

Secretary's report: the minutes of meeting 953 were accepted as 'I can't believe it's not Barbara'

The Treasurer reported that we have money

The Vice President reported that there's a new 'Drink Tank' out & stuff

The President had nothing fannish to report

Announcements
Andy announced that some Trak phones and Blackberries can have a nifty gizmo - check traffic.Berekely.edu

[evil] Kevin announced that Saint George Spirits will have their open house Nov 22 - so get your tickets now

Mo announced that she won't be here next Monday & that the Siliconventions board of directors is looking for 2 new members - are you interested?

Chris announced that Locus is even more hated by him and has earned his scorn again [and Forry's still not dead]

Andy proposed a new club rule and it was sent to committee - the committee chair is Andy

Dave C announced - Oooo a bunny! ... something butch

Reviews:
Cheryl reviewed the SF Fungus Festival as she whole-heartedly recommends the mushroom ice cream and reviewed Ellen Klages's book reading at Borderlands as good [there were follow-on's about do-it-yourself radiation experiments], then mentioned that the next SFinSF reading will be at 7pm on this Saturday and reviewed Writers with Drinks at a bar that was SRO and the next will be Dec 13

Dave G reviewed the Creation Farscape Con in Southern Calif as it lacked its old luster and friendliness

Joni reviewed Camera 12's sing-a-long movie series with 'Nightmare Before Xmas' as fun, if sparsely attended and worth full price

Dave C reviewed ['we are all Jay Lake'] his trip to World Fantasy con in Calgary as fun and smaller and he saw some readings [he shrugged] - the awards banquet food was good - the con was interesting and walking around Calgary was ... warm and it was all worth full price; then he reviewed voting early in the rain as he wished he'd waited till Tuesday a little and reviewed Christopher Fowler's 'Full dark House', an English mystery, as a good thriller, but relaxing and worth full price

Adrienne reviewed 'The Duchess' as it left her thoughtful, it had gorgeous costumes, she enjoyed it and really liked that it used real locations and not computer backgrounds - worth full price

[evil] Kevin reviewed the Leather Association as the scaled down plans worked well and they had fun and he reviewed the 'Tee Nee Thai Cafe' [1423 the Alameda, by the Towne] as their beer list was mostly Belgian Monastic bottle-conditioned ales - and was worth full price

Glenn reviewed food poisoning at Masu Sushi as worth negative full price and thumbs up to the Santa Clara Dept of Environmental Health for their rapid response and reviewed 'My Neighbor Totoro' as a lovely fun film and reviewed 2 pirate porn films as awful

Mo reviewed a job interview as wonderful - but it made her very thoughtful about her job history; check her LJ for more on this [maureenstarky]

Chris reviewed 'Love you More' as an incredible short film & reviewed the short film of 'Riverworld' in 7 minutes as 'O my god it was bad!'

We then did auctions: a game for \$1.25; a video for \$0.50; a painting for \$1.50; and boxes of books for \$3.00 and \$0.75

We adjourned at = 9:39

And the rumor of the week was: 'Evil Kevin's next scientific paper will be on Schroedinger's Jar'

Meeting 955

November 17, 2008

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

Began 8:00

23 people attended
A party jar was established

Secretary's report: the minutes of meeting 954 were accepted

The Treasurer reported that last week we took in \$4.00 in the regular jar, \$8.00 in the party jar and \$0.25 in the TAFF jar

There was no Vice President

The President had nothing fannish to report

Announcements

Carole announced that Philcon is this next weekend

Dave G announced that the Sharks won tonight and he and Spring intend to go to the 10:30 showing of 'Evil Dead, the Musical' on its opening night - not in the splatter zone - and wants to know if anyone wants to make an outing of it

Andy announced that Saint George Spirits will have their open house Nov 22 - so get your tickets now; \$30 for basic tickets, with 2 add-on tickets and a tasting clinic [with limited sign-up slots], check www.stgeorgespirits.com

Dave C announced that Loscon is coming up and announced that Dr Who, Season 4 and the animated Dr Who will be available for sale tomorrow - and he sells them

Reviews:

I reviewed 'Fable 2' as a delightful fun game, gorgeous and engrossing - with my only real complaint being about the assigning of evil points [30 for murder, 5 for stealing a shirt] - way worth full price - and reviewed getting a flu shot at Safeway as very fast and at \$30 - with a 10% off coupon for a full grocery order - it was very much worth the time spent

