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EMBRACING THE CHAOS — RHODE ISLAND COMIC CON RIGHTS THE SHIP

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 by [Nicholas Iandolo](#)
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Once upon a Comic Con ... A Nick Iandolo Odyssey

Wow! What a difference a year makes! Rhode Island Comic Con (RICC) took their blows last year, licked their wounds, and got back into the goddamn fight!

And fought they did.

I won't sugar coat it. I saw a few things that were a bit awry but instead of shrinking from the inevitable mishaps that will always occur, the organizers of RICC 2015 rose to the task and fought back to make this year's con a resounding success.

I'm serious. I was there from beginning to end, had seen and talked to tons of people from fans to vendors, exhibitors to celebrities to artists and I'll tell you there were *very few unhappy people* this year. I won't say there weren't any but given the fact that there must have been **fifty thousand people or more** there this year, there were a lot of smiling faces – especially those in costume!

So I'm going to give you my post-con wrap up straight, and let my fellow pop-culture loving Comic Con going fans decide for themselves if I'm right not. Sit back and relax because with now three days of Rhode Island Comic Con to cover, this is gonna be a long one.

Day One — Gettin' It Together

First up, was to pick up my press badge. I got there at around 10AM on Friday morning. One of my expectations (and there were many) was a press junket that was supposed to begin about an hour later. There were going to be celebs from *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and *Power Rangers* among others.

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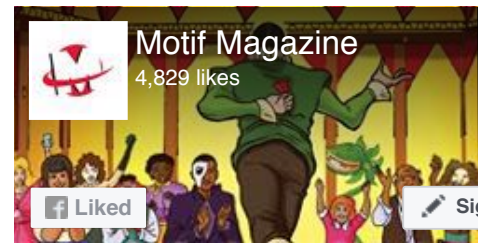
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Well, as soon as I picked up my badge I was told that the press junket was cancelled due to logistical issues. Okay, that put me off a smidge. In fact, there were a few instances where the press was getting put off a bit but I think that that had more to do with individual RICC volunteer staff than an overall policy towards the press – but I'll get to that later. The simple fact that my press badge got me into just about everything (including the afterparty Saturday night) was a huge improvement over last year.

Oh, and another awesome thing about my press badge was that it had a hologram of Harley Quinn on it to the envy of lots of fans and vendors who wanted to trade me for it. No way was I giving up my badge, but it was a great conversation starter.

The other thing that was a bummer, was finding out that *Carrie Fisher* wasn't going to be there because she was sick. I was so looking forward to meeting her, and with the new *Star Wars* movie coming out next month (that has her in it), I was worried that RICC's headliner guest no-show was going to dampen things a bit. Fortunately, I was wrong about that!

With no junket to go to, I decided to do my thing and go around and talk to people. Here's where *Day One* gets interesting...

I was very pleased when I first heard that RICC was going to add an extra day to the convention; furthermore, they were expanding into the **Dunkin' Donuts Center** (A.K.A. *The Dunk*) which was a capital idea in my book. Last year I wrote that there just wasn't enough space in the **Rhode Island Convention Center** to handle a growing-by-leaps-and-bounds Comic Con. There are just way too many fans out there, and the entire industry of pop-culture is so vast that you need more space and more time than you could ever imagine to pull off a convention of this magnitude (okay, I just tried to paraphrase Admiral Ackbar from *Return of the Jedi*)!

So I was down with The Dunk as an integral part of the con. In fact, the RICC organizers were using The Dunk as the main entry point for all the fans attending the convention, including The Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony with the Mayor of Providence later that day!

I wandered over into The Dunk's main arena floor and took a gander at a lot of vendors furiously setting up for the 3PM opening time.

The first person I talked to was Jerry Mendoza of The Wolf's Den (a collectables vendor). He was not happy. It turns out that having the vendors set up on top of the ice of the arena may not have been a good idea after all. Certainly, the ice was covered by huge plastic tiles but water was definitely seeping through the edges between them. "This is the stupidest idea!" Jerry tells me. "Someone is going to fall here—especially when the kids come running through! The water is ruining my merchandise!"

Other vendors on The Dunk's floor were voicing the same concerns.

However, by the end of the convention they seemed to be okay with the situation, placing their merchandise up on elevated platforms and such.

I don't think this was a showstopper by any stretch of the imagination. And I'm sure they'll figure out how to address this for next year.

Now what really surprised me was that the lower level periphery of The Dunk was being utilized. At first it seemed strange but now I realize that they were making sure that every bit of available usable space was being pressed into service.

This is where I met Andi O'Connor (www.andioconnor.net), a fantasy author from Pennsylvania. She was sitting at a table directly across from The Tumbler and the Bat Pod (Batman's rides from the movies *Batman Begins* and *The Dark Knight*).

She's got several books out including *Silevethiel*, which was named to *Kirkus Reviews' Best Books of 2013* and is the Best Indie Book Award 2015 winner for Sci-fi/Fantasy.

We got into a lengthy discussion about being an independent author versus a traditionally published author, traded war stories about agents and editors, and discussed how writing is more than just a way of life – it *is* life.

I asked her if she felt that being down here in the bowels of The Dunk was going to be a problem, she didn't seem too worried about it. The next day when I checked on her, she and her husband John were having a great time being there. "I sold a bunch of books so far, and the foot traffic by my table has been great!" She told me. The only question John had was who was doing the driving back to PA.

Moving right along, I went over to the Convention Center proper to see how the big room (the main exhibit hall) was getting along.

At this point it wasn't so big. In other words, only about half or two thirds (I can't be sure) of the space was being used for RICC. There was some kind of Navy convention going on as well, which was why I noticed several women in uniform walking around on my way in.

I come to learn later that there was a strategy being attempted this year with getting vendors set up. The RICC organizers were staggering the times when vendors and exhibitors could come in. Some were allowed in the day before, some during the day on Friday, and some later that evening (*Motif Magazine* being one of them). By the end of the night, the Navy was out and RICC had the whole Convention Center to itself.

The strategy was a good idea but it didn't go off without a hitch as a few vendors I talked to were wondering why they couldn't just get set up the day before, and some of them had pre-paid specific spots that were then reallocated to others.

Kate, a graphic artist, voiced her frustration about having to wait until 7PM to set up. "I'm losing a day's worth of business here!"

It was definitely chaos watching all of these vendors and exhibitors trying to get set up but when I checked on them later that day, they had pulled it off and everything looked great.

Like this massive superhero airbrushed banner that I watched being hung from the ceiling by two lifts and a team of guys – even though it was located nowhere near the artist who painted it!

This is what I mean about embracing the chaos.

Somewhere around here I got my first of a series of photo ops with a brilliant and gorgeous cosplayer named Serafina (www.serafinacosplay.com). I spotted her in an amazing Supergirl costume – the one from the new CBS TV series that premiered like two weeks ago.



At this point, it was time for The Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony. Yep! Something I've never really seen before at a Comic Con, so I figured this ought to be interesting.

Before I went in (thank you, magic of the press), I noticed the hugest line ever of fans waiting to get in. They went around the arena and all the way down the side streets!

