

Friday, Aug. 3, 2001

Dragon Con 2001: The event that almost didn't happen. Tsunami fell down the stairs Wednesday, and almost didn't come. I nearly changed my mind except that I had to pay for my hotel room since I was now inside the 72-hour period. So it's off to The Con as usual.

I'm glad I'm going though. I arrive in time to see Brian and Ian, plus Donna and Jennifer. We have some fun and they sing karaoke. I hate karaoke, but I go and don't complain much. This because Brian's rendition of "What a Wonderful World" brings down the house. The black singers at the next table are shocked when they look up.

"I thought someone was playin' a radio!" one of them says. They were floored by the pasty face and dark sunglasses that was belting out Satchmo on stage. It was nearly worth the drive just for that.

Of course, that they talked me into going out meant I didn't get home until well after 2 a.m. This was not in my plan given that I need to get up early. Tsunami was supposed to arrive tonight but he decided to wait until early in the morning and go straight to the hotel or meet me here. This would give him more time to rest his injured foot.

Saturday, Aug. 4, 2001

### **Daytime ...**

On Saturday morning I awoke early. Tsunami really did get up and leave Tallahassee at 3:30 a.m. So by 8:30 I was showered and ready to go. I planned to go get a hot brown at the Dwarf House in Hapeville (the original Chick-fil-A). Tsunami decided to go with me and get coffee. Mmm ... hot brown. If I wasn't going to be walking so much that day I'd have never gotten it.

I arrived at The Con at 10 a.m. to pick up my pass. I went straight to the Netherworld booth and Tsunami went to get in line. I had mine in five minutes; it took him 2.5 hours. By the time I went to find him the line had grown by two floors. Thank goodness for cell phones.

I spent the morning at the Netherworld booth, with my monster friends. Then, while in the dealer rooms, a big monster came up to me and whispered my name. It turned out to be my friend Roy the make-up artist and sculptor. Once I get moved into my new place, I'll show you guys the doll he made of me. It's so cute (not gross, I swear). Sabrina was with him and as it turns out they'd come down there to look for me.

Just as we were talking, Radio Boy appeared out of the crowd and said hello. Radio Boy is actually Tim, a friend of mine who does promotions for 96 Rock and some of the other Atlanta radio stations. He used to take me to all kinds of cool stuff when I lived there. I

tried to catch up to him after I set a time to meet Roy, but he'd been swept away by the crowd. Oh well, there's still email.

My track choices had been determined for the day:

X-Files Trivia Contest

Ghosts and Ghouls and Wraiths, Oh My!

Twin Peaks: A Retrospective

Hobbit Madness

Whose Line Is It Anyway? That 70s Sci-Fi Show

High Tea at a Low Table

I also did a panel with a television executive and book editor. I learned a lot from her. Her name was Ginger Buchanan and her credits were long and impressive in my book. Her entire bio isn't on the site though for some reason.

I had to try hard to resist living in one of the movie screening rooms that was showing all the Planet of the Apes movies in sequence. But Roy and I agreed to meet at That 70s Sci-Fi Show. It hadn't even started when we decided to leave. We thought it better to hang out and talk since as it turned out he had to leave at 6 p.m. He was making a monster for a movie being filmed in ATL. It was due Wednesday but he ended up having to hold it for one more day because the paint wasn't dry. Plus, he was doing the make-up for the Hall Costume Contest Sunday night. Netherworld had entered and of course they ended up winning.

While he was there though, we decided to take Stacy and Mark over to see the Star Wars Costume Contest. Our friend Jane was in it. She'd make herself a wookiee costume hair by hair. She ended up winning, which was cool, she deserved it. But she was too hot to stay and claim her prize so she'd find out later.

The costume I would've chosen for the entire weekend was the 6'5" black man who was walking around in a short pink tutu with hoops that made it stick out. His screaming tee read "Guns are fun, kill someone." I don't think I ever got a good shot of him, but I'm sure there's one on the Web site. He was too bizarre.

