



The Costume Fanzine of Record

Yipe!

Volume 1

Issue 1

Auguries and Vagaries





ISSUE ONE: AUGURIES AND VAGARIES

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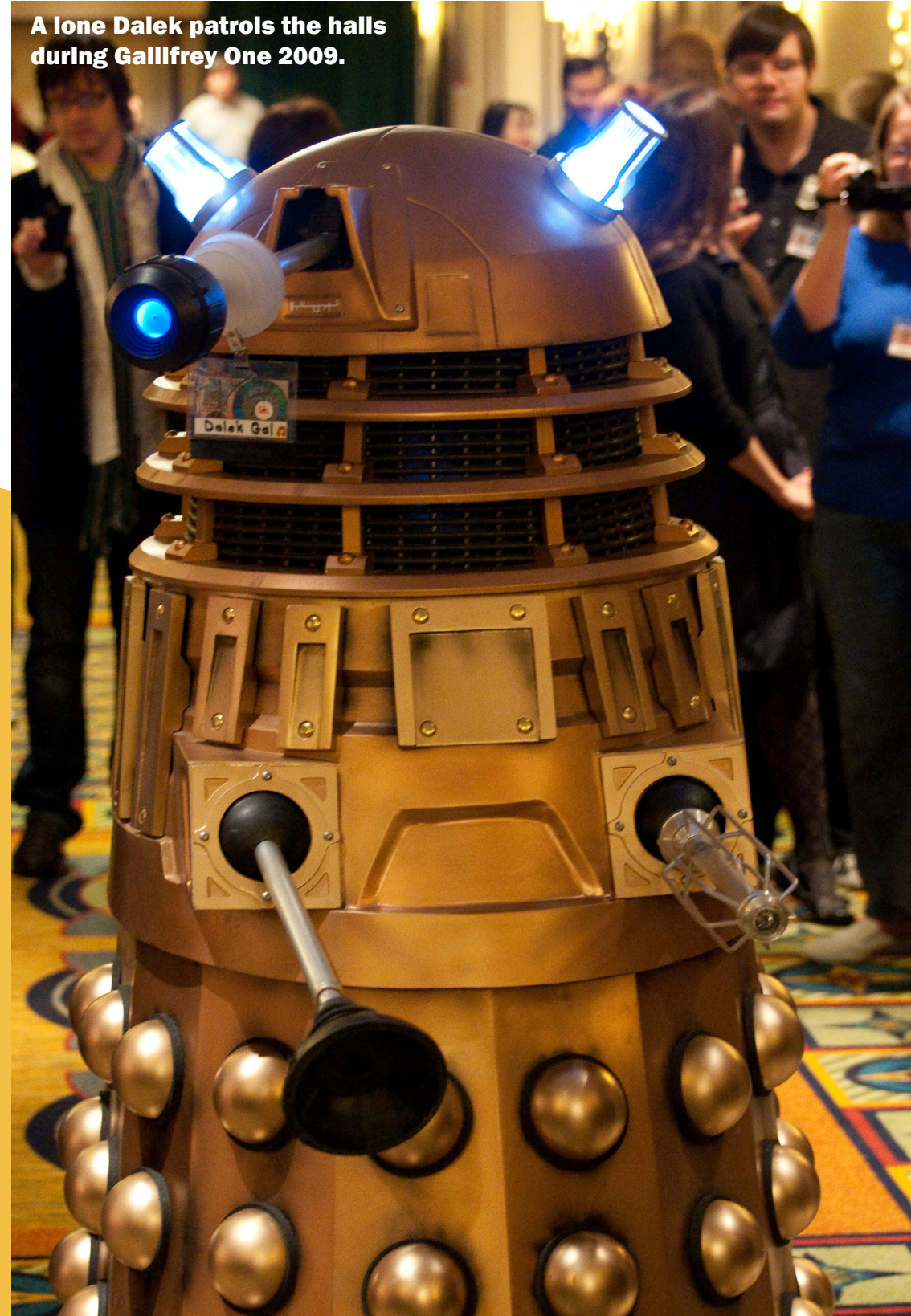
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Letter from the Editor

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Let me start off by saying I really wanted to make a Halloween-themed issue. Honestly.

Costume magazine, costume holiday-- what (barring fried butter) could be more perfect?

But time constraints, World Fantasy Convention, and the mid-October release of *Yipe!* *Xero* forced us into a November release of issue #1-- just in time for everyone to decide pumpkins are terrible people, crack the suckers open, and make them into pies.

As it turned out, this was all for the best: the extra time allowed for some great submissions to come our way and readers of the *Xero* issue will see I took note of their worries and bumped up our standard font size for better readability.

Enjoy your pumpkin.

-Jason Schachat

The Costume Fanzine of Record



I, SMAUG

Words, Photos, and Art by Jaime Martinez

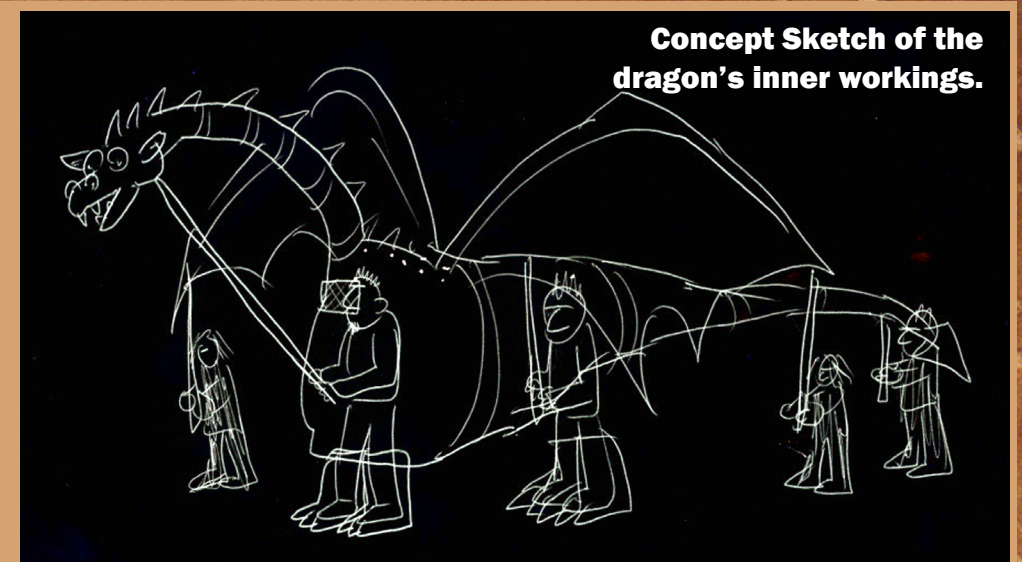
I cannot stop fidgeting in my seat as I wait for the curtain to rise on a stage production of *The Hobbit*. It is being put on by a prominent local children's theatre. It isn't just theatre for children, but also theatre performed by children. One quickly learns two things about this kind of theatre. One- nobody ever attends these shows unless they have a child in the show (well, if you don't count the creepy people.) Two- these shows are excruciating when your kid isn't actually on stage. This show is no exception. I suffer through what feels like a lifetime of bad