This was a good sign. The debacle of last year did not deter the fans from coming back and then some.

In fact, I took a moment to speak with some fans in line. "We are very excited about being here this year; we only hope it's not a repeat of last year." Tory (in costume as a Pokemon character) and her boyfriend Mike told me.

But things were looking good, even the weather was cooperating in one of the most unseasonably warm and clear November weekends we've seen in a long while. A far cry from last year's Rainy Con!

And then I bopped in and found myself standing between a massive crowd of fans in the lobby and the Dark Lord of the Sith, Darth Vader himself, with his Stormtrooper entourage (plus R2-D2, Padme Amidala, and an eight-foot Incredible Hulk), all awaiting the Mayor of Providence, Mayor Jorge O. Elorza and his special guest, none other than the original TV Hulk himself, Mr. Lou Ferrigno.

"Good afternoon everybody. Now who's excited to get this Comic Con started?" The mayor began to a ton of cheers. "I am excited just as much. The City of Providence welcomes all of you. This is a very, very important day for this city; we've been waiting to get this going. Over the three years that Comic Con has been here in Providence, we have seen this event just continue to grow and grow and grow. And it adds to the vibrancy, it adds to the flavor, and it adds to the fun – right here in the city center. So I'm excited to welcome you once again. I can tell that *The Force* is strong with this crowd, and I am sure that every single year we're going to continue to grow because Providence is a place that welcomes this kind of show, these kinds of activities. I hope you have a wonderful time while you're here; let's get this started. And let's have a wonderful convention **Comic Con 2017**. Let's get this going!"

I'm sure the mayor meant **Comic Con 2015**! Clearly he was just way too psyched about Comic Con.

Then he turned the mic over to Mr. Ferrigno, who revved up the cheering crowd with, "Come on, louder than that!" He continued, "Well great to be here. Because I couldn't make it a year ago ... But I have to tell you I've done a lot of different conventions but this is exciting because I feel the warmth of you people and great fans. You know when I was a child; I didn't have anything like this to attend. ... And I know they're expecting *over sixty thousand people*, and I know all of you, every one of you, you want to feel incredible.... It's beautiful, nothing to do with drugs, sex, or violence. It's still amazing and great for families. And let's all have fun. Thank you so much for coming. **I love you all!**"

And with a ten countdown to the *Star Wars* theme song, the ribbon was **lightsaber cut**. Rhode Island Comic Con was officially on, as R2-D2 whistled and the eager crowds poured into The Dunk and the Convention Center to have a killer time. It was a great moment!

I talked to another fan not long after that, Svetlana who had a *Legend of Zelda* cosplay thing going on, and I ask her how she was liking the con compared to last year. Her answer, "So far, so good."

Now it was time to meet some celebs!

As I wandered around The Dunk I saw that there were a lot of photo ops/autograph stations peppered throughout the lower level periphery. And so I found myself meeting the Khal/Aquaman himself, Jason Momoa!

There is no question that this man is the Dothraki Khal Drogo (from HBO's *Game of Thrones*) or Conan The Barbarian (from the 2011 movie remake of the same name). Holy cow was he imposing! I honestly didn't know what to say to him. He did give me a fist bump, and I asked him about his role in the upcoming *Batman vs. Superman: Dawn of Justice* movie. To which he said,

"Wait 'til *Justice League* [the movie]." But the best thing was his panel the next day – wait 'til I get to that!

Back on The Dunk floor I talked to a few more exhibitors. Someone told me that Kristen Hughey, another professional cosplayer was not happy with her current accommodations. However, in keeping with the *embracing the chaos* theme, the next day I noticed that her table had been moved to the Convention Center floor, right across from the *Motif* table. See what I mean?

Now as I was getting into the evening hours I made my way over to the celeb area at the Convention Center. The best thing about this Day One (or Preview Night as I call it) was that there was plenty of room and opportunity to check things out and talk to celebs without the crazy crowds of the next day.

So without further adieu, I went over to Mr. Lou Ferrigno's table and struck up a conversation with him. In 2013 at *San Diego Comic-Con* I ran into him as he was exiting "the john." I tried to introduce myself but he gave me a curt, "How are you?" and kept on walking.

Well, not this time, I got talk to him at length about his cameo in the 2003 Erica Bana *Hulk* movie directed by Ang Lee. Then I asked him when he'd be doing another cameo and he said, "Ask Marvel that." To which I replied, "Well, I'd love to see you in another Marvel film." He thanked me and I moved on to the highlight of my evening: meeting cast members from **Star Trek: The Next Generation** (TNG) & **Deep Space Nine** (DS9).

Part of my goal this time around was to meet these actors and I was bummed when the press junket with them in it was cancelled. However, just like with *William Shatner* last year (read my 2014 RICC post-con wrap-up here at *MotifRI.com*), that old Comic Con Magic set in to make things right!

With virtually no one at their tables, I was able to saunter up and start chatting with them. First on my hit list was Michael Dorn.

I told him how much I loved his character (Lieutenant Commander Worf, a Klingon) on *TNG*, and would love to see a *Captain Worf* show.

And here's where he won a million points with me...

It's just been revealed that CBS is now putting into development a new television *Star Trek* series. Sounds great right? Unfortunately, the show runner behind it is one of the writers from those abysmal JJ Abrams *Star Trek* reboots: *Star Trek* (2009) and *Star Trek: Into Darkness* (2012). Now it's no surprise that I am not a fan of these films or the *NuTrek* alternate timeline. In fact, I did a whole Motif Magazine *MoTiV* show *Take 2 Into Darkness* where my co-host Rosemary Pacheco and I battled it out over that disastrous second reboot film.

So when Michael told me that the new *Star Trek* series was going to be set in that *NuTrek* alternate timeline, and that he was so **not happy** about it, I became his friend for life!

As for RICC, here's what he had to say about it, "I think it's starting off a tiny bit slow but that's the nature of the business, and it's probably going to be insane tomorrow."

Then on to *Marina Sirtis* where I almost accidentally unleashed her wrath upon me!

Yep! You see we fans don't know everything that goes on between the celebs on their shows, on other shows, with their associates, producers, directors, and in the industry as a whole. Which means that there's always a possibility of saying something stupid to a celeb out of sheer ignorance! Like when I asked James Doohan (the original *Scotty* from *Star Trek*) back in the late 1990s at a convention in Boston about how things were between him and William Shatner. He looked like he wanted to kill me.

So Shatner again got me in hot water, this time with Marina Sirtis (Commander Deanna Troi from TNG).

You see Shatner recently put out another one of his *Star Trek* documentaries called, *William Shatner Presents: Chaos on the Bridge*. And it's a bit of a scathing biopic of Gene Roddenberry's (the creator and executive producer of *Star Trek*) last days (just before he died in 1991) while he struggled to retain control over his *Star Trek* franchise as the network execs were trying to take *Star Trek: The Next Generation* away from him. Shatner painted Roddenberry as a Nero-like emperor who was constantly at war with the execs, and who didn't even want a TNG series to begin with. Shatner, through his interviews with writers and producers of the show at the time, claims that the first two seasons of TNG were utter chaos.