We ran into Billy and Georgianna on the way back from the Star Wars thing. I didn't even recognize Georgianna as I asked her to stop so I could take her picture. It wasn't until I saw Billy ... that was kinda funny. He asked me to meet him in the booth in half an hour and to dress a little. I did. Hmmm ...

### **Info:**

If I had finished this faster you could have seen all the cool stuff at The Con. To view the Dragon Con Web site at this point is moot, because they've already started adding stuff for 2002. You can order your tickets in advance for just \$40 for all four days. Trust me, it's a deal. And I'm willing to share a hotel room if anyone wants to pitch in.

To see the guest list from 2001 while I was there, you can visit this link:

<http://www.dragoncon.org/people/index.html>

There are also a ton of photo groupings from last year and this year. Those are always fun to look at. I will be brining my own set to work this week hopefully. But feel free to browse this treasure trove of oddities in the meantime: <http://www.dragoncon.org/links.html> (you have to scroll down a little to see the photo files)

Saturday, Aug. 4, 2001

### **The Awards Dinner ...**

The Awards Dinner was an unexpected surprise. That was why Billy had wanted me to meet him. I had never been before, but Billy's ex was at a show performing with Danger Woman so he took me as his date. It was amazing. Everyone who was anyone was there — everyone who was anyone at The Con anyway. Though I'm not hard core enough to know all the names nor all the faces, it was still way cool. And I had a huge reason to want to be there anyway ... Alice Cooper.

Yes, Alice was going to receive two awards that night. Here's the scoop on the man who just won a lifetime achievement award for his contribution to horror, not to mention he's one of the greatest songwriters and performers of all time:

“The International Horror Guild has named pioneer shock-rock performer Alice Cooper as this year's Living Legend Award winner. He is the first performer to be so honored. IHG Living Legends are individuals who have made a meritorious and notable contribution and/or have substantially influenced the field of horror/dark fantasy. Previous recipients, all from the literary field, include Ray Bradbury, Clive Barker, Hugh B. Cave, Edward W. Bryant, Richard Matheson and Harlan Ellison.”

But that wasn't the only cool thing about the dinner. The master of ceremonies was Andy Hallett, the friendly green "host" from the WB's series "Angel." Now, I don't watch "Angel" but the guy was gorgeous, funny, famous, and could sing his hiney off. I was totally impressed.

Don Bluth also took home an award. He also had a booth in one of the dealer rooms so I saw him all weekend. He is one of the most famous animators ever. According to his bio, he's also a descendant of Pocahontas. Cool, huh? My favorite accomplishment of his is "Titan A.E." His entire bio can be found here: <http://www.dragoncon.org/people/bluthd.html>

Also sitting among us at the dinner were tons of famous actors and actresses, writers, animators, designers, etc. It was so amazing. I was a little disappointed when as we were seated they offered to seat us with some "Babylon 5" people and Billy said no. Since he was on the board he said the real people should take those seats. He'd rather sit with the mundanes as he so notably put it. Well, first I was offended (I ain't no mundane, I

insisted) then I was just bored. I don't watch "Babylon 5" though so I didn't care about that.

A few notables who were milling about were John Rhys-Davies, Jeffrey Combs (we'd see him later), Julius Schwartz, and others. You can see the complete list on the Web site if you're interested. (I noted the link earlier) There's also a famous actress that you've seen on "Babylon 5" and in a ton of other movies. I ran into her a lot during the course of the evening.

### **Later ...**

After the dinner things got really bizarre. I met up with Tsunami for a short while, but he couldn't make up his mind what he wanted to do. Finally, he opted for the anime room, which was screening stuff all night. I told him to call me later, and I headed for the bar. I bought myself one Gummi Bear, then went and sat down to listen to the drum circle. They always play outside near the pool after 10 p.m. There was quite a crowd gathered.

As I sat down at a comfy place near the pool, people Quai-Gon (the Jedi) came and joined me. Then one of the gay fandom's ranks joined us. They were both very cool and we talked for a long time. Soon, a "lame-ass vampire" as he described himself, came and sat next to me. He was a travel agent from Nashville. He was very cool. Then he took off for the Wolf Bane party at Planet Hollywood and I called Billy.