acting and proud parents cheering on their unskilled children. Flipping through my programme for the 742nd time does not reveal some hidden article or local ad I somehow missed the previous time. Just as it seems I shall never survive the ordeal it is finally time for my kid to take the stage. I sit up and snap to attention in anticipation of his entrance. Now I get it. I'm just like any of the other parents there, proud as all get out of my baby! He enters from stage left and my jaw drops and my heart sinks. What have they done to him?! He looks absolutely ridiculous. I'm

stunned to see that he has a myriad of jingle bells glued to his face, and it looks as though his jaw has been broken! They broke my baby's jaw?! As I watch him do a horrible dance while singing an even worse song, I just want to run up on stage and bring the curtain down, myself. Anything to stop this embarrassing display! I have to protect my child, my 15 foot tall, 15 foot long baby dragon named Smaug.

Traveling back a year before this tragedy, I reflect on Smaug's creation. I was then a college Theatre

student in a 2-year conservatory program. Each performance year was launched with the group putting on a show for children; and in my second year we were presenting an adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's classic, *The Hobbit*. I had been building puppets since I was a child, and the director knew this. He asked me if I would be interested in not only performing Smaug the Dragon, but also in creating the dragon as some sort of very large puppet. The idea intrigued me, as I had never tackled a puppet on this kind of scale. I was given a largely free rein when it came to the design, with one disappointing exception. As we were performing for children, I was asked to not



Concept Sketch of the dragon's inner workings.

make Smaug "Too Scary." In my mind Smaug should be quite scary, indeed, but it was a non-negotiable matter. Some of my more elaborate ideas such as moving eyes and "fire breathing" were vetoed under the "Too Scary" law.

When building any puppet, or indeed a costume, one of the first elements that have to be considered isn't so

much how will it look, but rather how will it work? In Smaug's case, I knew that the puppet was going to be very, very large. We wanted to see as much of the dragon's body as possible, and the director wanted it move around the stage as much as it could. I began to think of the dragons one sees in Chinese parades, and I thought "Why not combine that principle



with the visual style of an English fantasy dragon?" The director loved the idea, as did the other designers of the show so I soldiered on. I built Smaug's head pretty much as I would any other puppet, only bigger. The structure of the head (or "skull" as it were) was largely made of foam rubber, with two

large pieces of foam core board serving as a sturdy mouth. Smaug's (non scary, non moving) eyes were two large soccer ball-sized Styrofoam balls. In all, Smaug's head alone measured 5 ½ feet long. We had a rather diminutive girl playing Bilbo, so it was truly believable that our Smaug could gobble her up in

one bite. Unfortunately, the Director happened to wander into the shop as I was attaching the teeth to the jaws. I had only managed to install a large tooth on either side of the bottom jaw when I was instructed to add no more. "Too many teeth are Too Scary!" Of course they are.

that there was a person behind it. It was like a two-way mirror.

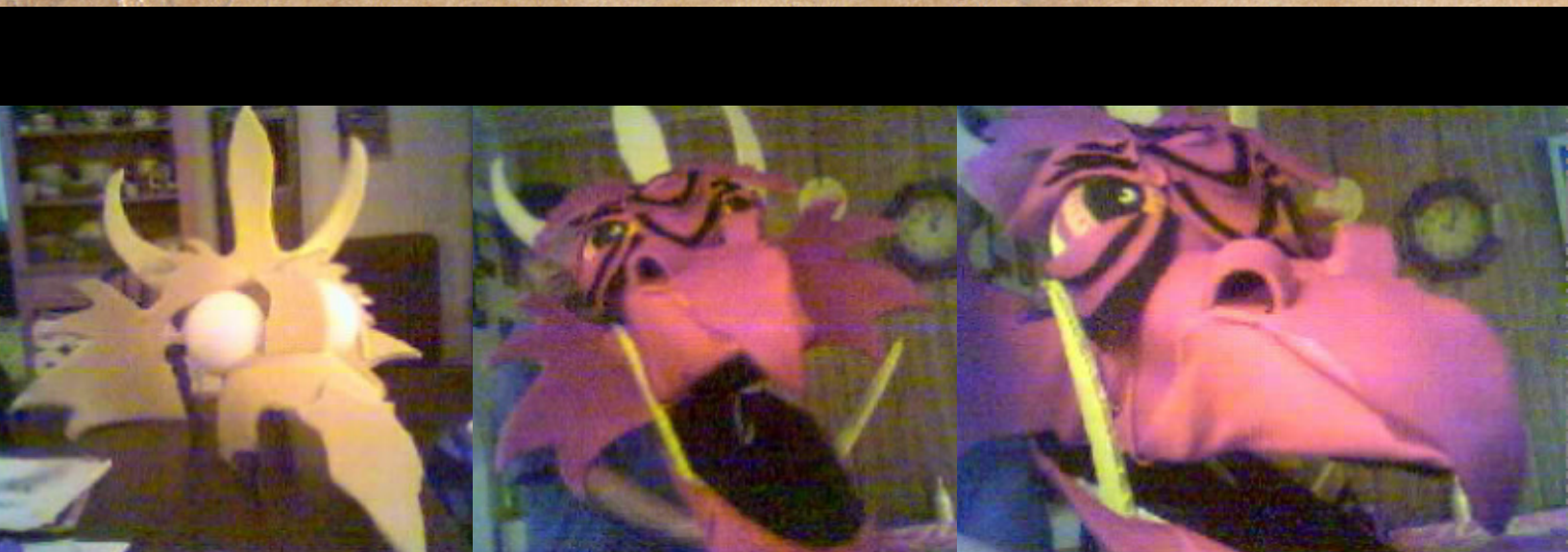
It took six puppeteers in total to operate Smaug. Myself, operating the head and providing the voice (with the aid of a body mic.) Three others held aloft Smaug's "ribs," which were hula hoops inside the red billowy material. A fourth person was positioned at the very tip of the tail. When fully extended, the puppet was fifteen feet long. Each of Smaug's large wings had its own operator as

well. The puppet was designed specifically for our production, and I knew we were planning to use a heavy amount of low stage fog for his scene, so the puppet was built without "legs." The legs of the puppeteers (or Team Smaug as we called ourselves) were masked by heavy black fabric.

The overall effect was very satisfying. The fog coupled with the flowy nature of the body really made Smaug appear to be "gliding." Every time we made our entrance, there

was an audible gasp from the audience that was exceptionally satisfying.

