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The Daily Dragon

Dragon Con 2024

An Alien, Yardsticks, and Nerds by Debbie Yutko



Guests from the hit show *Resident Alien* landed in the Marriott Atrium Ballroom on Sunday at 1PM. Meredith Garretson, Sara Tomko, Alan Tudyk, and Alice Wetterlund joined moderator Mike Crugnola for the panel, "Resident Alien Guests: Visitors from...Beyond" to share their experiences both on and off the set. Of the four panelists, only Tudyk has been to Dragon Con before. "This is amazing," Wetterlund said of the con, "the greatest fans on earth!" All four guests admitted to also being nerdy fans. Garretson, Tomko, and Wetterlund got to meet Jonathan Frakes here. According to Garretson, they were so excited they were in tears. "I'm such a *Trek* fan," she said.

What is Tudyk nerdy about? *Yardsticks*. When Tomko asked why *Yardsticks*, Tudyk said because they used to be advertising tools and are remnants of businesses that closed long ago. They often had puns on them, and one even listed a business as an unlikely combination of funeral home/furniture sales. "I have over a thousand," he said of his collec-

tion. Tomko turned to him incredulously and said, "I'm learning a lot about you." After which Wetterlund informed him that her mom has a yardstick from Jimmy Carter's home and Tudyk can have it... for the right price.

When asked how their *Resident Alien* characters feel about love, Tudyk said Harry both loves it and thinks it's "the worst thing ever." Tomko sees Asha as slowly learning how to love herself. Wetterlund talked about Darcy being able to accept love but needing to learn how to give love because it isn't natural for her. Garretson noted that Kate resents love at first because it took her to this small town, away from her own job and life, but she's slowly learning to make deeper connections with others.

Would they ever consider filming a musical episode? They were heartily in favor. In fact, Tomko has pitched the idea to producer Chris Sheridan, but he's concerned that viewers might not "respect" it. Wetterlund whipped out her phone and filmed the audience's cheering approval of a musical episode she

plans to show to Sheridan later. Tudyk said he'd like to sing an old Jerry Lewis song and proceeded to imitate the comedian's voice while singing, "something awful... I can't carry a tune." With that comic performance, maybe Sheridan will reconsider.

If they ever decided to cosplay, who would they be? Wetterlund would like to wear a signing-booth outfit with tiny headshots on it so she could go around and enjoy the con. Tudyk would be a zombie with "a lot of mushrooms on my face and serious skin tags." Tomko thought she'd be either someone from *Twin Peaks* or *Chewbacca*. The furry suit would be hot, she realized, so maybe she'd just wear the head.

They loved interacting with fans, seeing cosplay of their characters for the first time, and hearing how much fans love their characters and show. They hope to be invited to Dragon Con again, a sentiment their fans returned with boisterous approval.

Read the full article on the Daily Dragon website!

Hobbit Love by Kevin Shirley



The Marriott Atrium Ballroom was electric Saturday afternoon at Dragon Con as the High Fantasy track welcomed Billy Boyd, Dominic Monaghan, and Elijah Wood for an hour of storytelling and reflection. Kevin Bachelder moderated the conversation and questions from the audience.

These actors worked together on *The Lord of the Rings* over twenty years ago, and Bachelder began by asking the panel to reflect upon the passage of time and what that means for their perspective on the films. Wood pointed out that it had been twenty-five years since they began shooting the films. Monaghan referred to his life in "pre" and "post" Rings terms.

Boyd added another dimension to the consideration of the films: their role as a morality tale. Here Boyd focused on the nature of Hobbits. In them he saw friends who just wanted to help. They wanted to save the Shire and get back home to it. Perhaps it was a kind of

naïve innocence, but the hobbits were determined to "just do the right thing." He found this particularly true of his own character. Merry was determined to "carry on"; to put one step in front of the other until he finally fell on the field of battle at Pelennor Fields.