"Come on up," he says. "Georgianna will meet you on the 17<sup>th</sup> floor."

"OK, I'm on my way," I reply. Now I'm a little nervous though because I'm wearing jeans and a fitted t-shirt; not exactly costumish or sexy. Oh, and I was carrying a backpack.. If it wasn't for my location, my geekness would've been showing. ☺

Whatever, I met G and we headed for the VIP room. Yes, the VIP room. Upon arrival we found ourselves surrounded by WWF wrestlers, Tom Savini, Jeffrey Combs, and lots of other random famous folks. The drinks were free, the view was great, and there were fascinating conversations to be had everywhere.

Billy and Sabrina showed up a little while later. Sabrina is married to a rock star, heavy metal guy who travels everywhere and hates stuff like Dragon Con. Sabrina works at the house with me; she's been there since it opened. She can most often be found inside the 3-D house, which is one of the coolest things ever to be created. I go through that one a lot when I'm working. Billy and Georgianna took off for a presentation about the Web, but Sabrina and I stayed for a while, well until they shut the room down at 1:30 a.m. We met a pimp daddy (Michael) who had a great costume and looked just like Bruce Willis. Gorgeous!

Jeffrey Combs was hanging out in the smoking room and kept talking to us when we walked by. He was flanked by his agent and the agent's girlfriend for the whole night.

But that didn't stop him making time with the likes of us. That was kinda neat. We also met some cute software guys that almost seemed glam or 90210ish. They were a trip.

I had met the software guys earlier on the smoking balcony. While we were talking, Lt. Boomer from "Battlestar Galactica" came out and had a smokey treat. Dirk Benedict and the guy who played Apollo were also at the event somewhere. I'd seen Dirk, but I hadn't seen Apollo since last year.

Sabrina and I met other people on the balcony too. One guy was a dead ringer for Francis Ford Coppola (in the "Hearts of Darkness Days"). He and his wife were from Rhode Island and they were a TRIP. The funniest thing happened here though. We were talking about some of the costumes at The Con, and I told the story about the whitely painted guy with the black heavy metal wig and the vinyl loincloth.

"I mean, what was that guy thinking!" I exclaimed.

At this Sabrina falls into me (thank goodness I wasn't on the balcony side) and starts laughing. "Oh Amanda, oh Amanda, you're not gonna ... ha ha ha ha." She couldn't stop, she was nearly hysterical.

My eyes got wide and I'm like, "Oh no, what? Don't tell me I know him."

She nodded through her tears of laughter.

"Oh god, who is it?" I asked hesitantly.

"Anthony!" she managed to squeak between guffaws.

Anthony is a friend of ours from the house. He is a freak and a half who makes bad movies, has an open marriage, and plays the scariest redneck I've ever seen. He's a really nice guy, but did I already mention the word "freak"?

Well Francis and his wife thought this was funny, watching my surprise and all. If you'd like to see the photograph, let me know and I'll send you a copy once I scan it in. You won't believe it. Dear god.

By the way, if you want to see a photo of Sabrina in one of her winning costumes, go here: <http://dawnsdancewithdeath.tripod.com/carrie.html>

### **Soon after ...**

Eventually, the party was over and we all tried to figure out which party to go to next. Jeffrey was trying to hang, you could tell, but he was being led. I was finally approached by a man with a shaved head who simply whispered, "1015." I nodded and walked away. I told Jeffrey's agent that "The Swiss would be in 1015," by this time it was an inside joke between us. Tee hee.

Room 1015 was the Thrills, Nils, and Chills party. Complete with a full bar, DJ, suite of rooms, and a ton of boys (Sabrina and I were one of four women when we arrived). We got the dance floor going and the shaven-headed man kept it up. He and I were having a battle of the musically trivial minds and I was winning. It was a blast.

