

FRIDAY, JUNE 30

Friday 12:00 – 1:00pm

Bryan Newton: Teen Titans GO!: Producing Children's Animation and Digital Media

Bryan talks about his start in television animation, tools of the trade, and the thought process that goes into shows like Warner Bros. *Teen Titans Go!*, Nickelodeon's *Breadwinners*, and Disney Channel's *Right Now Kapow*.

Friday 12:00 – 1:00pm

Men of Cosplay by LGBT HQ's Matthew Levine

Cosplaying from a male perspective. Wardrobe malfunctions, the purpose of a dance belt, objectification, and double standards. Discuss everything from armor, to character choice, etc...

Friday 12:00pm – 1:00pm

Overcoming Personal Inertia by La'Ron Readus

As an author, I have struggled tremendously with sitting on my stories and not sharing them with the world. Whether it was because I felt they weren't good enough, or that I lacked inspiration to put pen to paper. As an entertainer seeking to make a name for myself on YouTube, I've found myself dealing with the same problems over and over again. Nevertheless, I've overcome the need to halt my progress in doing the things that genuinely make me happy: writing fiction and being a much needed face in the spectrum of geek, nerd and pop culture. I want to share my journey with others so that they can overcome their own sense of inertia as well.

Friday 1:00pm – 2:00pm

Covering Pop Culture on the Web with Hybrid Network by CJ Paschall, Josh Baldera, William Etheridge

We are an online media group dedicated to providing the latest updates on popular culture news with a heavy focus on nerd media such as comic books, films, horror franchises, and much more. With this panel we want to bring an insight into the world of covering entertainment and pop culture online and building a digital media brand.

Friday 1:00pm – 2:00pm

Life of an Outcast by Substantial

Substantial speaks to his experiences as a black artist working in countries where you're one of the only Blacks or People of Color in the room.

Friday 2:00pm – 3:30pm

Everyone's a Gamer: How the Gaming Diversity Taxonomy Redefines Who's a Gamer by Anthony Ashford

"Gamer" is a particularly interesting word, in that consumers of other multimedia content such as film or music don't have a single word that defines their interest and engagement in such content. We've seen "gamer" used as a personal identifier of pride around a hobby that mainstream society doesn't understand, but we've also seen "gamer" used as a term for the sake of exclusivity, specifically against marginalized people (i.e. "women can't be gamers").

Gaming + Social Justice hopes to change this and reclaim "gamer" as a word that anyone and everyone can use to describe themselves (regardless of how much or how little you play). To us, it's all about "engagement" and "investment," and we encourage you to see how we've broadened the definition of "gamer" in this session.

Friday 2:00pm – 3:00pm

Closet Cosplay by Shinobi Chronicles

This is taking whatever you have in your closet and creating an awesome cosplay that can wow your audience.

Friday 2:00pm – 3:30pm

Fandom Diversified: Changing Dynamics of Nerd Journalism by Valerie Complex,, Alex Aghahowa, Tanisha Kelly, Ira Hobbs and Kenneth Lyles

We're entering a new renaissance in geekery. Now more than ever media personalities and journalists of color have a poignant and influential voice that resonates throughout nerd culture. From the Gamergate scandal to the advent of BlerdNation, both high and low points are heavily spotlighted. But what does this mean for the future? Is it mission accomplished? This panel talks to journalists and media personalities of color about meeting challenges head on, how they are working to make change, and has them get really real about the climate of nerddom today.

Friday 3:30pm – 4:30pm

UsualRangers5: A Mighty Morphin' Panel! by Cree Rogers, Jerry Pringle II, Andre Johnson, Aaron Pringle, Natalie Pringle, Chris Housey

UsualRangers5 are a group of 90's kids based out of Savannah, Ga who grew up watching and playing Power Rangers! When they met, the group formed itself, with each of us bringing a Ranger to complete the team! Got questions about our suits, our group, or our experience saving the world? Join us at our panel where we discuss who we are and what we do!

