

Feature



Virtual Postcards From WorldCon Renovation *Jeanette Peters*

A veteran costumer and first-time WorldCon attendee files a series of personal highlights and reflections directly from the convention.

Wednesday, Aug. 17

My first impression was, hey everyone from the San Francisco Bay area is here! The O'Hallorans, the Pettingers, Suford Lewis, Carole Parker, and Debbie & Rick Bretschneider. We encountered all of them between check in early afternoon and the 6:00 close of the art show and dealers room. I chatted with an artist couple from Colorado who met while attending the San Francisco Art Institute – that makes them Bay Area too!

World Con is very book oriented. The first day I saw only about 10 people in costume out of hundreds packing the panels and presentations, and standing in line for autographs. We didn't costume the first day either, having left home in Rohnert Park, California



Masquerader in Na'vi makeup from Avitar. Photo by Lincoln Peters

at 5:30am, we arrived a little bit worn around the edges.

The dealer room was so big that hubby Sam and I spent an hour in there without seeing each other! He was lost in the booksellers booths, and I was counting out how much new costume goodness I could pack out of there without breaking the bank or the car's load bearing capacity.

Since there were so few people in costume, I will send pictures tomorrow. I'm going to soak my tootsies in some hot water and head back in the morning!

Thursday, Aug. 18

More costumes in the hall today but still not as many as we'd see at a BayCon. I met people from Utah and Oregon, and heard a few Brit and Aussie accents here and there but mostly it seemed as if Californians were the major constituents.



One of the proprietors of "Damsels in This Dress." Photo by Lincoln Peters.

First panel of the day was Make-up effects. Hey, all it takes for cool zombie make-up is some spirit gum, torn crumpled kleenex tissue, ground up oatmeal or corn flakes, and when you've pressed it down then slice open and fray the edges to look like a wound and apply the color make up to make it really awful and disgusting! We got a great website for buying supplies:

<http://graftobianmakeupcatalog.com>.

A panel on future fashion and wearable art veered off topic a bit and went into how what you wear influences the people around you. The panel discussed how William Gibson's novel Zero History uses fashion to solve it's mystery plot. New trends in Hipster style in Britain are dazzle make-up meant to confound the CCTVs facial recognitions software, and tactical accessories - pens that convert to a knife (ah remember sword canes?). Gail Carriger has a blog called Retro Rack, and she really knows her retro style - she was wearing the sharpest little red 50's dress with matching red cocktail hat, white shoes and gloves.

Last panel was Steampunk your props. Let me just give you the great websites for supplies and you'll know what to do with them. Google these: Steampunk Emporium, Restoration Hardware, Vintage Jewelry Supplies, Electrique Boutique, and Wild

West Mercantile. Also check out model railroad stores, automotive supplies for metallic paint. Ladies, Payless Shoes has an Oxford Heel in stock that could be painted and tricked up!

Friday, Aug. 19

Today is Masquerade Day! More costumes in the hall, but nowhere approaching even 10% of the crowd. My first panel was The Continuing Popularity of Jane Austen. Not about the clothing but for those who have read everything she wrote, a few titles to search out, The Unexpected Miss Bennett, Janeites by Rudyard Kipling, and Jane Austen's Letters to her Sister.

I went to another non-costume panel called Drawing for Illustration. We practiced sketching from an idea, and I exercised the other half of my brain for a while.

The panel on Fitting Your Costume to your Body was at another site and I almost didn't find it. We talked about good books. The HOAX body type system was recommended. Threads Magazine has had a series of articles on stitches, some of which are used in fine tailoring, so check out the library for past issues. Something called Zeuz lining was raved about, but I'm not



SIW members Bryan Little and Mette Hedin tie the -- tentacle? Photo by Kathe Gust.

sure of the spelling, have you heard of it? Simplicity's new steampunk pattern came up in the discussion, and one of the attendees happened to have a half finished one in her tote! The pattern is fairly easy but the sleeves are a bit tight and need fixing. The moderator said she's seen it done with Leg O' Mutton sleeves quite effectively.

The Masquerade was amazing! Not only excellent entries, but Chris Garcia (I did not know he is an ordained minister) did an impromptu wedding on stage for Bryan and Mette!!!! In costume! "You may now tentacle the bride" Never has the time between the show and the awards been so delightfully filled. Of course, their entry won multiple awards.

Saturday, Aug. 20

I started the day in a great Cloaks and Robes presentation. Kevin Roche gave a wonderful suggestion: use a shirt pattern that fits your neck and shoulders to make a yoke for your cloak. Then it will lay flat around your shoulders and won't choke you from the weight of the fabric. Anne Davenport recommended using the abundant fabric to put in pockets both inside and out, then showed her Jedi robe with it's deep pocket to hold a water bottle (which was also perfect for storing the rather awkwardly

shaped convention program). To make your cloak billow when you move, use a lightweight fabric and trim the edges with feathers to catch the air and pull the fabric up and around you. A good use for old broken necklace chains is to sew them into the hem of your cloak when you want it to swing and fall straight. Hoods are difficult, but the Kinsale cloak pattern has an option for a button on hood that might be a useful solution.

In between panels I admired the shoes a lady was wearing with her Girl Guide costume. She said they were "Skechers" and were ridiculously comfortable. Wow! Made a note of that!

I popped into George R.R. Martin's presentation on adaptation of books to film, but he was showing a lot of clips from his HBO film Game of Thrones. The graphic violence was a bit nauseating and I sneaked out the back to catch the second half of an author reading.

Last panel was a presentation on underwear in speculative fiction, a surprisingly erudite discussion on something that makes you want to giggle. However, the uses of underwear to define character, advance the plot, and yes titillate the audience are limitless. From the "strong



SF Bay Area locals Chris Erickson and Jean Martin. Photo by Lincoln Peters.

man" trunks that inspired Superman's costume, to the corset worn outside in Wonder Woman's costume, underwear is in front of us even when we don't realize it.

This is the night of the Hugo Awards! We spent some time in the pool and hot tub first and then got in the very long line. I personally find award ceremonies a little tedious, but how could I not be there to see Connie Willis get the Hugo for her epic *Blackout* and *All Clear*? Chris Garcia won the Hugo for his Fanzine *The Drink Tank* and nearly (no actually) had a meltdown right on stage. *Girl Genius* won for graphic novel, their third Hugo, and Phil Foglio announced they would be taking themselves out of consideration next year to give others



Author Connie Willis won a Hugo for *Blackout* and *All Clear*. Photo by Kathe Gust.



Drink Tank e-zine editor Chris Garcia won a Hugo! Photo by Andy Trembly.

a chance. Nicely done. After the ceremony, Kaja let me touch the Hugo. It is a lovely piece and the base this year was done in fused glass that made it look as if the rocket has landed on one of the ice moons of Saturn.



Girl Genius creators Phil & Kaya Foglio, retire from Hugo competition. Photo by Kathe Gust.

Sunday, Aug. 21

We check out of the hotel in an hour. The panel on Storing and Transporting Costumes will come, alas, too late. We'll take one last look at the dealer room - truly drool-worthy stuff - and hit the road to avoid that beastly Sacramento to San Francisco Sunday afternoon traffic. Worldcon is wonderful and exhausting and has more to do than you can possibly accomplish, even with Hermione's time turner. We had a great time, and would do it again given half a chance.



Jeanette Peters reports from her throne at WorldCon. Photo by Lincoln Peters.

Jeanette Peters first began costuming in the science fiction and fantasy genres, but has recently branched out to historical. She has competed or assisted backstage at costume competitions and is an enthusiastic hall costumer.