When asked about the bond among the cast, Boyd gave the credit to Peter Jackson for his casting decisions. Jackson knew he was asking actors to commit years to this endeavor, and as such needed people who would be happy and content to be in New Zealand. They all had to be committed to the work, and they were. Four years of living and working together created a bond forged in the crucible of a unique, intense experience. Such bonds often transcend even those of blood and kinship.

Reflecting on co-writing and performing "The Last Goodbye," Boyd noted that it was as much about the end of the cast's time together as anything else.

He was in New Zealand working with Fran Walsh when he wrote it. His castmates weren't with him. He wrote much of the song sitting in one of the local pubs he and his cast mates used to frequent. It is, he declared, "a song of farewell, a goodbye to everyone." Beyond the serious reflections,

there were many moments of laughter as the actors played off one another. Dragon Con received a special treat when Boyd shared, he believed for the first time ever, the tale of the "poo specialist" who failed to properly secure his trailer's gray water tank (what Boyd referred to as the "bucket") before attempting to empty it. He failed, in Boyd's words, to "lock what should have been locked." The result was a fire hose effect that covered everyone! "It looked like a Chocolate cake had been demolished in front of them," Boyd declared. Monaghan interjected that Boyd's scream was so loud and of such intensity he thought that the Balrog scene was being shot. When the panelists realized that Boyd had never shared the "poo" story at a convention before, Boyd proudly declared "Dragon Con.... you're welcome!"

Read the full article on the Daily Dragon website!

Herding Cats: Next Gen to Picard

by Kevin Shirley

The Trek track took over the Marriott Atrium Ballroom Saturday morning to host a Q&A panel of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and *Star Trek: Picard* stars. Garrett Wang, track director and panel moderator, oversaw Jonathan Frakes, Gates McFadden, Brent Spiner, and John De Lancie, in an hour of conversation that spanned far and wide across the world of *Star Trek*.

In response to a question early in the session, McFadden got to reflect on her directorial debut in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. The last of the castmates to direct an episode, McFadden helmed "Genesis," the 19th episode of the sev-

enth season. A make-up heavy episode, she was quick to praise the work of Michael Westmore, who wanted to nominate the episode for an Emmy in the make-up category. She also noted the outstanding acting of and Frakes and now deceased Patty Yasutake (nurse Alyssa Ogawa). She enjoyed the detail work involved in the creative process, having an opportunity to use things on set that had never been used before.

It's well known that Frakes turned his directing opportunities on *Star Trek: The Next Generation* into an ongoing successful career as a director. He was asked what it was like to direct the live

action/animation crossover episode of *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds* ("Those Old Scientists") in which characters from the animated series *Star Trek: Lower Decks* travel back in time. Tawny Newsome and Jack Quaid played their animated characters in the episode. Directing the episode was, according to Frakes, like "herding cats!" He praised Newsome and Quaid for their improvisational skill and Anson Mount's comedic ability. Frakes pointed out that in that episode the "laws changed."

Read the whole article on the Daily Dragon website!



2024 Dragon Award Winners

Best Science Fiction Novel: *Starter Villain* by John Scalzi

Best Fantasy Novel (Including Paranormal): *Iron Flame* by Rebecca Yarros

Best Young Adult / Middle Grade Novel: *Midnight at the Houdini* by Delilah S. Dawson

Best Alternate History Novel: *All the Dead Shall Weep* by Charlaine Harris

Best Horror Novel: *Black River Orchard* by Chuck Wendig

Best Illustrative Cover: *Of Jade and Dragons* by Kelly Chong Best Comic

Book or Graphic Novel: *Monstress* by Marjorie Liu, Sana Takeda

Best Science Fiction or Fantasy TV Series, TV or Internet: *Fallout*, Amazon Prime Video

Best Science Fiction or Fantasy Movie: *Dune: Part Two* by Denis Villeneuve

Best Digital Game: *Baldur's Gate 3*, Larian Studios

Best Tabletop Game: *D&D: The Deck of Many Things*, Wizards of the Coast

The Julie Award: John Cleese. The Julie was established in 1998 in honor of leg-

endary comics editor Julius Schwartz, and is given for universal achievement across multiple genres.

