

# PARALLEL PREP

SUNDAY LATE ISSUE | JULY 6, 2025

In this official issue: Fencing, Drumming, Meeting, Time Traveling

## Programming Changes

Classics of Science Fiction II & III (at 8 and 11PM) have been cancelled.

### J.K. Woodward: BayCon Is a Party

In his Main Stage interview Sunday, Guest of Honor J.K. Woodward compared his first BayCon to other fan gatherings. “Star Trek and comic cons are industry-run. There are panels with 20 people, and they’re rushing you everywhere,” he said. “BayCon is more intimate—it’s fan-run. It’s like a party.”

Woodward will introduce his own miniseries—*One Last Trick* is a five-issue horror/science-fiction arc about a sex worker-turned-revolutionary in a cyberpunk dystopia—at one of those corporate cons, San Diego Comic-Con, in July.

## Fencing Demo



The sun shone down on the live fencing demo as presented by the Italian Renaissance Swordsmanship Academy (IRSA)

## Taiko Performance

If you heard a booming rhythmic drumming yesterday afternoon, we’re pleased to tell you it wasn’t in your head but rather a taiko drum performance courtesy of Wadaiko Newark! Sensei Sue, Sensei Terry, Dr. Wanda, Paige Ajimura, Carol Jo Tichenor, Dan Tichenor, Irena Kuo, Finni Chang, Pat Doyne, Selina Tang, Kit Chan Most, and Veronica Coates wowed the Main Stage audience with deep, synchronous beats. In between numbers, the history of group taiko drumming was also shared.

According to Wadaiko Newark’s website, Wadaiko is the Japanese term for the traditional style of drumming known in the western world as Taiko. Wadaiko is the playing of traditional Japanese rhythms on traditional style drums.

The emergence of taiko in North America is largely credited to Grandmaster Seiichi Tanaka who formed the San Francisco Taiko Dojo in 1968.

## Westercon Business Meeting

The Westercon Business Meeting ratified an amendment to the Westercon Bylaws to retain the formal name of the convention and suggest that it be held in May, June, or July.

The Business Meeting also gave first passage to a motion to repeal the Westercon Bylaws so as to retire Westercon, concluding with Westercon 80. This motion will be up for ratification at next year’s Westercon.

Finally, the Business Meeting formed a committee to discuss any further motions and resolutions pertinent to the orderly winding down of Westercon and report such matters back to next year’s Westercon Business Meeting. Please contact [businessmeeting2025@westercon.org](mailto:businessmeeting2025@westercon.org) if you would like to serve on this committee.

## Panel: What Could Have Been

The What Could Have Been panel discussed our interest in alternate histories, parallel dimensions, and multiverses.

It's based in "fascination with the mistakes made in history," said panelist Cliff Winnig. The panel cited World War 2 alternate histories *The Man in the High Castle* (Philip K. Dick, 1962) and *The Iron Dream* (Norman Spinrad, 1972, in which Hitler becomes a science fiction author).

Winnig credited Michael Moorcock's work as pop culture's AU beginnings: "It was the greatest marketing gimmick ever. All of his characters are the same guy in different worlds — so we read them all." Panelist Chris Garcia pointed toward the Silver Age of comic books. "[DC Comics editor] Julius Schwartz told cover artists: 'Draw a monkey fighting Superman, and winning'. To make these stories possible, they needed alternate universes."

There followed the famous comic book arcs Crisis on Infinite Earths in DC, and Secret Wars in Marvel, said Garcia, "but film did it best."

Larry Niven ("the committee told me I could barge into any panel I liked") is a 2015 recipient of the Damon Knight Memorial Grand Master Award (lifetime achievement in fantasy/science fiction). Niven said AU fiction is "very personal. Each of you thinks about different decisions you could've made." Though he's opposed to the whole idea.

"I despise the alternate track theory — though I've used it myself at times. None of your decisions count because they've all happened in another universe." If you must read one of his, Niven said, make it the 1989 time travel story "The Return of William Proxmire," first appeared in *What Might Have Been? Vol. 1: Alternate Empires* (ed. Gregory Benford).



M.A. Carrick teaching dances from the *Rook & Rose* books.

## Poet Laureate VIP Experience



Poet-In-Residence Audrey T. Williams had "a lovely time!"

## spSF Membership Cards

Society members. Did you know that we have new membership cards for you? Come by our table next to InfoDesk to claim yours. Bring your member # with you!

## Party Report

Last night following the Masquerade & Variety show, BayCon's party hosts reopened for another night of revelry in a convenient parallel dimension.

A Bear's Picnic (1703): Past BayCon GoH Larry Niven visited his favorite party. Tonight Chaz brings back meatballs and mac & cheese!

The Red Room (2642) continued to honor the late director David Lynch with *Lost Highway* while tracks from Twin Peaks drifted through the room.

Sir Lance's party (2602) still had that (delicious?) cucumber-lime gin that a certain reporter still hasn't had the opportunity to sample.

TRMN (2609) had a casual reception with a scattering of berets. Pod shots were served with rumchata, curaçao, and a cinnamon flavor liquor that gave it a taste akin to alcoholic Cinnamon toast crunch.

Nicolais' 42 "The Answer" Anniversary Party featured the "Scorpion" drink with fresh-crushed mint garnish.

Party Report contributors: Ashley Fakava, Yochanan, Hope Hirst

## Parallel Press Staff

Editor-in-Chief: Chris Castro

Newsletter Staff, Contributing Editor:  
Ashley Fakava

Newsletter Staff: Frisco Del Rosario

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