Friday 3:30pm – 5:00pm

"Do It for the Culture!": Why the Cool Kawaii Life Chose ME! by Nolan Fontaine, Imani Brown, Ronald Green

"Cool-Kawaii" is a term coined by Dr. Thorsten Botz-Bornstein discussing Afro-Japanese aesthetics. Cool Kawaii combines the African-American hip-hop culture with kawaii lifestyle. This will be an interactive discussion on anime, all things kawaii, otaku culture and how it's helped YOU personally & professionally. Meet with Imani K. Brown, international tattoo artist, illustrator & proprietor of Little Ink Playshop, as well as Nolan L. Fontaine, M.S., Ronald C. Green, Jr., co-founders of Urban Otaku Alliance, LLC.

Friday 4:00pm – 5:00pm

Heirs Apparent by Tuskegee Heirs

Come hang out with Greg Burnham and Marcus Williams, the creators of Tuskegee Heirs. Sit with the 2016 Glyph award winning "Rising Stars" as they detail how their comic careers got started, the inspiration behind Tuskegee Heirs, their successful Kickstarter campaign, goals for animation and more.

Friday 4:00pm – 5:30pm

Cosplay in Japan 101 by Sooyong

Cosplay in Japan 101 is panel is for people who have ever wondered what the cosplay world is like in Japan and how it compares to cosplay in the USA. I will go over a wide range of topics, starting with a brief introduction to well-known Japanese cosplayers and events, as well as debunking any myths surrounding cosplay in Japan. Some of these misconceptions are related to the generalizations made that Japanese cosplayers are "more skilled" than American cosplayers, and that cosplay and cosplay photography is always taken very seriously when it comes to accuracy and craftsmanship. Lastly, I plan to give a personal account of my experience at some of Japan's most popular events, such as the summer and winter Comic Markets, World Cosplay Summit, Tokyo Game Show, and a few events that are not directly related to cosplay.

Friday 4:30pm – 5:30pm

From Sketch to Screen by Rachel Hixon of Tangent Artists

Have you ever spent an hour (or more) trying to completely clean up a scanned-in sketch so you can work with it in Photoshop? Ever lost sleep trying to color a shaded pencil sketch without losing all those subtle details? Considered seppuku over trying to make a terrible scan usable? In this panel, Rachael Hixon of Tangent Artists will share with you the tips, tricks, and shortcuts she has learned in her 20 years of using Photoshop as an artist and graphic designer to make the task of getting your sketch onto your computer screen as quickly and painlessly as possible-- and what to do with it once you get it there!

Friday 5:00pm – 6:00pm

Anime vs. Hip Hop: A Concert Panel with Tribute to Nujabes and Other Warrior Producers and MCs
by DJ AARock and Substantial

For the past few years DJ AAROCK and Substantial have hosted their popular panel discussing the many bonds that Anime and Hip hop share with each other. From Samuria Champloo and the acclaimed Soundtrack produced by Nujabas and Fat Jon to countless hip hop songs that have sampled Anime sound bites and themes.

Friday 5:00pm – 6:00pm

International Cosplayer Q & A

A Q&A featuring Blerdcon's international cosplay guests! Come to find out what cosplay/convention culture and the PoC experience is like in their respective countries.

Friday 5:00pm – 6:00pm
Body Paint 101 by Allegriana

Everything cosplayer Allegriana learned about costume bodypainting through trial and error (and from being a body paint model). Materials, prep, application, clean up, safety concerns.

Friday 5:00 – 6:30pm
Pretty, Brown, and Nerdy Presents: Otaku Turn Up

A dance event where nerds can be themselves, show off their awesome dance moves and win cool prizes in the process. Similar to the typical convention rave, except instead of rave music, we plan on having hip hop remixes of popular anime/video game songs. It will be a night for all otakus to remember!

Friday 5:30pm – 6:30pm
Ronald Seaman: "Behind the Makeup" Screening

Screening and Q&A session for the new cosplay documentary "Behind the Makeup" by London film maker "Lea Winchcombe", featuring Ronald Seaman (Aracknoid3 Cosplay).