Some time after our production closed, Smaug was loaned out to the children's Theatre Company that would go on to disgrace him. As they were not paying to use the puppet, I had a very solid agreement with their tech guy that they would not make any modifications to the puppet whatsoever. Should they require any, we had agreed that I myself would be called in to do the work. I never heard



The head was covered in various areas either by paint or fabric. We had found in our costume shop storage a huge bolt of some beautiful red silky material. It was just what I wanted for the body. I loved the idea of a billowy, flowing look (again thinking of the Chinese parade dragons.) The head was mounted to

a long pole (it may well have been a 10-foot pole, now that I think of it.) A spring mechanism in the head connected to a chord that was then connected to the lower jaw which gave Smaug the power of speech. The entire head/pole mechanism was then connected to a harness that I wore, with the end of the pole positioned at

my chest. This allowed Smaug to stand at about 15 feet high. We found a fantastic shimmering, shiny material that served as Smaug's chest/underbelly (which was meant to be covered in jewels.) The best thing about it was that I could see perfectly through this material, but when the lights hit the puppet you could not see



Smaug at rest, full crew of puppeteers huddled together and trying not to breathe.

anything from them, so I assumed that there was no work to be done. However, when I saw the show I was horrified by the results. The jingle bells had been hot glued to the face of the puppet, the original wings had been replaced, as had the teeth. Perhaps worst of all was that the jaw mech had been completely broken in order to fit in a hose that allowed Smaug to breathe jets of steam. I'll admit, I originally had wanted such an effect, but I would not have broken the puppet to achieve it.

It was all a terrible situation and the tech

guy who I had made my agreements with sheepishly admitted that he had been "overpowered" by a gang of overzealous parents who demanded the modifications. After Smaug came back into my possession, I made some gentle repairs, including a third set of teeth that reflected my original vision (before the "Scary" police stepped in.) Smaug made one last onstage appearance in yet another production of *The Hobbit*. This time I knew the director personally, and knew that he was in good hands. After that show, Smaug made the decision to retire. His short career

had seen its wonderful highs, and its miserable lows. He settled into a lovely storage facility.. retirement village where he remains to this day. He did, however, make one last public appearance when some friends enticed me to drag Smaug out one Halloween night, so we could frighten children in my front lawn. We did, and it was lovely. These days Smaug is content to stay inside regaling all who will listen of his glory days trodding the boards and of the darker side of show business. He hopes to compile his tales into a memoir entitled *I, Smaug*.

King Vintage Museum

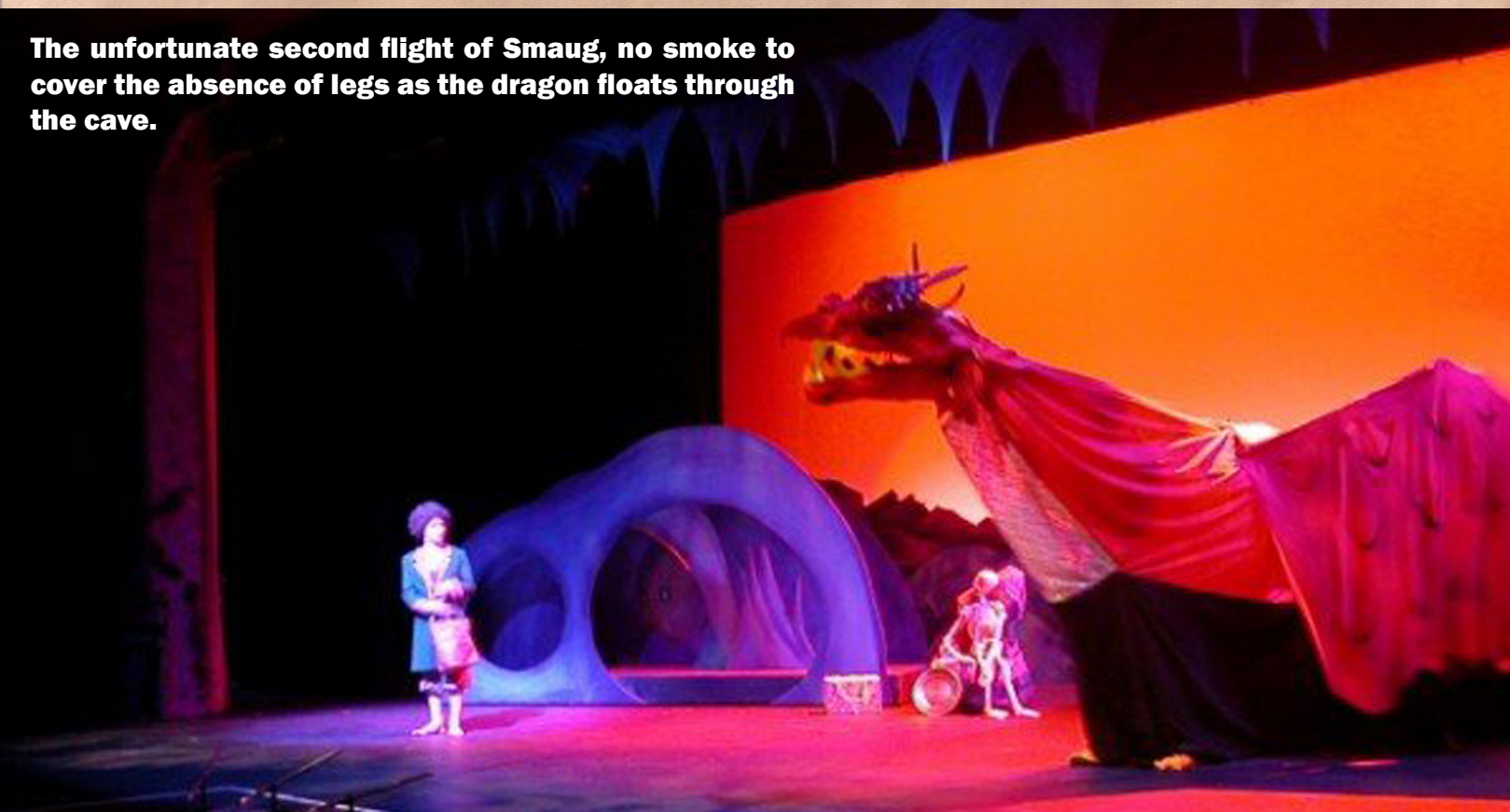
Words and Photos

by Robert Hole

Located about half-way between Fresno and Yosemite National Park on California Highway 41 is the growing small town of Oakhurst. Situated at the southern end of the California Gold Country, the town has been settled for over 150 years.

In the 1980s, Oakhurst area residents Barbara and Allan King found themselves collecting vintage clothing. As most collectors do, they fell into it. Mrs. King had a couple old dresses. They showed them off, and people started giving them more items. As they acquired more, they came up with the dream of opening a vintage clothing museum. A local civic group got involved and in 2002 the King Vintage Museum opened to show off their collection.