Sabrina kept hanging on me though, she said better her than all those geeks. It was too funny ... until we left the room. Billy and Georgianna showed up with a few more guys and the five of us headed downstairs, but Sabrina arm-in-arm with me gave some folks the wrong impression. I'll leave it at that. Too weird to be in a place like that with boys with no social skills. Durn!

We decided to go check out the dance downstairs. It goes from 1 a.m. until 5 a.m. I'd already missed Cruxshadows and Godhead was Sunday so no more bands. But by this time it was after 3 a.m. In Atlanta liquor is served until 4 a.m., but only 3 on Saturdays (since it's technically Sunday) so I decided to head back to the room and see what happened to Tsunami. I finally got to sleep at about 4 a.m. *Zzzzz ...*

### Sunday, Sept. 2, 2002

I awaken early and get ready for brunch. I'm wiped from two nights with no sleep and the weird pink drink the wrestler had made for me in the VIP room. My stomach's a little trembly so I decide to forego food until I get there.

Upon arrival, Bridget is there. She has to inform me that Steve and Cathy won't be coming. They'd discovered a leak in their basement that morning and were having a flood. What a drag! Her parents were due in at 3 p.m.

The Buckhead Diner is Elton John's favorite restaurant. It's also a favorite of mine. I hadn't been there since I left ATL, and I was surprised to see a brand new menu. They hadn't changed the menu for as long as I was going there, so often I opted for specials. This new menu, however, was to die for. It was amazing.

I ordered my usual homemade chips with melted Maytag bleu cheese and a \$4 chocolate malt (the best anywhere). The new menu offered two things I must go back and try. They were:

- Creamy tomato white cheddar cheese soup with white truffle oil and cheese popcorn
- Tupelo honey crème brulee

I can hardly WAIT to try these. As it was I had the beef tenderloin eggs benedict which featured (from top to bottom) onion straws, wild mushroom hollandaise, two poached eggs, a 6 oz. beef tenderloin, and fried green tomatoes done in a hearty cornmeal so it was nearly as solid as bread. It was absolutely fabulous. Bridget had the crabmeat fritata and we were both miserable and ecstatic by the time the meal was devoured.

Our waiter was also a treat. He brought Bridget a black linen napkin so she didn't get white lint on her black outfit. He noticed that I was left-handed based on where I placed my drinks. Bridget asked how he figured it out since we hadn't eaten anything yet, so how could he know which hand I used. It was too cool. I was certainly impressed with the service, even more so than I had been for the past six years.

### **Stuffed ...**

After we left, I went back to The Con to drop off my pass. I was full and sleepy, and I had to make one more stop at the dealer tables to buy my Zero necklace. Zero is the dog from "Nightmare Before X-mas." It's a really cute necklace. ☺

I also considered going to Forensic Pathology 201. I'd done Forensic Pathology 101 for the past two years, but had never made it to this one. Dr. Kris Sperry is a local forensic pathologist who lives in Tucker but gets called in on cases all over the country. He does this bizarre presentation each year featuring tons of slides and a "Guess how this one died?" game. There are classics that return each year such as the woman who had her head kicked off and the guy who asphyxiated himself wearing his sister's prom dress. One woman was beheaded with a pair of scissors by an ex-boyfriend. I couldn't eat pizza for a week after that one. But Dr. Sperry is so funny. He even brings his teen-aged daughters sometimes. They're surprisingly normal.

But I decided to pass on the exercise in gruesomeness, so I got on the road and headed back to JAX. I was going to miss the hall Costume Contest, that's the big one. Netherworld was entering. I would find out Monday that they won — and I missed it!

Well, I had bigger fish to fry. Kelly and Mark were in town and had just gotten engaged. I felt like it was the right thing to do to come and see them. Brian nor I had seen them in two years, so we both came down. Meisha and John Jones went with me, while Mark, Kelly, Jonathan, Brian, Ian, another Mark, and Jim were already there. It was lots of fun.

We met at Frankie's at the beach. Unbeknownst to me it was a karaoke bar. What're these people, obsessed?

This time, I paid homage to Alice and got up there and embarrassed myself.

But we won't talk about that ...

**THE END**