Well, like an idiot I mentioned this to Marina and, oh, did she almost take my head off! "What does Shatner know about what went on, on TNG? He wasn't there! All he wants to do is make money! All we ever did was laugh on that show! That's why I'm not in that documentary!" Talk about me wanting to crawl into a hole, shrivel up, and die! But then she calmed down when I explained that we fans don't know everything that goes on out there in Hollywood. And finally she was genuinely pleasant again and had this to say about Rhode Island Comic Con: "It's fantastic! It's packed full of people, which is what we love to see. I'm meeting old friends that I haven't seen in twenty years. And it's a chance for us to thank the fans a bit for being so loyal to us all these years."

And loyalty will come into play later as far as Marina is concerned when I get to the Star Trek TNG/DS9 panel on Day Two!

Finally after the faux pas with Marina, I got to enjoy what might be the most pleasant conversation with a celeb I've ever had, with Terry Farrell (Lieutenant Commander Jadzia Dax from DS9).

What a joy it was to chat with this woman! In fact, I watched her, Michael Dorn, and Marina Sirtis banter with each other, having a ball, telling jokes, like the old friends they are.

Terry and I got into a great conversation about the DS9 episode *Trials and Tribble-ations*. You see, the remarkable thing about that episode was that, through the magic of time travel and green screens (not widely used on television yet at that time), some of the cast of DS9 got transported back in time to *Captain Kirk's Enterprise*, with Kirk and other members of his crew. And it worked!

She told me that they made a mock up of the entire bridge of the old Enterprise, but all in green. From the Captain's Chair to the crew stations, walls, panels, everything green! Though I didn't get an actual quote from her about RICC, she had some great things to say at the panel on Day Two.

With that, I shimmied over to the *Motif* table and helped my fellow Motifers set up, and then it was time to call it a night!

But the best was yet to come because **Michael Dorn was right**; Day Two was going to be insane – in a good way!

Notable Day One costumes and other happenings of the day:

- Sitting on the Iron Throne of the Seven Kingdoms of Westeros from **"Game of Thrones."**
- Hellboy **but a girl**, complete with red face and horn nubs!
- A troupe of Teen Titans.
- Wayne and Garth have a lightsaber battle.
- A life-size Simpsons family sitting on the couch, which was a photo op setting.
- Acquiring a Litchfield Penitentiary T-Shirt for my wife from the Netflix series **Orange Is The New Black**.
- An Angelina Jolie style Maleficent.
- Boba Fett (who was psyched to meet the original Boba Fett, Jeremy Bulloch at the con).
- Batgirl, from another professional cosplayer, designer, seamstress, and exhibitor Jennifer Rose (fb.com/JenniferRoseNY). Yeah, I got a picture with her too. Her RICC quote: "The floor here is so much less crowded than *San Diego Comic Con*. Also the programs and the guests are way more accessible. Plus I love the community and the feel."

Day Two – Ming-Na Wen Sends Me Into Orbit!

Wait 'til I tell you about my encounter with *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* star *Ming-Na Wen*! But first let me kick off *Day Two* with what I saw outside The Dunk from the highway.

I saw a line of people so long waiting for the doors to open, on another beautiful day mind you, that those sixty thousand plus fans/attendees estimates seemed to be right on target!

This was an excellent sign that RICC 2015 ship, the *RICC Mystery Falcon* (yeah, I made that up!) was now righted!

I bet a lot of people went home and *Tweeted/Facebooked* that RICC was rocking this year because by the time I got into the Convention Center, I had heard that the entire con was completely sold out!

And, I want you to know, that I also heard that the Fire Marshal was very happy with the way people were moving in and out of the Convention Center and The Dunk. No more problems there ([see video](#)).

Now onto my eagerly awaited first panel: Faces Of Star Trek with Michael Dorn, Marina Sirtis, Terry Farrell, and Gates McFadden (Commander Doctor Beverly Crusher on TNG). Sadly, John de Lancie (Q, the omnipotent pain in the ass from TNG, DS9, and Star Trek Voyager) was unable to make it. The panel was moderated by Clare Kramer of **Buffy The Vampire** TV series fame. In fact, Clare moderated all the major panels at the con.

This was one of the liveliest and most awesome panels I've ever been to at any con!

The cast members bounded onto the stage all looking great, like they just came off a *Star Trek* set. They were all eager to interact with the fans but the real star of the panel was Marina Sirtis – no surprise there.

She ruled. That woman was on fire! And I should know after the “scorching” I almost got from her the night before.

For example, when Gates talked about how *Star Trek TNG* helped an Iraq war vet deal with his injuries, and how *Star Trek* in general offered a positive version of humanity’s future, Marina added, “Plus, all the girls were stacked!”

So one fan asked Michael if his character, Worf, ended up marrying the wrong woman. Oooh, that started a lively rivalry between Marina and Terry. You see there was a brief interlude between Worf and Troi on TNG but ultimately Worf ended up marrying Jadzia Dax on DS9 (until she was killed off shortly thereafter).

Michael’s response, “Do I feel that Worf married the wrong woman? You shit!” Because that question got him in hot water with Terry. And then Marina called the fan who asked the question up to the stage and kissed him!

After that, Michael confirmed to that audience that day what he told me the night before about the new CBS “Star Trek” series being set in the JJ Abrams NuTrek universe. Much to the pleasant boos and hisses of most of the fans in the audience, myself included.

Gates son called her right in the middle of the panel. She took the call and got him off the phone quickly. But Marina took a few friendly jabs at her. Gates was like, “What? I miss my son; he’s in Germany right now.”

To which Michael replied, “Gates, it’s time to cut the cord.” The audience got a kick out of that.

Michael then joked about the fun they had on DS9, while working on TNG was very serious.

But Terry ribbed Michael about how he used to question the *DS9* scripts when the writers were mucking up Worf’s character. They would be ready to shoot, then Michael would complain and delay the shoot!

Marina then added, “The writers thought their scripts were Shakespeare!” And added that it took extensive meetings just to get one line changed.

Then Marina talked about how Brent Spiner (Lieutenant Commander Data on TNG) and Jonathan Frakes (Commander Will Riker on TNG) found a way to double team and trick the producers into authorizing line changes. To which she also added, “Men. Can’t live with them, can’t kill ‘em!”

Later a fan asked a question about whether or not the actors were anything like their characters.

Marina’s response was, “I’m nothing like my character.” No surprise there.

The rest of the panel’s response was pretty much the same.

Gates remarked about Jonathan Frakes and Michael Dorn both being good kissers!

They were also asked to reveal their favorite episodes:

Marina – *The Measure of a Man* and *A Fist Full Of Datas*. The latter because she loves doing comedy but very rarely got the chance on *TNG*.

Michael – *Drumhead*, *Soldiers Of The Empire*, and *Once More Unto The Breech*.

Gates – *The Prime Directive* and *The Host*

Terry – The first Worf DS9 episode and all the shows that she did stunts in and worked with Michael. But what pissed her off was how the producers were bullying her for leaving DS9 because Rick Berman (Executive Producer of all of Star Trek after Gene Roddenberry died) made her an insulting compensation offer.