The unfortunate second flight of Smaug, no smoke to cover the absence of legs as the dragon floats through the cave.



Child mannequin, circa 1900





Wedding dress, circa 1908



Wedding Veil, circa 1930

I visited the museum in July, 2009 and was happily greeted by the docent on duty. She gave me the grand tour, taking me through the highlights of the displays and pointing out some pieces

they are particularly proud of. She then let me wander around the museum and gawk.

Much of the collection has some local angle-- coming

from local families and from local history because most of it comes from the last 150 years. The museum does have a couple 18th Century pieces which are a part of the tour.

While the main focus may appear to be Victorian era clothing, their displays also include the entire 20th Century. The Victorian gowns are just bigger and need more space than, say, a fringed flapper dress.

Of note is a wonderful display of women's hats lining the women's room and several cases of "accessories". There is also a lovely set of wedding gowns.



Dress, circa 1860

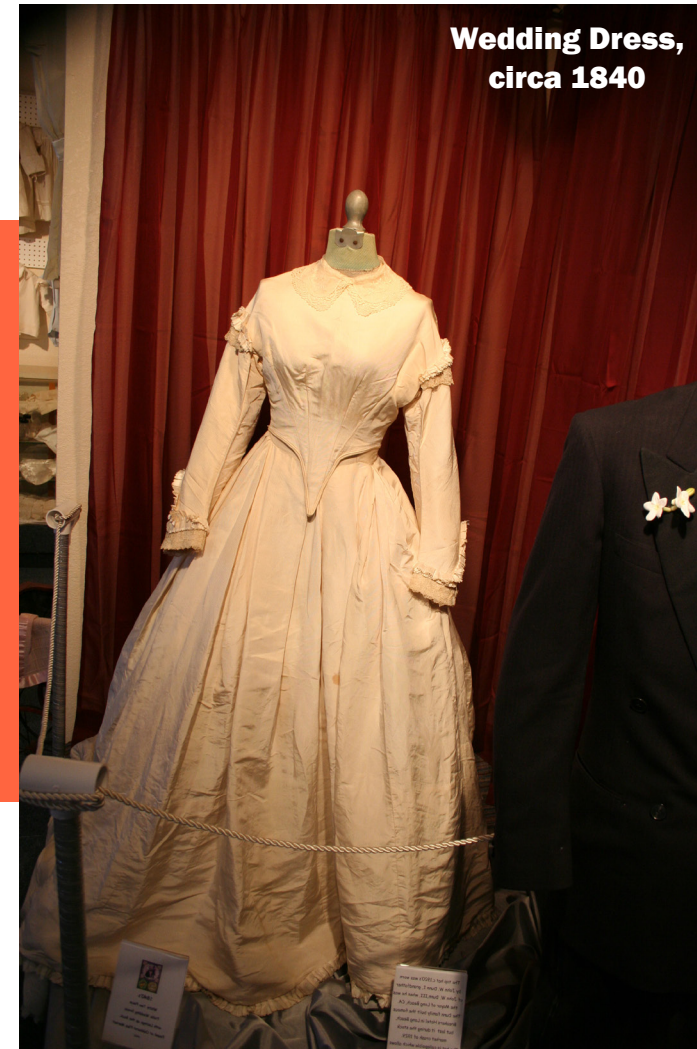




**Gentleman's Wedding Suit,
circa 1900**



Child's Dress



**Wedding Dress,
circa 1840**



**Sheer Dress,
circa 1918**

There is a gentleman's room and a children's room as well. As the docent pointed out, men and children tend to wear out their clothing and not be as sentimental about it, so it doesn't get saved nearly as often as ladies clothing.

The gentleman's room therefore consists mostly of militaria and has examples of uniforms from most of the 20th Century wars as well as the Civil War. They also have some recreations of Revolutionary War area military gear.

Like all museums, its collection is much more than can be shown at one time and they feature both permanent and rotating displays.

I was allowed to take photographs, some of which are included with this article. No flashes allowed, of course. One of the great things about the museum is that the layout and size of the display collection allow for some close-up photography of clothing detail.

by sundown, I'd walk home defeated.

It was in one of these despairing strolls then that I happened upon a girl sitting on the side of the road. She was around my age, but her hair was incredibly long and seemed as though it had taken an eternity to grow. Or at least more time than either one of us had been alive. Perhaps this was borrowed hair, I wondered, and proceeded to ask where she had gotten such a breathtaking loaner-body-part. Upon hearing my question, she began to cry and her tears dripped down onto the dirt at our feet. I asked what was wrong, not knowing that inquiring about somebody's cells was a sensitive and tricky matter.

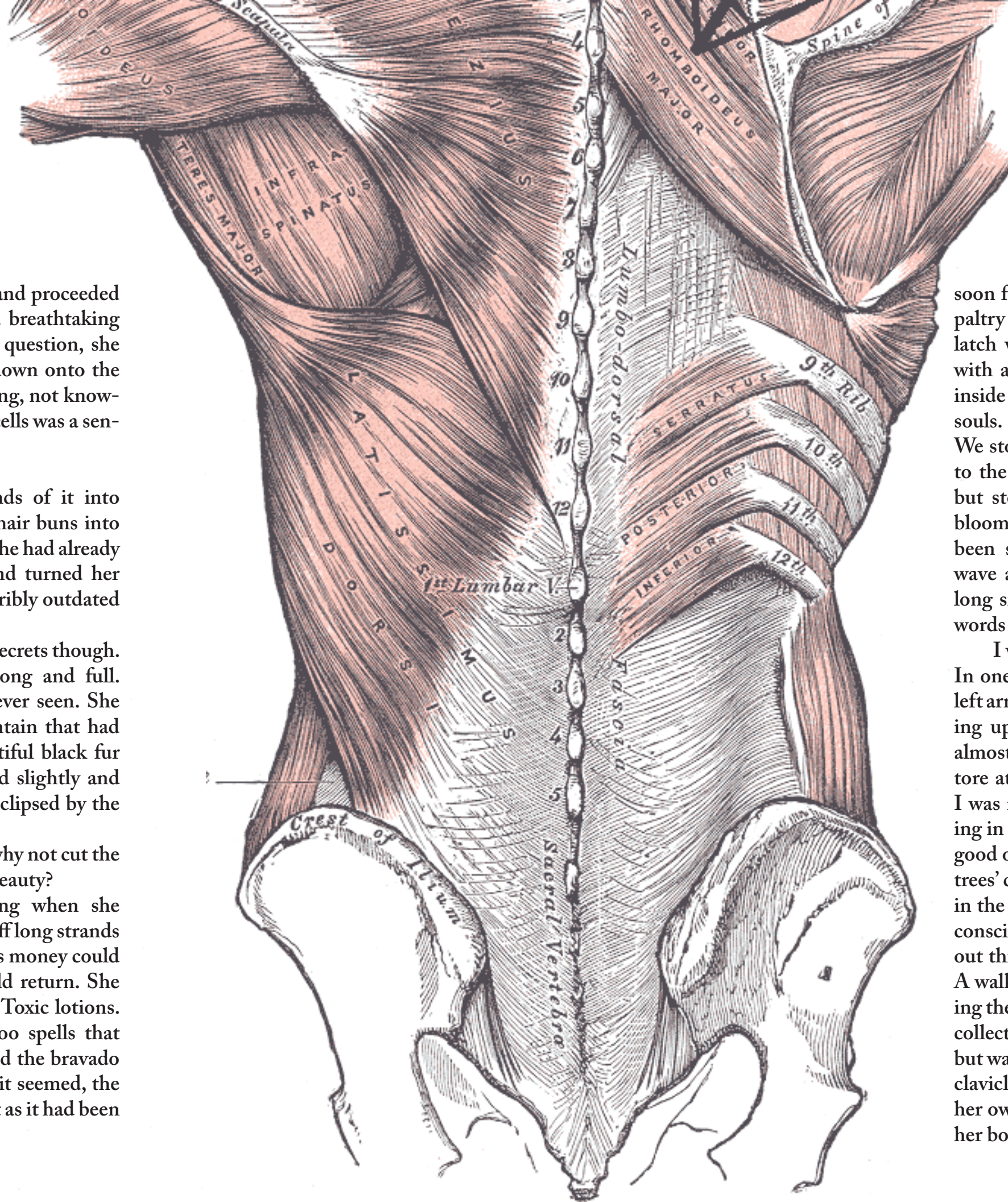
"I hate my hair!"