Adrienne reviewed 'Quantum of Solace' as the

opening credits were fun but the film editing was choppy and not too good and the music was generic action movie fare; Andy follow-on'd that the story was very thin, generally good with lots of action scenes, worth full price

Lisa reviewed 'Madagascar 2' as very silly and very much fun and really worth full price, but she paid matinee

Fred reviewed Convergence 08 as interesting and there was information about Genescent where Greg Benford has moved from writing science fiction to being an entrepreneur

[tall] Kevin reviewed a trip to Chicago as no part of the travel was fun but on the flight back he saw 'Mama Mia' and it inspired him to create SMOF filk with Cheryl - check her LJ - and Lisa follow-on'd that she saw it and it was very silly

Cheryl reviewed the United terminal in SF as it has a huge display of science fiction toys there that is very worth seeing and she reviewed Chicago as still suffering from Obama fever and she saw a sf reading there that was 'bi-national'

Ken reviewed Texas as he visited the Alamo and, indeed, there is no basement there, the Riverwalk at San Antonio was lovely, Taste of Texas in Houston was definitely worth full price and they brought back lots of swag

We then did auctions: a box of books for \$3.00 and a book bag for \$3.00

We adjourned at = 9:12

And the rumor of the week was: 'World Fantasy Con 2009 is looking to book Abba as music GoH'

Meeting 956

November 24, 2008

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

Began 8:03 as Garth & Joni fled

21 people attended
A party jar was established

Secretary's report: the minutes of meeting 955 were accepted as 'tolerated'

The Treasurer reported that last week we took in \$9.45 in the regular jar & \$0.50 in the party jar

The Vice president was late, but reported there have been 2 new 'Drink Tanks' - check efanazines.com - and [it was channeled] he wants stuff on a Venture Brothers theme for the next 'Drink Tank' by Wednesday

The President had nothing fannish to report

Announcements

Glenn announced that Loscon is this weekend

Ken announced that this Friday is the Legion of

Rassilon meeting at First & Trimble

Dave G announced that he and Spring intend to go to the late showing of 'Evil Dead, the Musical' on Jan 10 - not in the splatter zone - and wants to know if anyone wants to make an outing of it - and also announced that there will be a party at 7pm at the House of Spike, Dec 27 and celebrants are welcome

Dave C announced that Loscon is this weekend - the writer GoH is John Scalzi - come and bring him candy corn and bacon - and visit the dealer's room

[evil] Kevin announced that there'll be an expedition to see Leonardo, Dec 7, time TBA

Reviews:

Andy reviewed the trip to St George Spirits as the catering was fabulous and the spirits were plentiful, completely worth full price; [evil] Kevin reviewed the trip as he got his Christmas tree in a bottle; Chris follow-on'd that it was a joyous experience, Dave G follow-on'd that meat in a cone was absolutely incredible - also worth full price

Adrienne reviewed a Bay Area Ghost Hunter meet and greet at the Brookdale spa and inn as it was a bit loud and annoying - but the tour was interesting and he ate at 'Ciao Bella' - a small place - but the food was nice and the drag show was swinging

I reviewed 'Madagascar 2' as wonderful and silly and the penguins rule & worth full price; Eric follow-on'd that he and Pat enjoyed it

Glenn reviewed an article by Phil Procter as an excuse for him to read puns to the room and recommends the 'Funny Times' as being a good read

Cheryl reviewed a TV commercial as verging on science fiction when it involves an AI and a car whose owner is named 'Dave' - and reviewed their plumbing as it 'sucks' when it should drain and today it totally 'blowed', but it is hopefully repaired now, [tall] Kevin follow-on'd that now they will hopefully also repair the hole

Mo was tired

Ken reviewed BBC1's docudrama 'Einstein and Eddington' as worth full price and worth watching

Chris reviewed being sick on Sunday as it sucked, that he saw a short called 'The Story of Sputnik' as one of the greatest films ever - and then saw one of the worst shorts ever = 'Kink Inc'; he reviewed 'Quantum of Solace' as it has a lot of kicking in it and he likes kicking and reviewed 'Zack and Miri make a Porno' as exceptionally sweet

Art commented that the complete works of Monty Python is now on YouTube

Stellen reviewed his trip to Sweden on SAS/United as the last leg began in Chicago and was therefore infested with a lot of Swedish journalists, going home - that Sweden was cold and wet, it was nice to see his folks, then it was cold and snowy and during the return flight in

New York he had the single toughest piece of chicken he has ever eaten in this life - and the trip was worth full price

We then did auctions: an artifact for \$2.00; books for \$0.25, videos for \$ 0.25 and \$0.50 and a laser printer for \$12.00

We adjourned at = 9:35

And the rumor of the week was: 'Chris Garcia will direct 'Lobster Hookers from Mars'

LOCs, from page 5

is save up to buy a plane ticket!