And this is where Marina stepped in and talked about loyalty. “We made all of these producers and writers famous like Ronald D. Moore [Battlestar Galactica 2003-2009, Helix], who was some kid who pitched a Star Trek script, because “Star Trek: The Next Generation” was and still is the only show on TV **to have ever allowed unsolicited script submissions** (i.e. without a professional Hollywood agent representing the writer, which is damn near impossible to get, especially if you don’t live in Hollywood). He [Moore] went on to become a highly successful producer, and never hired us for a job [on his non-*Star Trek* shows]! Buch of effin’ ingrates!”

And the crowd went wild when she said that! Wow! What a panel!

As I was walking out of the ballroom I noticed a woman with a huge original series Star Trek USS Enterprise tattooed on her shoulder. I had to take a snapshot of it. She also had the Starfleet insignia tattooed on her clavicle as

well. Her name was Meghan and she was a hardcore Trek fan!



Now it was time to reach the personal pinnacle of my RICC experience: meeting **Ming-Na Wen**!

Very few Comic Con experiences are as awesome as this one, like when **The Godzilla Encounter** was sold out at San Diego Comic-Con, but I happened by pure chance to run into the guy who was running it and he got me and my buddies in without a problem. Or when, because of mishaps at last year's RICC, the William Shatner photo op/autograph signing was reshuffled and I accidentally found myself in a nearly empty line, enabling me to meet one of my childhood icons.

With Carrie Fisher out the picture, I was angling to meet Ming-Na Wen. As soon as I heard the call over the loud speaker about her photo op/autograph signing, I headed over there.

Even in the VIP line the wait was about forty-five minutes.

As I got closer to meeting her, she actually stood up on her table and started tossing out Hershey's Kisses to the crowd. The fans went wild as she said, "I'm giving you all kisses because I love you all!"

I'm not a superficial person but I've got to tell you, seeing Ming-Na Wen in real life smiling and happy – as opposed to her pissed off, brooding character Agent Melinda May on Marvel's "**Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.**" – made me realize something: she looks better in real life than she does on TV! And at 51, she's a stunningly beautiful woman! Yep! I admit it, I was completely enamored.

So along with getting a quote from her (because I was still on the clock with *Motif*), I had to get a picture with her. And boy did I get great one! I was so psyched that afterwards I emailed the picture to myself just in case anything happened to my iPhone!

But before I left her awesome company I asked her two things. First, I mentioned that I had tried to get into the AOS panel at San Diego Comic-Con and it was impossible, but that was certainly not the case here at RICC, and I asked what she thought about that. She said, "San Diego Comic-Con has rooms that accommodate over 4000 people but here fans can actually have a one-on-one with us!"

And then I asked her if there was any inside info on the upcoming Marvel film *Captain America: Civil War* and any connection to AOS. She said, "Unfortunately, they won't tell us anything but I do know it's going to be a BIG surprise in May!" And as a huge Marvel films and AOS fan, meeting Ming-Na Wen, well...that just sent me into orbit!



After that, I didn't think things could get any better but I was wrong because I then wandered into the Q&A With Jason Momoa and got to sit right up front, no more than six feet from him. This "panel" of one was again moderated by

Clare Kramer.



Clare introduced him and he came out on stage drinking a beer! The crowd, especially the ladies, went wild. This man is larger than life – literally! But he also exudes a sincere charm, a gentle quality, and one hell of a sense of humor.

Of course everyone knows he's going to be the new DC film's Aquaman but his real claim to fame was the one season stint he did as Khal Drogo on HBO's "Game Of Thrones." Lots of people wanted to know all about what it was like to play that character.

He said that the audition for the role was the hardest he had ever done. In fact, as a native Hawaiian with strong ties to his culture and history, he actually did a Haka War Dance for the audition and landed the role immediately!

He loved playing the role but unfortunately there was almost no fighting for his character in that entire season. In fact, **SPOILER ALERT**, in the first book by *George RR Martin* most of Khal Drogo's warrior exploits happen off-page.

So Jason insisted on at least one Khal Drogo fight in the HBO version. Since he had played another sword and sandal warrior character, **Conan The**

Barbarian, in the oft maligned 2011 remake of the 1982 film, where he chopped off about thirty heads, he pitched the fight to the *GoT* producers and they went for it, giving Khal one action sequence.

Then a self-proclaimed terrified fan got up and asked Jason a question. "Why is Aquaman awesome?"

Jason reassured the fan he didn't have anything to worry about and then answered the question by saying, "I didn't grow up following white superheroes. But the water gods are awesome and Aquaman is awesome. He does cool stuff..."

And that's when he almost let slip either a BvS, **Justice League**, or **Aquaman** (the 2018 movie directed by James Wan) spoiler!

The fans went crazy. And that's when Jason said, "Look if you want to have to some fun with me here then keep what we talk about private and don't put this shit on the Internet! Ah, I can see all of you posting to the Internet right now!"

But that didn't deter him, he was cagey about details of his upcoming movies but still open about himself and his work, and very, very freakin' funny. At one point he said something pertaining to that Conan remake disaster. "Most producers piss on stuff and make it worse." Which is pretty much what happened to that film, and why Jason has been campaigning for another Conan film that he'd like to produce.

As for Aquaman, he had this to say, "I'm gonna make one badass motherfucker! And if you don't like *Aquaman* [the movie] and *Justice League*, you can try to get your money back from me!"

He feels that since the Hawaiian people are the people of the water he was appropriately cast as Aquaman.

Then another fan asked, "When you were standing next to Ben [Affleck playing Bruce Wayne/Batman in BvS] and Henry [Cavill playing Clark Kent/Superman in BvS] what up?"

To which Jason replied, "I feel Wonder Woman [played by the statuesque Gal Gadot in BvS] could kick all our asses!"

As for small screen stuff Jason Momoa is doing a Netflix series called "Frontier" playing a badass native in the 18th century Hudson Bay trading period.

Another fan wanted to know when Jason would be on "Saturday Night Live." To which he replied, "That would be a great moment of my life!" He also told the audience that he would love to do some comedy because he thinks he's a very funny guy.

Well he certainly had the audience in stitches!

"I am the chosen one!" For Aquaman that is, Jason shouted out. "Don't put that on the fucking Internet!" He added. The audience roared with laughter.

Then Back to GoT with a question about which house Jason Momoa (not Khal Drogo) would side with. He replied with, "Well I guess I'd have to go with

House Targarean despite my whore wife [Daenerys Targarean] sleeping with all these guys after my character gets killed off!"

As for horseback riding, especially on Conan he said, "That horse wanted to kill me! I would eat that horse!"

Just about anything that Jason said was a riot.

Then he said, "I love 'Drunk History,'" as he drank his beer, referring to the Comedy Central show that started off on YouTube (more about the YouTube panel on Day Three) where a couple of drunken guys effectively and hilariously rewrite history through their inebriated eyes.

"Have you ever had a shark encounter while surfing in Hawaii?" Another fan asks.