She moaned and rolled strands of it into small lumps and then shoved those hair buns into her pocket ovens. I tried to smile but she had already made up her mind to disapprove and turned her back to me, ignoring the boy with terribly outdated skin.

I was certain to charm out her secrets though. I exclaimed I loved it. It was so long and full. And probably the darkest color I'd ever seen. She looked like the silhouette of a mountain that had been draped in a luscious and bountiful black fur coat. Hearing my remark, she turned slightly and grinned. A soft half moon partially eclipsed by the thick mane.

If she hated her hair so much, why not cut the locks and be done with it despite its beauty?

She had tried. Every morning when she awoke, she explained, she would lop off long strands using only the sharpest hedge pruners money could buy. But by noontime, the hair would return. She had tried barbers with special fluids. Toxic lotions. Anti-anti-aging creams. Even voodoo spells that called for the tooth of an alligator and the bravado of a bullfrog. No matter the remedy, it seemed, the hair grew back just as lush and vibrant as it had been before.



"Is there anything more bothersome," she whispered into only my ear, "than having to deal with skin? Sometimes, I wish I could be in my bones and nothing else."

I nodded.

And then we stowed away without another word spoken. Driven by a fated breeze stagecoach, we soon found ourselves standing outside the paltry gates of an old cherry orchard. The latch was unlocked and the hinge awoke with an obnoxious squeal, but we slipped inside without a single witness to our bared souls. We skipped over collected puddles. We stomped on splintered bark. We raced to the center where the tallest trees grew, but stood silently when we noticed their blooms were gone. They were dry. They'd been stripped of beauty by the summer wave and the neglect of a town that had long since abandoned saying encouraging words to little things that longed to grow.

I went first.

In one motion, I ripped the skin from my left arm, starting at the wrist and then moving up my ulna. With flesh and muscles almost completely gone, my boney fingers tore at the final remains of my body until I was nothing more than a skeleton basking in the warm rays of the sun. The air felt good on my exposed frame and I heard the trees' dead limbs shake with approval. But in the presence of her stare, I became self-conscious. I was some foolish pale ghoul out three months too early for Halloween. A walking, talking anatomy picture prowling the normally safe orchard row. I tried to collect my innards and retreat to the brush, but was stopped as she placed a hand on my clavicle. Moved by my bravery or swung by her own convictions, she too violently tore her body bare. Hair and all.

And as we stood there, our skins unkempt and strewn on the ground, the grass grew thick and the trees bloomed once more. And every cocoon – entered by springtime caterpillars who had feasted on rotten wood – opened to reveal lavender and chartreuse butterflies that fluttered up into the clouds, never to be seen again.

Everyday over the next few months, we'd meet at that same street and run away to our secret spot. Under the shade of the trees, we'd rip each others flesh away and lay in just our bones beneath the leaves. We'd giggle and smirk as we'd drape our skins over the branches like a canopy. Or tie them to the strongest trunks to swing from gory, homemade hammocks. Sometimes we'd eat whole handfuls of the fruit and discuss how miserable both of our lives had become living in a world that makes everybody wear such uncomfortable skin.

Most of the time, though, we didn't say anything at all. Instead, we'd just hold each other with our bodies pulled close and our rib cages intertwined. Our coccyges mingled while our femurs negotiated and oh how we danced – two beautiful skeletons waltzing to a song that only we could hear. It was safe there, beneath those cherry trees, tucked away from peoples' stares. Protected from the watchful eye of God in nothing more than the bodies He didn't quite give us.

Those were the best moments, and in them, I felt the proof that I was truly a man.

And I was not shy about my exploits, even though I probably should've been. Other neighborhood boys would

query what it was like to see a person without their skin. I'd explain the gore and the mess and the gunk that got beneath your nails with exaggerated macabre. Then assure them most things in life contain these elements and a grown man has got to be able to deal with it. I felt wise and strong and all knowing. They'd hang on every detail I'd give, either out of curiosity or repulsion. I'm sure even mama began to detect something suspicious was happening, if only because my constant complaints about my epidermis had ceased. But she never once questioned me. After all, I was inarguably mature now. And I continued to venture out to the cherries to fulfill my wants.