And we also heard from Mr. Robert Lichtman!

Hi, Chris-

Regarding your review of CHANTICLEER #3 in the latest *SF/SF*, a few points:

"I came to FANAC.org and found that there was a fanzine I'd not yet bothered to look up. It was CHANTICLEER, which also happens to be the name of my favorite bookstore in Sonoma."

Mine, too, and not much competition since the store across the street and the one in the shopping center that has Long's and Whole Foods are both pretty standard fare. I've bought my share of books there over the years and enjoy the occasional conversation with the proprietor.

Chris replies: *I haven't been there in a while, I think the last time was a very brief visit walking from the Community Center to the Sonoma Hotel during the Sonoma Valley Film Festival. I still saw at least a dozen things I really wanted to shell out for, including an old French Verne which I believe was a first edition (and the price certainly was!)*

"J. Wontford Laydschur, which totally sounds like a pseudonym but will probably end up being real..."

That's one of Liebscher's many pseudonyms.

Well, I was part right. My Dad had all sorts of pseudonyms, and I've got a couple. It should be easier for those of us who use them to recognize them!

"The closing note mentions that there will be an issue 4 (I'm sure if it ever showed up, Robert Lichtman has a copy)..."

A safe guess, and indeed I do. There were seven issues altogether and I've got them all, every one.

See, I was right! It's kinda like saying "It's a British fanzine that didn't suck. I bet Greg Pickersgill has it."

They were lovely productions, and the typed-up versions on Fanac.org don't impart any of the sort of typographic wonderment editor Liebscher did in every issue: attractive borders of typed symbols and characters on just about every page.

They don't make 'em like that anymore!

"Walt even mentions that there's an article on Jazz from Laney, which I think appeared in AH, SWEET LANEY. I'm not 100% sure on that, but I think I remember it."

No, that article isn't in *ASL*.

I remember there was a Jazz article in ASL, but I'm guessing Laney was much like me in that we can go on and on about the various things that we enjoy partaking in. Like how many articles am I gonna write about wrestling!

For more on CHANTICLEER check out <http://efanzines.com/AOY/AOY-25.htm> — and for that matter, you might want to go upstream from this specific article to read all of this collection. If you've not run across it before, it's worth your time.

Best wishes, Robert

That is something I'll certainly do...at least to get another This Old Fanzine out of it!

Bay Area Fannish Calendar

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

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

Friday, November 28-Sunday, December 21

The Great Dickens Christmas Fair

The Cow Palace
2600 Geneva Avenue
San Francisco
www.dickensfair.com
\$22 each day
Victorian London is recreated for the four weekends after Thanksgiving.

Wednesday, December 3

Ask A Scientist: How Computers Look at Art

The Axis Cafe
1201 8th Street
www.askascientistsf.com
Free
7 p.m.

David Stork, Chief Scientist of Ricoh Innovations, Consulting Professor of Statistics and Visiting Lecturer in Computer Science at Stanford University examines how computers are helping our understanding of art.

Friday, December 5

Author: Dan Piraro

The Booksmith
Haight Street
Free

7:30 p.m.

The cartoonist behind the comic strip *Bizarro* signs his new book *Bizarro Buccaneers: Nuttin' But Pirate Cartoons*.

Thursday, December 11

Thrillville

El Cerrito Speakeasy
10070 San Pablo Avenue
El Cerrito
www.thrillville.net
9:15 p.m.
\$9

Vintage Mexican thrills in The Robot Vs. The Aztec Mummy, live music by Carne Cruda.

Saturday, December 13

Psychotronic Film Festival

De Anza College Campus, Forum 1
Cupertino
www.kfjc.org

7 p.m.

\$5

The KFJC Psychotronic Film Festival shows unusual and unique vintage 16mm films, including surreal animated shorts, weird commercials and obscure B-movie finds.

Sunday, December 14

Sac-Con

Scottish Rite Center
6151 H Street Sacramento
www.sacramentocomics.com
\$6

The Sacramento quarterly Comic, Toy and Anime show.