To which Jason replied, "This is what this tattoo [raises a massive left forearm] is for. It's for the water gods to protect me. As soon as I see a shark I show 'em this tattoo and tell them to go get 'whitey' over there!" Another round of laughter.

In the end, he conceded that his hardest and favorite role so far was Khal Drogo on GoT. He also joked about his co-star Emilia Clarke, who played his wife Daenerys, used to want to cuddle in between scenes and he'd have to tell her to beat it, he's married!

Jason also mentioned to the fans that he has his own production company and a film that he's producing and starring in called *Braven*, which comes out after *BvS*.

Finally, Jason stood up, thanked everyone for coming and said, "Remember, all this shit stays here, or I'll come to your fucking house and kill you!"

Totally badass! And this article is being posted just hours after I secured a brand new life insurance policy.

The only thing that wasn't so cool, and I found this out later, was that one of my fellow members of the press had to hit the bathroom just as the Jason Momoa panel got started. A volunteer guarding the door reassured my colleague that he'd be able to get back in. When he got back from the bathroom another volunteer staff member was now guarding the door and refused to let my colleague back in – even though his jacket and camera equipment were still on his chair in the room. This was a recurring theme throughout the con, where not every volunteer staff member was on the same page. It happened to me on Day Three, but I'll get to that later. Not the end of the world, but similar to vendor experiences getting set up, it's still an area for added future improvement.

Before I go any further, I want to make note of a very, very important aspect to this convention that sets it apart from every other Comic Con I've been to, including San Diego: **this year, they started serving booze all throughout the convention!**

That's right, I should have mentioned this in Day One but so much happened that I'm just getting to it now. Right after The Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony at The Dunk I noticed all the beer stations were open. I couldn't believe it! And I couldn't help myself, I picked up a nice 16 oz of Harpoon UFO White and kept smiling ever since.

Now I'm sure the booze has nothing to do with this favorable review of Rhode Island Comic Con 2015. Really!

And with a totally responsible pop-culture cosplaying sci-fi/fantasy loving geek/nerd creative fandom hanging out drinking good ales, wines, and mixed drinks, no one got out of hand! That's cool!

Seriously, I was having a great time, beers or no. In fact, I went back over to The Dunk and ran into the Rhode Island Comic Press Manager Susan Soares. We struck up a great conversation about how the con was going so far. I think that they were really putting the fans first here—and that's what it's all about. We also talked about how her husband was the one who got her hooked on sci-fi and now she's addicted.

Then I ambled over to meet *Michael Rooker*! One of the stars of *Guardians Of The Galaxy* (my all-time favorite movie so far), whose character Yondu Udonta was just spectacular in the film.

I told Mr. Rooker that I have been following his career since his role in Oliver Stone's *JFK*, and he told me, "Boy you need to get out more!"

I also told him that I must quote Yondu a few times a week, and that I hope he'll show up in GoTG2. He said, "Well, you better get on the phone with Gunn then!" (*James Gunn* is the director of the first film, and slated to direct the second.)

The guy was awesome, and he seemed to have a lot of fun with the fans at his table taking selfies with him.

So now it was starting to get late in the day and I was fixing to attend the afterparty later that evening. It was called, **1.21 Gigawatts: The Future Is Now!**

Clearly a *Back To The Future* (*BTTF* for short) theme, check out the drink list:

- **The Future:** Malibu red, Orange juice, Grenadine
- **21 Gigawatt:** Vodka, Red Bull
- **The Pinhead:** Midori, Absolute Citron, Malibu Coconut, sour mix, pineapple juice
- **Wild Gunman:** Midori, Sprite, White Rum
- **The Biff:** Midori, Peach Schnapps, orange juice, pineapple juice, cranberry juice

After a quick dinner, we headed over to the *1.21 Gigawatts* Afterparty. There was me, the Uber-Geek, our intrepid leader and pop-culture loving publisher, Mike Ryan, our very own Beer Advocate, Pete Larrivee, and our exceptionally dynamic and beautiful Dare Me Girl, Katie Lewis (who came to work that day dressed up as an awesome classic Scarlet Witch!).

The first thing I noticed when we arrived was that Big Nazo (and if you don't know Big Nazo, what rock have you been hiding under?) was jamming away on the upper level of the Convention Center, bringin' down the house!

Actually, I had been seeing Big Nazo all over RICC 2015, they are a staple at this event. It wouldn't be RI Comic Con without them.

We had a round of *BTTF* themed drinks while Mike was working up the courage to take a spin on the mechanical bull.

Oh, didn't I mention there was a mechanical bull at RICC as well?

Of course there was! And Mike was determined to tame it. He gave me his stuff to hold and then mounted the beast. And in not one, not two, but three fell swoops he took a dive into the padded walls. Not to be defeated, he gave it another go. And this time he made it for a few more fell swoops! I've got it on video.

Then came time for the dance party. The Convention Center's Rotunda was turned into a wall-pounding disco with a Jumbotron behind the DJ stage showing clips from all three *BTTF* movies.

- Brian O'Halloran of *Clerks* fame was there.
- And many cosplayers were cutting a rug.
- An Asian Spider-Man was break dancing like he was infused with superpowers.
- One of the Disco Boys from the Ben Stiller superhero spoof movie *Mystery Men* was bustin' big moves on the dance floor.
- And, I kid you not, a giant puffed out Baymax from *Big Hero 6* lit up the dance floor with his robo-dance-moves!
- And there was way more than I can describe here, I'll probably post the video to the Motif Facebook page so you can see it.

Anyway, I managed to get a dance in with Katie before I called it a night.

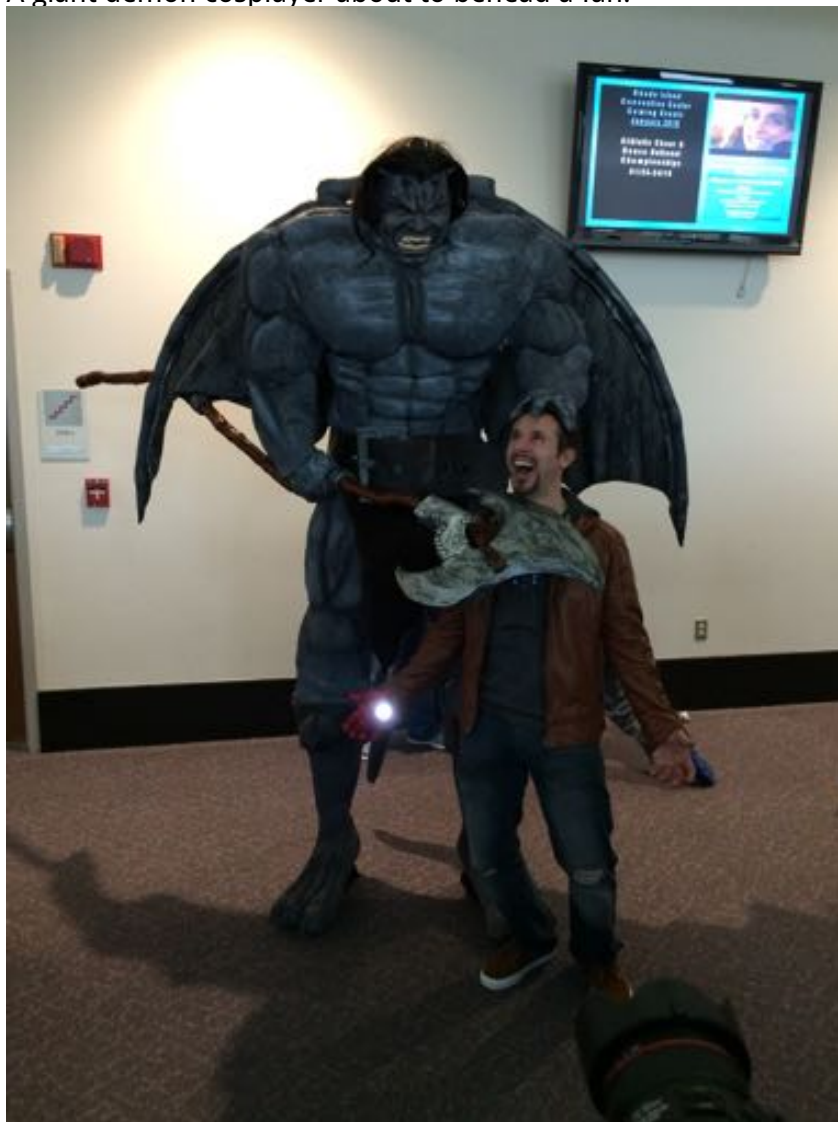
Michael Dorn was so right, **Day Two was insane!**