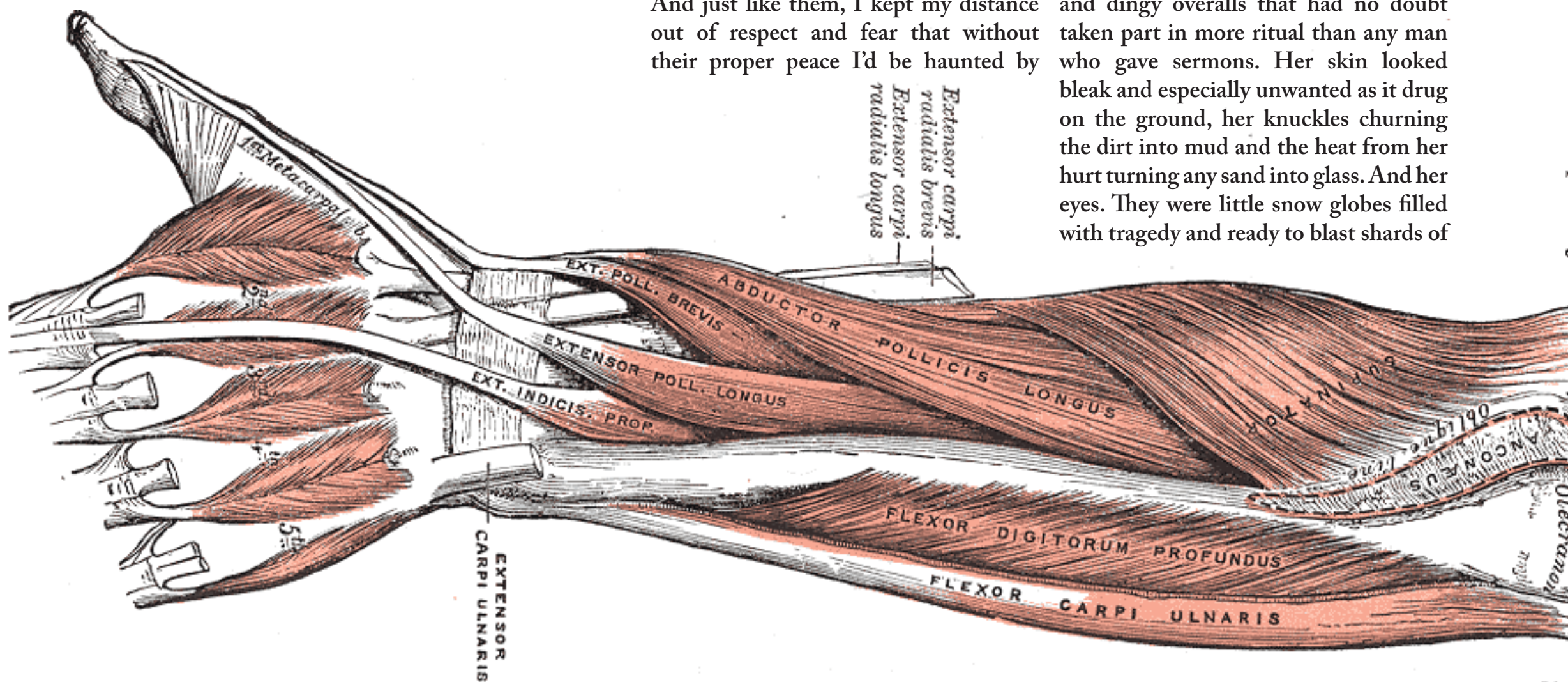
One day, however, the street corner was empty. I ran to the orchard and called out her name, but she was nowhere to be

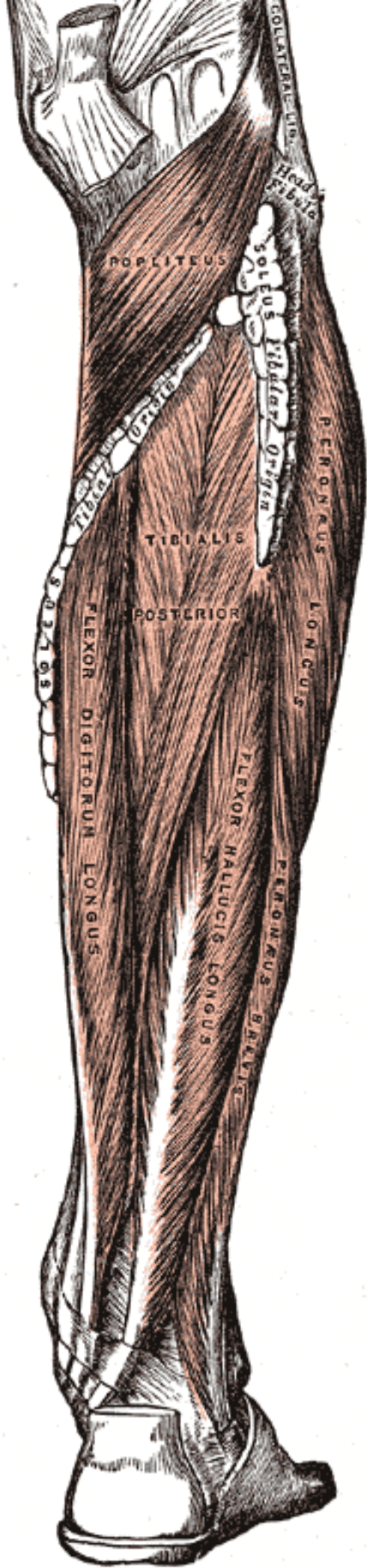
found. Frustrated and hurt, I tore through the streets looking for clues to her disappearance until I came across a funeral procession. They marched along silently in neatly adorned rows, each person's skin pigmented to mourning black and gray. There were drummers who followed the casket and pounded away the cadence of the death march. And with each pulse of rhythm, the entire congregation would shudder like a cold wind off the ocean was tickling them unwontedly. Further out still, in the hills that looked down on the weaving road perhaps, crows squawked a song of remorse with just the slightest hint of humor in their cackles – I've always found it next to impossible to tell whether ravens are distraught or relieved in moments of great loss.

And just like them, I kept my distance out of respect and fear that without their proper peace I'd be haunted by

whoever had passed. It is common knowledge that death is not the end, but the beginning, and everybody knows someday we'll all begin too. But the last thing I wanted to do was dishonor a person enough for them to will an eternity spent yelling boo at me from my closet. Or in the corner of that crawl space of my garage that mama sometimes made me get boxes from.

It was out of the corner of my eye then, that I saw her. She was slowly trudging along at the end – only followed by two cemetery workers who had shovels slung over their shoulders and dingy overalls that had no doubt taken part in more ritual than any man who gave sermons. Her skin looked bleak and especially unwanted as it drug on the ground, her knuckles churning the dirt into mud and the heat from her hurt turning any sand into glass. And her eyes. They were little snow globes filled with tragedy and ready to blast shards of





melted snow all over our cobblestone streets. But mostly I noticed her hair. It was cut. Kept. Formal. The shortest in her row, even though it was well past afternoon.

Some men carried special jars that allowed smoke to pour out like the tail of a cat, whisking and slinking around those who wore hoods to hide their grief. It came up and licked my cheek, and I coughed. A nice, petite cough. Something respectful, but just enough to give myself away. Half of the procession turned and glared. I shuffled my feet and shrank from their confusion, trying to become invisible against the cement wall where I stood. I felt exactly as I did when I was a child waiting for a train to pass; my freedom just beyond its tracks.

I caught her gaze. As the procession turned the corner, she snuck away, grabbing my hand and pulling me along as we headed for the orchard. We hustled past its rusty gates and navigated the trees expertly till we came to our spot in the center where the giant trees slinked over, hugging one another like lamenting archways. I reached for my wrist and began to tear, but she placed her hand atop mine, stopping my insistence.