Wednesday, December 17

My Name is Bruce

The Bridge Theater
3010 Geary Blvd
San Francisco
www.peacheschrist.com
7 p.m and 9:30 p.m.
\$10.50

Bruce Campbell appears live and in person for a screening of his directorial debut, with your hostess Peaches Christ.

Friday January 9-Saturday February 7

Evil Dead, the Musical

The Campbell Theater
636 Ward Street
www.willowstheatre.com/evildead.htm
\$25

EDTM's triumphant return! Check website for tickets and showtimes.

Friday-Sunday, January 9-11

Sac-Anime

Scottish Rite Center

6151 H Street
Sacramento
www.sacanime.com
\$30

Guests include Chris Sarandon, Vic Mignogna
and Travis Willingham

Tuesday, December 3

Ask A Scientist: Bigfoot

The Axis Cafe

1201 8th Street

www.askascientistsf.com

Free

7 p.m.

Eugenie Scott, physical Anthropologist and
Executive Director of the National Center for
Science Educations examines whether or not we
might one day be able to welcome some
long lost relatives to the family tree. Co-
sponsored event with the Bay Area Skeptics.

Thursday-Monday, January 22-26

Further Confusion 2009: Surf Safari

Doubletree Hotel

2050 Gateway Place

San Jose

www.furtherconfusion.org

\$40 until December 30th

GOHs this year are animator Jeff Pidgeon,
puppeteer Anita Coulter and author Clare Bell.

Friday-Sunday, January 23-25

The Ninth Annual Edwardian Ball Weekend

The Regency Center

1290 Sutter Street

San Francisco

www.edwardianball.com

\$80

A Gorey-inspired weekend of Edwardian dance
and performance.

Saturday, January 24

The Phenomenauts

Slim's

333 11th Street

San Francisco

9 p.m.

\$13

Tuesday, January 27

Wicked

Orpheum Theater

1192 Makret Street

San Francisco

www.shnsf.com

Check website for tickets and showtimes.

Thursday, February 12

Thrillville's Voodoo Valentine's Show

El Cerrito Speakeasy

10070 San Pablo Avenue

El Cerrito

www.thrillville.net

9:15 p.m.

\$9

Sugar Hill and Her Zombie Hit Men, plus a live
act TBA.

Saturday-Sunday, February 14-15

AOD 2009

Cathedral Hill Hotel

1101 Van Ness Ave

San Francisco

www.aodsf.org

\$25 until November 30

Animation on Display (AOD) is a San
Francisco-based convention that celebrates the
animated arts from around the world in all
media. Details TBA.

Friday-Sunday, February 13-16

DunDraCon

San Ramon Marriott

2600 Bishop Dr.

San Ramon

www.dundracon.com

\$40

Gaming convention.

Friday, February 27-Sunday, March 1

Potlatch 18

The Domain Hotel

Sunnyvale

www.potlatch-sf.org

\$55 until February 14

Literary convention, with panel discussions,
writer's workshops, consuite. Books of Honor
for 2009 are *Always Coming Home*, by Ursula
K. Le Guin and *Growing Up Weightless* by
John M. Ford.

Friday, February 27-Sunday, March 1

Wondercon

Moscone Center South

San Francisco

www.comic-con.org/wc

Details TBA

Friday-Sunday, April 3-5

Contact 25

NASA Ames Research Center

Mountain View

\$175

www.contact-conference.com/2009

Interdisciplinary gathering of scientists, artists and writers. Details TBA.

Thursday, April 9

Thrillville's 12th Anniversary Show

El Cerrito Speakeasy

10070 San Pablo Avenue

El Cerrito

www.thrillville.net

9:15 p.m.

\$12

Plan 9 From Outer Space, Re-Animator, plus a live act TBA.

Friday-Sunday, May 1-2

Robogames

Fort Mason Center

San

\$20

Details TBA, dates tentative.

Tuesday, May 22-Sunday, July 5

Spamalot

Golden Gate Theater

1182 Market Street

San Francisco

www.shnsf.com

Check website for tickets and showtimes.

Friday-Tuesday, July 17-21

Azcatraz, A Harry Potter convention

Park 55 Hotel

55 Cyril Magnin Street

San Francisco

www.hp2009.org

\$145 through February 28th.