Notable Day Two costumes and other happenings of the day:

- Saw a life-sized mockup of the *Millennium Falcon* cockpit being used for photo ops on the upper level of the Convention Center.
- A live band calling themselves *The Cantina Band* played all kinds of genre-related tunes, including the *Ghostbusters* theme, *The A-Team* theme, "Hooked on a Feeling" by Blue Swede (featured in the Marvel film *Guardians Of The Galaxy*) and of course the actual **Cantina Band** music from *Star Wars: Episode IV – A New Hope*!

- A giant demon cosplayer about to behead a fan!



- My second picture with Serafina as Yellow Power Ranger – she also came by the Motif for additional pics for our webzine. She later posed with Green Power Ranger in the Convention Center lobby.
- Hawkgirl, complete with a **six-foot fully extendable wingspan!**
- Princess Leia's capture and by Darth Vader and his Imperial Stormtrooper entourage – a mini-drama played out on the Convention Center upper level.
- Meeting one of many Sailor Moons (including *Motif's* own Jade Moon!)
- I did not get to attend any of the screenings for the Film Festival but fans definitely should. There were titles like *Star Wars: Episode IV – A New Hope*! How could you go wrong with that? Several talented local filmmakers also represented.
- I only saw part of the costume contest this year but believe me those costumes were truly amazing! Especially this mind-blowing

Voltron: Defender of the Universe costume!

- Holding a real-life Glaive in my hand from the movie *Krull*, thanks to Hole In The Ground Productions (www.holeinthegroundpro.com) who came all the way up from their creation studio in Pennsylvania to exhibit and sell their props. The owner, *Eric Berry*, and I had a great discussion about how the new *Star Wars* movie will be using more practical effects than VFX/CGI, and how the latter put many physical artists out of business. That all could change on December 18th the movie opens, and that would be an ironic twist if such a change were shepherded by the same franchise that ushered in the shift to digital effects in the first place.

Day Three — The Ship Keeps on Sailing to Strange New Worlds!

Exhausted but still raring to go, I made my way back down from Boston (Yep! that's where I'm from but my wife is from RI so I'm married to Rhode Island!) for another amazing journey on the RICC Mystery Falcon!

Today though, I was getting down to business and asking some important questions of the artists, vendors, and exhibitors. Like I said, I'm not sugar-coating anything. Embracing the chaos comes back into play.

First up, *Mystic Gem* exhibitor/vendor at the upper periphery of The Dunk, *Glenn Boudreau*, who said about RICC, "No complaints, the staff got me right

in. Business has been good this year at the con.”

Next up was Matthew Phillion (www.theindestructiblesbook.com) author of his YA superhero 3-book series *The Indestructibles*, named one of SuperheroNovel.com’s top five novels of 2014. His thoughts were, “Not my best con but still very good. Been treated real well by the staff. I was a little worried about being in The Dunk but the foot traffic has been great.”

Then I tried to get into the Peter Cullen (the voice of Optimus Prime from *The Transformers* movies and cartoons) photo op/autograph signing. At first one row of RICC volunteer staff members let me right in but then the next row kicked me out, which made no sense what-so-ever.

But after my press colleague’s story about the Jason Momoa panel, I figured I just got hit with the same the right hand doesn’t know what the left hand is doing issue among the volunteer staff. I don’t know. That put a slight damper on my RICC 2015 experience for a bit that day.

But then the Comic Con Magic settled in again as I ran into an old college friend I hadn’t seen in over twenty-five years. He was working as a handler for voice actor Gregg Berger. I ran into them both at the celeb area and we got caught up! Mr. Berger told us he too just ran into a friend he hadn’t seen in twenty-plus years. Coincidence? Or just that good old Comic Con magic doing its thing? That put me in a great mood again.

And finally it was time for me to get my third and final picture taken with Professional Cosplayer Serafina as she donned her Harley Quinn. The results were amazing: red and black hair, ghost white face with black diamonds for an eye mask, black and red leather Harlequin mid-riff outfit and boots, and an oversized pop-gun! I really had no business standing next to such a sultry and mischievous beauty!

Then I got a quote from her about her experience at RICC this year. “It’s been great. Everyone here is so friendly – they all want to tell me their life’s story! I’m from Colorado, so I’m not used to that. The convention staff has been great as well. Things were a little chaotic on Friday but it all worked out great!”

Then I saw something that I just had to take a picture of: the best reproduction of *Captain America*’s Vibranium Shield from the Marvel *Captain America* and *Avengers* films. I’ve searched high and low at many Comic Cons for an exact replica of this shield because WWII Captain America (from the movie *Captain America: The First Avenger*) is my next big costume. But I can’t do it without the shield. And most of the shields out there are more of the comic book, discus kind, not the movie kind. So when I saw this kid – his name was Billy – walk by the Motif table with the shield, I darted right after him. He gave me the info on how to get one for myself. I took a pic with me holding the shield – glorious!

Finally, I asked how he was liking the con and whether he came last year. His answer surprised me.

“I was the first guy who they stopped selling tickets to. They literally closed the window on me once the Convention Center was locked up and no one could get in. However, this year it’s all good and I’m having a great time!”

Wow, to get so close and get locked out and then come back this year with no gripes, that says something about how right RICC was doing by the fans.

I still had more talking to with artists, vendors, and exhibitors to do.

Next up was Casey from Well Played Clothing (www.wellplayedclothing.net). She got me to buy these awesome polo shirts with the *S.H.I.E.L.D.* and *Hydra* logos on left breast. They're so fine that I plan on wearing them to work!

I asked her about last year compared to this year. She said, "Last year somebody cut my booth but this year it's been good. We're having a great year here with sales."