She leaned her entire self into my chest and began to cry.

Uncertain what to do, I'd pull away, but each time she'd only inch me closer until I just wrapped my body around hers and ran my fingers through her short hair. I cooed gentle words and stood strong, propping her up even when it felt like both of our legs would give in to the grief. We posed there for hours. As her tears rolled off her cheek, they'd gently meet my chest and run down my sternum, warming the outer most layer of my delicate skin.

The day ended with both of our flesh still intact, and I walked her to her house, giving our first and final kiss on her forehead right before she retreated through an orange oval door. I stood for a moment, watching the plumes from inside fire out the chimney, pretending not to notice her family's curious stares at the boy standing outside their windows. It was in this moment, and only this mo-

ment, that a hummingbird perched on a fencepost near me cleared its throat and spoke-- as hummingbirds are sometimes, as it may or may not be commonly known, the voice of our entire universe.

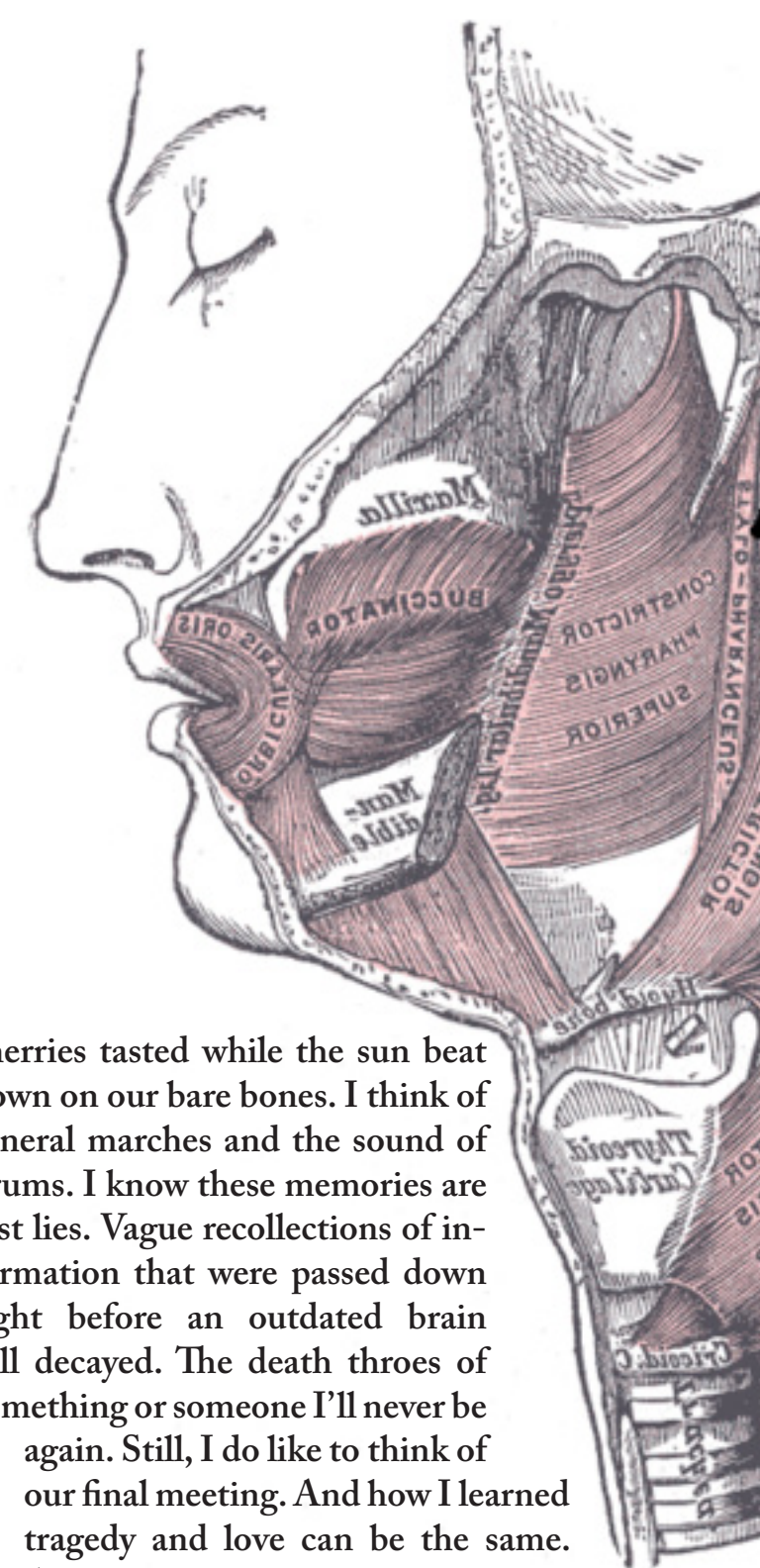
"Now son, you are a man."

And then it flew off. I smiled and then slowly turned away and found my own way back home again. The summer ended the next day as did her and my routine.

Eventually, the doctors were right and every cell I had died out and was replaced by newer ones. This process continued again and again until now even my replacement cells have been replaced. I guess I finally have my new skin. But in a not too distant future, I know I'll shed away this old self as well.

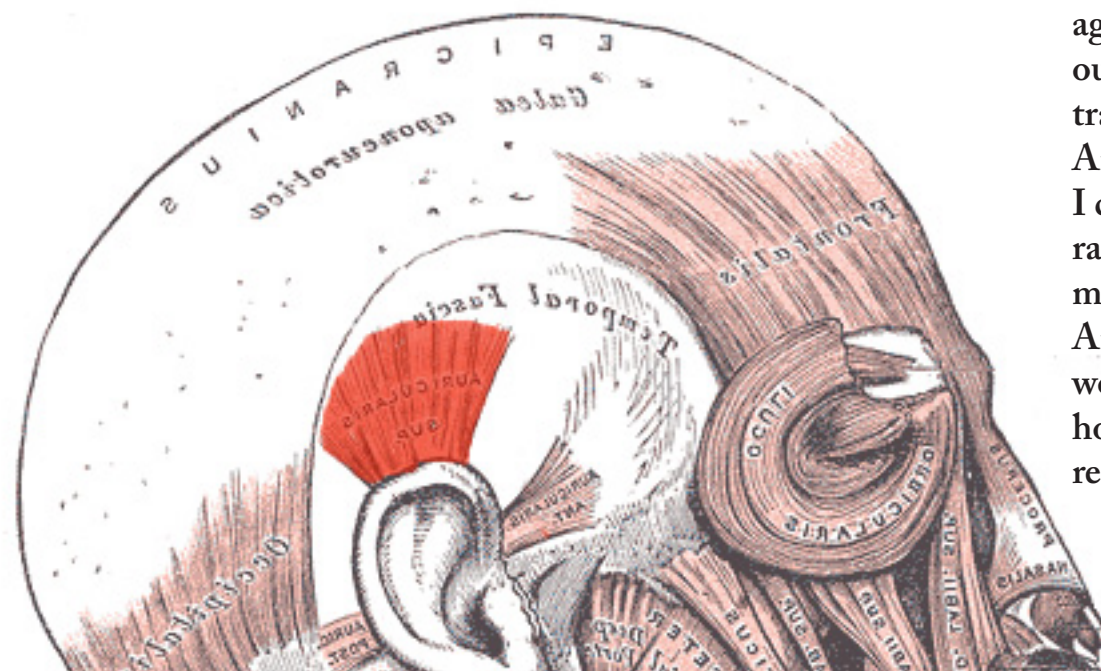
Sometimes I wonder what it'd be like to be aware in that exact moment: When the last cell of who you were flakes off in the wind and your entire past becomes just another speck added to a collection of specks under a sofa that needs cleaning.