Friday-Saturday, September 25-26

From the Land Beyond

Scottish Rite Center

6151 H Street

Sacramento

www.sacramentocomics.com

Details TBA

Thursday, October 29-Sunday, November 1

World Fantasy Convention

The Fairmont Hotel

170 South Market Street

San Jose

\$100 until November 30 (extended)

The World Fantasy Convention is a professional networking event that regularly attracts several hundred of the top authors in the field every year. It is the home of the World Fantasy Awards and this year will be celebrating Edgar Allen Poe's 200th birthday.

Ongoing:

Daily

San Francisco Ghost Hunt Walking Tour

Begins: Queen Anne Hotel

1590 Sutter at Octavia

San Francisco

www.sfghosthunt.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

Coco's

1206 Oakmead Parkway

Sunnyvale

www.basfa.org

8 p.m.

Free

Mondays

Dukefish

Jake's of Sunnyvale

174 E. Fremont Avenue

Sunnyvale

8 p.m.

Group meets weekly to play German-style strategy board games such as Settlers of Catan, Carcasson and other games, plus an occasional game of bridge breaks out. Meet up at 8:00 p.m., figure out who wants to play what, and typically start playing games no later than 8:30 p.m.

Mondays and Wednesdays

Silicon Valley Boardgamers

Mountain View Community Center

201 S. Rengstorff Avenue

Mountain View

www.davekohr.users.sonic.net/svb/

6:30 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.

Tuesdays

MGI Boffers & Outdoor Games

Codornices Park

1201 Euclid Ave

Berkeley

mgisciaf.angelfire.com

groups.yahoo.com/group/MGIFamilyclub/

Free

1:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.

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

Wednesdays

Fanboy Planet Podcast

Illusive Comics and Games

2725 El Camino Real, Suite 105

Santa Clara

6 p.m.

Free

Live from Illusive Comics and Games, it's the Fanboy Planet Podcast with your host, Derek McCaw.

Wednesdays and Saturdays

Hayward Collectibles Show

22300 Hathaway Ave (rear bldg)

Hayward

www.toysandbaseballcards.com

Wednesdays 3 p.m.-8 p.m. and Saturdays 10 a.m.-5 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.

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.

East Bay Star Wars Club
Central Perk
10086 San Pablo Ave.
El Cerrito
510-558-7375
www.ebstarwars.com
Meets the second Friday of every month at 7:30 p.m.

East Bay Steampunk
Various locations (see website for details)
www.steamfaire.com
6 p.m.–8 p.m.
Free
Steampunk fans meet up on the third Friday of

the month

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.

The Gay Men's Book Club
Borderlands Books
866 Valencia
San Francisco
Free
5:00 p.m.
Please contact Chris, the group leader, at cobalt555@earthlink.net for more information.

Legion of Rassilon
Giovanni's Pizza
1127 N Lawrence Expy
Sunnyvale
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.

MGI Family Board Game Night
Its Your Move
4920 Telegraph Ave
Oakland
mgisciaf.angelfire.com
groups.yahoo.com/group/MGIFamilyclub/
Free
5 p.m-8:30 p.m
Every 3rd & 4th Fridays

Micro Gods, Inc.
Berkeley Public Library, West Branch
1125 University Ave
Berkeley
mgisciaf.angelfire.com
groups.yahoo.com/group/MGIFamilyClub/
Free
2:30 p.m-5:30 p.m
Family Club for fans of Science Fiction, Fantasy, Movie, Anime & Manga. Meets every 3rd Saturday, please check Yahoo group for updates.

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.

Other Realms Book Club

Books, Inc.
1375 Burlingame Ave.
Burlingame
Free
www.booksinc.net
6:30 p.m.
Meets the 4th Wednesday of the Month.

Science Fiction and Fantasy Book Club
Borderlands Books
866 Valencia
San Francisco
6:00 p.m.
Free
The Please contact Jude at
jfeldman@borderlands-books.com for more
information.

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
groups.yahoo.com/group/scifisantarosa/
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.

South Bay Steampunk
Various locations (see website for details)
www.steamfaire.com
6 p.m. – 8 p.m.
Free
Steampunk fans meet up on the second
Thursday 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.

USS Northern Lights
Contact firstjedi2000@yahoo.com for location.
www.geocities.com/Area51/Cavern/4096/
7 p.m.
Free
The 'Lights is a chapter of Starfleet
International and a swell group of science
fiction fans.
We do more than Trek. Usually meets the
second Friday of the month, with social event
TBD.

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.