Sounds good, so then I went upstairs to attend the *How To Be A YouTube Star* panel. This one was a good one to attend – very informative. I love when comic cons have information or how-to panels that help artists and creatives get a leg up in oversaturated media arts industries. Since I have my own YouTube channel (www.YouTube.com/user/NicksSciFiCorner – shameless plug), I was looking for some insights on how to grow it. The hilarious guys from CinemaSins were there as well as the Super Beard Bros. They offered some great advice like:

- Get a good microphone, like a Shure, and a camera like a Canon T5i.
- Submit videos to Buzzfeed, Reddit, and Deadspin. Find email addresses of bloggers and forums. Find people online who can help get your video out there and send them the link.
- Do a video with another YouTuber.
- Know your genre and community. Focus on the people in that genre and always send out your link.
- Always be yourself on YouTube. Do what **you** want to do on it. The opposite happened to Laina Walker, A.K.A. *The Overly Attached Girlfriend*, who became so known for that skit/character that she struggled for years to be herself on YouTube even taking a three month break from it and then pouring her heart out on her channel to tell her fans she wants to be herself. The responses she got were incredibly supportive and she's doing fine now.
- Find a niche that no one else has done on YouTube. (*ed note* – good luck with that.)
- Don't do a review show! There are waaaaaaay too many of them now!
- Keep trying, keep working at it, and make it as good as possible.
- Do regularly scheduled vids. Consistency is key, even if most viewers don't notice.
- Someday the right person is going to see your video and send up, and it'll go viral.
- You don't benefit from SEO (Search Engine Optimization) until you're popular. Focus on your content.
- Find video influencers on YouTube like the Double Rainbow Guy.
- Read the book *The Tipping Point* by Malcomb Gladwell.
- There is no formula for going viral on YouTube. Content is king.
- And finally, the audience is a great bullshit detector. Be genuine and honest.

Wow! I have my work cut out for me!

Then I went downstairs to the *Artist Alley* as I always do on the last day of a con.

There I spoke with several artists and asked them the same questions I'd been asking the vendors and exhibitors.

Sara Richard (www.sararichard.com), a very talented graphic artist said, "No complaints. This year things have been great."

Not so much for Adam Wallenta of Adam Wallenta Entertainment however. He tells a different story about his experience this year. "My mother, who is part of my staff with her own vendor badge, left the Convention Center for a bit and they wouldn't let her back in through the vendor entrance – with an approved vendor badge. They also confiscated her water, forcing her to buy the \$4 water here. That's bad for the vendors and artists and the environment. Also, we artists are so cramped in here that I have to jump over my neighbors just to go to the bathroom. Also it was so disorganized getting set up. My booth was supposed to be 209 but they ended up putting me in the 300s so I couldn't fully promote my location to my over eleven thousand Twitter followers and fans. I've been to cons all over the world and this one needs to listen more to the needs of the artists."

Here's a little chaos embracing that needs to be done on both sides (artists and RICC organizers).

And I'm sure the RICC staff will reach out to Mr. Wallenta and make it right for him.

To be fair, the "no outside water or food policy" is a Convention Center thing and has nothing to do with Rhode Island Comic Con. Hence the reason why I never bother with the convention center food (here or in San Diego), it all sucks, and I head out to places like the Union Brewery in Providence and Lolita's At The Park or Bubs in downtown San Diego.

Ian Ally-Seals, graphic artist for Rare Earth Comics (www.RareEarthComics.com) has a different perspective on the chaos. "The disorganization at this show, like last year, is to be expected. When I got here this year, they had given my table away – a specific location that I had paid for. But once we got settled in, the show is great and we're doing great business. With Rhode Island Comic Con all the anger and disappointment happens before the show begins. Then it's all good."

That's embracing the chaos!

Jordan Bourne, a graphic artist known as CISCOLL (ciscoll.storenvy.com or [Facebook.com/Ciscoll](https://www.facebook.com/Ciscoll)) said this, "First Rhode Island Comic Con for me. A little disorganized getting in, no one seemed to know what's going on. However, after I got settled in, everything was good. Being treated very well by the staff."

And as I was nearing the end of my RICC 2015 experience I found myself inadvertently at the Karen Gillan (Doctor Who's companion Amy Pond and Nebula from *Guardians of the Galaxy*) photo op/autograph signing. I actually had no intention of going in and meeting her. I just wanted to see how much her hair had grown out after shaving it off for her GoTG role. But she wasn't actually there yet.

However, the bright young volunteer named Steve who was managing the line asked me if I wanted to get in. Then he saw my press badge and said, "Oh, you're press. Your line is here [points to a wide open express lane]." His

kindness and respect absolutely undid the slight I got from the whole Peter Cullen thing a few hours earlier.

Finally, finally, finally, I ran into a woman named Christina who wore her costume permanently, i.e. full body tattoos. She was with her tattoo model, Jenna, because Christina is a professional tattoo artist with Acme Ink Tattoo Studio in Coventry RI. They were meeting Ron Perlman but Kristina was drawing attention to herself as admirers, me included, wanted to take snapshots of her beautiful body art. I asked her how she was liking RICC, and she said, "First time here. It's spectacular."

To which Jenna added, "Ron Perlman is spectacular!"



Notable Day Three costumes and other happenings of the day:

- Meeting Lori Petty, of *Tank Girl* and *Orange Is The New Black* After she fist bumped me, I asked her when there was going to be a *Tank Girl 2*. Her reply, in a totally Lori Petty way, was, "Don't hold your breath!"
- Encountering Lynann Wilkinson, Rieke Master, Music Artist, and Cosplayer several times, who as Harley Quinn with her own homemade Harley's Hammer kept trying to get me to trade my Harley Quinn RICC badge every time I ran into her. I'm not giving it up, so I'll plug her businesses instead here. You can find her on

Twitter or Facebook or call (401) 862-8627. Tell her Nick Iandolo sent you!

- Big Nazo jamming on the steps of The Dunk and playing with the crowds before the doors opened.



- Facing off against a cookie-wielding Dalek from "Doctor Who." I kid you not!
- Awesome Batman and Catwoman costumed duo.

- *Motif's* Katie Lewis as the hottest Slave Leia in any galaxy!



- Running into Peggy Carter (founder of the Marvel Cinematic Universe's *H.I.E.L.D.*) while wearing my Hydra polo shirt! Good thing she didn't shoot me on sight!
- More Batmans (including a demonic, red-eyed one).
- A great MCU Ant-Man costume. First time I've ever seen one at a con.
- Nearly getting attacked by *Chewbacca*! No, not really – he just growled at my like he did at Lando Calrissian in *The Empire Strikes*

Back.



Rhode Island Comic Con 2015 — Final Thoughts, Keep Hitting the Moon and Beyond!

Even though I'm an Italian-American I'm going to quote from a Russian friend of mine whose daughter, Natalie Glebova, was Miss Universe 2005.

"Aim for the stars and you'll hit the moon!"

Every year since 2012, the first Rhode Island Comic Con, I've felt that they've been trying to do this very thing. And every year (including the last one) I certainly think they've hit the moon. But this year, they bypassed Mars and Jupiter and got as far as Saturn!

