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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 6, 2014

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DrunkCameraGuy takes on Tampa Bay Comic Con

No one can get their geek on with style quite CL's intrepid contributing photographers.

Posted By DRUNKCAMERAGUY on Wed, Aug 6, 2014 at 9:54 PM



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HAPPY HAPPY JOY JOY! Bob Camp at his *Ren & Stimpy* booth.

For a fan, prepping for a comic book convention is a ritual. It involves going through your longboxes to pull the books you want signed, putting backing boards in bags for books you'll be picking up, testing your metallic pens, and, of course, planning your outfits for the weekend.



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For years, the only comic con action was MegaCon in Orlando, but not any more. Tampa Bay Comic Con is as legit as can be. The event fills the 400,000 square foot Tampa Convention Center with celebrity artists, writers and actors, as well as hundreds of exhibitors offering everything the nerd could want, from Deadpool narwhals to signed photos of Sexy Mario.

As always, the schedule I put together for the panels I wanted to attend would only have been possible for Blink, but the con was put together so well and everything was laid out so smoothly that I made it to almost everything I wanted to do.

The first thing I wanted to do when I got to the con was scope out the artists before things got too crazy. I basically bee-lined it to Bob Camp's (*Ren & Stimpy*) booth, where he had color sketches and actual cels from the show on display for sale. While I was really tempted by the scenes from "Space Madness," one of my favorite episodes, I spent the extra money and got a custom sketch of my dogs a la Ren and Stimpy.



Another highlight of Friday was Q&A with Daniel Cudmore (*X-Men*, *Warcraft*, pictured above). He talked about bulking up for his role as olossus and tales of Ian McKellan and Patrick Stewart giving everyone the giggles.

Saturday was insanity. The traffic getting to the convention center was backed up across the bridge, the lines to get in wound around the front terrace, and once inside there were Harley Quinns and Deadpools shoulder to shoulder waiting for the panels. However, don't let that scare you away, because one reason that Saturday is still the best day to go is that it's definitely the best day to see the best cosplay. Even if you don't do any of the extra stuff, like panels and gaming and Q&A's, you can walk the exhibition hall and more than get your money's worth in people watching.



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While I was bummed that I wasn't able to get in to Kick-Ass Yoga, I adored Geekapella (above). Their amazement at the turnout for their performance was charming, with one girl taking a selfie with the room. They thrilled the standing room only audience with a capella versions of geeky theme songs from *Game of Thrones* to *Ghostbusters*.



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The day's hot ticket was the Q&A with the dreamy team of Pedro Pascal (*Game of Thrones*) and Richard Madden (*KING OF THE NORTH*, I mean *Game of Thrones*, both pictured above). As throngs of girls lined up behind the microphones to ask them to take their shirts off, Pedro talked about being "just fucking traumatized" by the red wedding and Richard

gave travel tips for Ireland, which consisted of "dress warm and drink a lot."



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The kids' costume contest was an endless stream of adorable tots, peppered with a weird amount of tiny, shiny Catwomen. The adults' contest had some of the best costumes I've seen in real life. There was even a guy dressed as George R. R. Martin with what seemed like the entire cast of *Game of Thrones*, including at least half a dozen Khaleesis and a wheelchair transformed into the Iron Throne. The \$500 first place prize went to a group that did *Guardians of the Galaxy*, which would just about cover what it must have cost to put together the insanely cool Groot costume.



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Sunday was another relaxing day. As we walked in I was admiring the shading on a lady's derriere when she turned around and I literally gasped because she was absolutely killing a lady Hellboy cosplay (Or is it Hellgirl? See above). We did another quick walk of the con floor and then stopped by Way of the Sword's room. They're a Florida-based group of foam sword fighters, and this isn't like whacking your little brother in the head with nerf. There are rules like if you're hit in the arm or the leg, you can't use that limb for fighting any more, which I at first confused for one guy really enjoying kneeling.



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The middle of the day was full of Q&As. First up were Brighton Sharbino and Kyla Kennedy from *The Walking Dead*. While both girls said their moms didn't let them watch the show before they were on it, Brighton said she wasn't scared of the zombies on set because she'd see them hanging out eating yogurt. She also talked about the first time she met Woody Harrelson on the set of *True Detective* and telling him that her grandmother was a huge fan of him on *Cheers*, which hit him like a punch in the gut.



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Next up was Evan Peters (*American Horror Story*, *X-Men*) who was adorable. So many of my friends were just dying about him being there and I had no clue why. I quickly learned that it was because he was not only rather attractive, but he is also funny, goofy and witty. One audience member asked him to sing his favorite song, and he went right into "Turn Down For What" without skipping a beat. He talked about being spanked by Steve Carell (during a guest appearance on *The Office*) and by Jessica Lange.



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John Rhys-Davies (*Indiana Jones*, *The Hobbit*) was just as intense as you'd expect, but way more verbose. He talked about Gaia theory, evolution, genetics, and the meaning of life. He told the audience that if he was in charge he wouldn't let any men marry before age 30, which led into him talking about brain development and marijuana. Oh yeah, and he also told some great stories from *Indiana Jones* and how his agency threatened to drop him if he didn't take the role of Gimli.

The con ended on a musical note for us with video game pianist Martin Leung. I'm more of a comic girl than a video game girl, so I was lost at some of the songs, but I was thrilled by his *Star Wars* medley and his Super Mario arrangement. After his regular set he took requests and performed the original Tetris theme insanely fast, a lushly textured version of the theme from Halo, plus a few more. He seemed to be having the time of his life, which is basically how I felt all weekend. If you missed it this year, don't make that same mistake next year, even if you come on a low key day like Friday or Sunday. Start planning your costumes, and I'll see you there next year!

Tags: [Tampa Bay Comic Con](#), [John Rhys-Davies](#), [Game of Thrones](#), [Star Wars](#), [Bob Camp](#), [Evan Peters](#), [Brighton Sharbino](#), [Kyla Kennedy](#), [The Walking Dead](#), [Hellboy](#), [Hellgirl](#), [Pedro Pascal](#), [Guardians of the Galaxy](#), [Blink](#), [Geekapella](#), [Martin Leung](#), [Image](#)

SLIDESHOW



Tampa Bay Comic Con 2014

The comic book, fan culture event took place Aug. 1–3 at the Tampa Convention Center and has been in existence since 2000. Nick Cardello was on the scene to capture all the cosplay, costume contests,

famous artists, TV/film celebs and other activities.

By Nick Cardello

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