Yet every once in a great while I'll hear a lullaby, or a scent invades my nose, and I think of my summer spent without skin. I think of us dancing and the way the



cherries tasted while the sun beat down on our bare bones. I think of funeral marches and the sound of drums. I know these memories are just lies. Vague recollections of information that were passed down right before an outdated brain cell decayed. The death throes of something or someone I'll never be again. Still, I do like to think of our final meeting. And how I learned tragedy and love can be the same. And, if I close my eyes hard enough, I can almost feel the way her sadness ran down along my chest. It was the most alive I've ever been.

And despite all the science in the world telling me otherwise, somehow, someway, I think my new skin remembers too.



Letter from the Other Editor

Send all complaints to:
Kevin@yipezine.com

Wholesale Costume Rebellion at World Fantasy Convention 2009!

Jason mentioned that one of the factors that delayed this issue was the 2009 World Fantasy Convention, held over Halloween Weekend at the Fairmont Hotel in San Jose. This interfered with our YIPE! timetable because yours truly and a number of our contributors were on staff for WFC 2009. My husband Andy & I were in charge of the hospitality suite, and we'd spent the better part of the last year designing a décor theme inspired by Edgar Allen Poe's The Balloon-Hoax.

WFC is first and foremost a profes-

sional conference for the writers, editors, and publishers of fantastic fiction and art. The board of directors is very sensitive to the conference's public image, in particular to anything that might find it lumped in with fannish activities and conventions. As a result, there is no filk-singing, no fanzine lounge, and costuming is actively discouraged. I understand their concerns; they can be summed up as "the last thing we want is for the only photo published by a jour-



nalist to be of some whack-job in a cape."

On the other hand, WFC is also famous for the hospitality events (parties) hosted by assorted publishers and individuals. This year, while the committee and staff toed the line, several people decided they were going to have Halloween parties on Saturday night (Oct 31st) and a grass-roots campaign to dress up started. There was a Steampunk party, a zombie birthday party, and a DJ'd horror party. There was even a Facebook event, "I will dress up for Halloween at WFC 2009."

This costume rebellion on the part of the (adult, professional)

New Trek Uhura arm in arm with a corseted classic Trek medical officer.

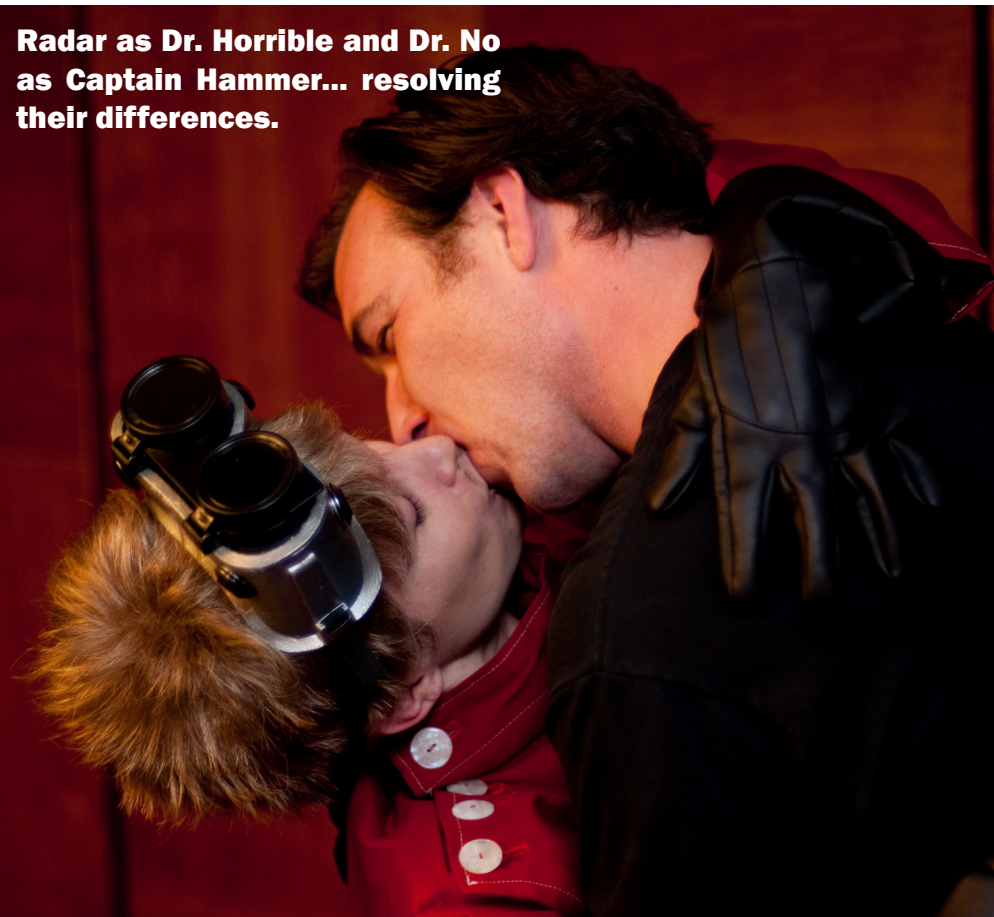


attendees was marvelous to observe. I think nearly half the people I saw at the parties that night were in costume, and those who were not were appreciative of the ones who were. I dressed fairly

conservatively, in my "Aeroscaph Pilot's Uniform" illustrated above, to cut the 3-foot tall hot-air-balloon-shaped cake we commissioned for Edgar Allen Poe's birthday. (Later I changed to a much more comfortable "tropical" version of the uniform. We won't print that photo)

Sunday morning, everyone was back in professional drag. The world hadn't ended. I hope the WFC board appreciates that fact, and that for that one night, the grownups in their costume rebellion made the convention a little more fantastic (and fun). That is, after all, the point of it all this costume stuff, right?

Radar as Dr. Horrible and Dr. No as Captain Hammer... resolving their differences.





YIPE! NOVEMBER 2009

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