They're well on their way to reaching the stars.

And even though I walked my legs off for three days, talking to everyone I could, seeing and hearing and reporting on every amazing thing that I encountered, there was still infinitely more than one intrepid reporter (and hardcore pop-culture/sci-fi/fantasy/comics/cosplay fan) can cover! That is what my fellow members of the press and colleagues from *Motif* and the

other publications/webzines/blogs are for. Go read those accounts of this massive event as well.

Of course, there's still a lot of work ahead for the Mr. Steve Perry, President of *Altered Reality Entertainment* (the company that organizes Rhode Island Comic Con) and his team.

For example, I love the extra day (Friday) concept but it seems more like the San Diego Comic Con Wednesday Preview Night than an extra day.

In my opinion, they should get everyone (vendors, et al.) loaded in on Thursday and get the Friday going in full-swing with panels, shows, exclusives, celebs, the works. The fan support (and the financial support) looks to be there. People will come, and with the con ready to go Friday morning there's no way that wouldn't be good for business.

Or better yet...get everyone loaded in on Wednesday night into Thursday morning and have a preview night Thursday with special exclusives like: RICC exclusive collectibles that cannot be gotten anywhere else – like they do at SDCC), a Hollywood-style preview screening of sweeps weeks genre shows or advance previews of premieres. I saw "The Flash" pilot episode at SDCC 2014's Preview Night. I think it's time RICC starts talking to *Hollywood* to make new things happen – this includes exclusive movie clips at panels for unreleased films that fans will camp out the night before to get into!

There's definitely an *Entertainment Industry/Hollywood* component missing with RICC. And it cannot be avoided much longer. The very thing that fans complain about with San Diego Comic-Con is the very thing they demanded over the years: bigger, BiGGer, BIGGER!

And speaking of preview nights and exclusives – and this has nothing to do with Rhode Island Comic Con and its organizers – where the heck is *Hasbro*?!

At San Diego, people line up for hours just to get a ticket to then get in the line for the **Hasbro Toy Shop**! And on the Preview Night, they line up by the thousands to get exclusive *Avengers* or *Star Wars* collectibles that they cannot get anywhere else!

I've seen people come out of that convention center with armfuls of oversized SWAG bags busting out with merch! Imagine how much money *Hasbro* would make if they backed a *Hasbro Toy Shop* right in their home town, right in their backyard, literally across the street at Rhode Island Comic Con?

But in four years I haven't seen any Hasbro-owned toy shop, toy showcase pavilion (there's both at SDCC), kiosk, table – hell – not even a guy passing out flyers! Nothing! Come on Hasbro! These are **your** people, show up and show your local support. The business is there and you won't have to cart your stuff across the country to sell it!

I'm actually not going to say they need to be better organized because no one, not even San Diego, can run conventions like these without glitches and an element of chaos. In fact, it's out of the chaos that some of the best experiences are had: like my Shatner one!

As the convention matures, the organizers are simply going to get better and better at what they do. They'll eventually have lines so long that they'll have

great line managers who will keep the lines going and entertain the fans at the same time. They'll get giant pavilions in for big studios and companies like Warner Bros., Disney, Hasbro (yes!), Microsoft, and Oculus Rift, moving them in and out with ease. They'll have a whole new wing to the convention for gamers with huge MMO arrays for the latest *Halo*, *Destiny*, *Alien*, *Star Wars* video games, and casino-like tables rocking classic RPG games like *GURPS*, *Feung Shui*, *Dungeons & Dragons*, *Magic The Gathering*, *Call of Cthulhu*, and more. The entire downtown area will be pressed into service with game review companies like GameSpot or artsy video-streamers like *Machinima* taking over pubs and joints pumping out tunes, free drinks, and Comic Con giveaways all day – literally taking over *Water Fire*! More celeb afterparties happening in the evenings than any one ever dreamed of! More off-convention site events like *zombie walks or runs for your life*, a free giant MTV Party at Burnside Park, outdoor exhibits with rides and VR experiences like the Adult Swim Carnival, the parkour mega obstacle course Assassin's Creed Experience, and the return of THE GODZILLA ENCOUNTER!

And if all of this sounds way too big and San Diego Comic-Con-like for your tastes, my fellow pop-culture loving, Comic-Con-going fans, consider this:

- **2012**, RICC attendance was around **14,000 fans** with a third of the main Convention Center exhibit hall in use.
- **2013**, RICC attendance nearly doubled, some say up to **30K** and ALL of the Convention Center exhibit hall was pressed into service including the lower levels.
- **2014**, RICC attendance peaked, IN ONE DAY, to **over 40-45K fans**, maybe more, and despite all of the Convention Center's available spaces being utilized the Fire Marshal had no choice but to close the doors because attendance exceeded the fire safety capacity.
- **2015**, RICC attendance may very well have easily reached over **60,000 fans**, as Mr. Ferrigno said in his ribbon-cutting speech. All of the Convention Center was in use, all of The Dunk was in use, and STILL they were busting at the seams running out of space for vendors, artists, and fans. Fortunately, the Fire Marshal was happy. However, with over **60K** in attendance that's nearly half of the total attendance of San Diego Comic-Con in 2012!

That's right. So in **four short years** Rhode Island Comic Con has grown to half the size of the granddaddy of all comic cons during the beginning of its peak years – or quadrupling in size since the first RICC in 2012. And SDCC is still growing like crazy; so much so, that the city of San Diego is spending half a billion dollars – billion, with a "B" – to double the size of its convention center to keep SDCC there!

This growth pattern clearly means that RICC in a few scant years may well be seeing the crowds that San Diego sees today at around **150,000 fans/attendees** – never mind all the staff, volunteers, vendors, exhibitors, artists, celebrities and their staff, all the food and service people, printers, painters, sign makers, genre-themed pedicab drivers, actors/promoters walking the streets passing out flyers and such, religious freaks with massive signs telling us we're all going to Hell because there are now gay comic book characters (oh yeah, they're coming, you wait and see), and more and more and more!

And since SDCC brings in over **\$200,000,000** a year to the city of San Diego, you think that Providence is going to snicker at that kind of annual booty and tell RICC to scale it back? Let's hope not! At this rate, and with what I saw this

year, The Biggest Show in the Smallest State is going to get a HELL of a HELL of a lot bigger!

This is only the beginning as the *RICC Mystery Falcon* sails off into the stars! You want chaos baby? You're about to get more than you ever dreamed of, so start embracing! Excellent comeback Rhode Island Comic Con!!!

See all of you November 11th – 13th, 2016!

Be sure to visit more images at www.Facebook.com/MotifRI

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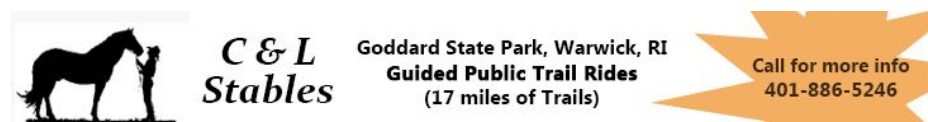
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