Eugie Foster Memorial Award for Short Fiction: "The Sound of Children Screaming" by Rachael K Jones. The Eugie Award, celebrating the best of short innovative fiction, is named for Nebula winner Eugie Foster.

Mike Resnick Memorial Award: "When I Was Your Age" by Sam Brown. For the best unpublished science fiction short story by a new author.

Before the Actors, There Was Mark Braught

by Jared Austin

Mark Braught, a professional illustrator, created the official images for Warner Brothers (WB)-approved Harry Potter merchandise. Before WB announced the actors, they needed illustrations to help with developing merchandise and for promotions for the first film. Braught created those illustrations. He spoke about his work on the "Illustrating Harry Potter: An Hour with Mark Braught" panel at 10AM on Sunday at the Marriott, Room A707 on the Young Adult Literature Track.

A professional freelance illustrator since 1984, Braught was chosen to create around 60 illustrations for WB to be used to create merchandise. Braught had to create one illustration per day. He drew chalk illustrations on poster-sized paper, getting constant feedback from both WB and JK Rowling herself. JK had final approval on all illustrations.

During that time, Braught would start at five or six in the morning and would have to be done by 11AM or 12PM so that he could package up the illustration, drive it to the airport, and put it on

a plane because that was all he could do back then. When the plane arrived in LA, he'd have a driver to pick it up and deliver it to the WB studios by ten that night.

He started his work creating turnarounds of the characters, meaning he'd draw the character from the front, side, and also behind. Braught created those turnarounds in black and white first, then added color, getting feedback throughout. Once he received approval for the illustrations, 3D statues of the characters were created to match the illustrations.

Knowing that filming was taking place for the first movie, Braught would ask for details, but WB wanted to keep all the actors names under wraps at the time. They sent him images of the characters in their pajamas, but their faces were blocked out.

A lot of companies signed on to do merchandise in coordination with the films, but they could only use illustrations from the book for their merchandise.

Read the full article on the Daily Dragon website!

Dooplers, Scrubbles, and Moopsies: Oh My!

by Elizabeth Caruso

On the eve of the Bell Riots, fans of *Star Trek: Lower Decks* were able to get an inside scoop on the animated sci-fi series at a cast panel hosted by Brian Richardson. Guests Eugene Cordero, the voice of Sam Rutherford, and Tawny Newsome, the voice of Beckett Mariner, shared tales from inside and out of the recording booth in the Friday panel at 4PM in the Marriott Imperial Ballroom.

The guests stated that they enjoy the show's progressive themes and genre-bending plots. Newsome, a lifelong Trekkie, was impressed by *Star Trek: Lower Deck's* integration into the greater *Star Trek* universe while maintaining a comedic tone. Cordero and Newsome teased the upcoming 5th season (and last on Paramount+), hinting at more juicy A-plots and wacky B-plots to come. Fan-favorite character Badgley is rumored to re-appear—our guests were dutifully mum on the details.

Newsome shared the origins of Mariner's Andorian girlfriend. Newsome improvised the line "Move, Jennifer!"

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for a scene where Mariner pushed past a background character. Showrunner Mike McMahan was charmed by Newsome's ad-lib and spun up a backstory for the new character, Jennifer Sh'reyan. McMahan thought that Mariner and Jennifer looked like a cute couple and created a romance subplot for the two. Cordero remarked that Rutherford's iconic "okey dokey" catchphrase emerged organically from a particularly energetic line read. McMahan was tickled by the delivery and began writing the catchphrase into future episode scripts. Both guests stressed that McMahan's involvement was not only a professional commitment but a labor of love.

Schedule Changes

The following previously confirmed guests are unfortunately not able to attend Dragon Con 2024: **Freema Agyeman, Chloe Bennet, Jack Coleman, Emilie de Ravin, Dan Jeanotte, Terry Matalas, Melissa Navia**