Friday 5:30pm – 6:30pm
Wigging Out: The Art of Wigs by Foxy Squire and Maki Roll

Your costume is perfection and the shoes are a spot on match, but your hair is not cooperating. Maybe it's the wrong color or length. Perhaps, you need a specific part in the middle or a strand to fall in just the right place. Whatever the reason, it's time for a wig. But how...This class will help guide you through the thought process of buying styling and storing your wig.

Friday 6:00pm – 7:00pm
Jay Funk: How I Made Tutting a Business

Join Jay Funk, as he tells you his story and gives you industry insight.

Friday 6:00pm – 7:00pm
Exploring the History and Diversity within Lolita Fashion by AmaniHime

"Lolita Fashion (a.k.a. 'Gothic Lolita') is one the longest-living and largest youth fashion subcultures in Japan—so large that it now has an extremely large international community, made up of well-over tens of thousands of people. With its roots in the Japanese punk and goth scene, Lolita continues to thrive as one of the most hyper-feminine counterculture fashion movements – as well as becoming increasingly intersectional, with a growth of members within the African-diaspora and other ethnic, religious backgrounds, crossdressers and other LGBTQ+ identities. Hosted by NYC-local AmaniHiME (recently featured by VICE, NYLON,, come learn about the history, the aesthetics and see representation within the Lolita fashion movement.

Friday 6:30pm – 7:30pm
Geek Night Comedy Show featuring Stand-Up Comics Derek Williams and Charles Ellis

Friday 6:30pm – 8:00pm
The Future of Afrofuturism and Black Speculative Fiction by William Jones, K Ceres Wright (author), Chad Eric Smith (actor), Jaycen Wise (Comic Creator), LH Moore (author)

There has been a continuous and growing movement within the black creative community which has been coined, "Afrofuturism". This creative movement has expanded into various medium (film, television, comic books, literature and music) but now the question is, where do we go from here?

The purpose of this panel will be to discuss the meaning of Afrofuturism, its necessity, and its future. Panelists will deal with the social, political, and economic impact of Afrofuturism and Black Speculative Fiction. Panelists will discuss, the rewards and challenges of being a creative person in the fields of Afrofuturism and Black Speculative Fiction. Attendees will also gain insight into the creative process and how to get started in the business writing and comic book production.

Friday 6:30pm – 8:00pm**Proper Pitching and Promoting Yourself** by Bryan Tillman

Bryan Tillman covers such topics as presentation, body language, elevator pitches, standing out, interview skills, and how to make an opportunity when there isn't one. This is the program for you if you are looking to make a name for yourself or trying to get your ideas in front of your company of choice.

Friday 7:00pm – 8:00pm**Nerd Talk Live (with Pretty, Brown, and Nerdy)**

On our Pretty Brown & Nerdy Youtube channel, we have a brand new series called "Nerd Talk" where we rant and have discussions about anything geek related, whether it be comic books, video games, anime, etc. It's an open dialogue. We, the panelists, give our opinions on whatever topics the audience asks us about, while asking for their input as well. We will have back and forth conversations and geek out the entire time. This interactive panel will definitely be the "talk" of the con.

Friday 7:30pm – 8:30pm**Heroes of Diversity** by LGBT HQ (Matthew Levine, Jay Justice, Tony Ray, Allegriana)

Public Pop Culture figures from minority groups who overcame adversity, disability, and/or prejudice to find success in their chosen fields.

Friday 8:00pm – 9:00pm**Cosplay in Non-Canon Bodies** by TaLynn Kel, Tanya Woods, JaBarr Lansley

This panel will discuss cosplay for people who aren't canon. It will explore topics like body type, race, physical ability, age, and gender as we explore the perception and expectations of cosplay and cosplay popularity. We'll also discuss different ways to cosplay characters and discuss issues like character fidelity, armor on curvier bodies, and cosplay hacks.

Friday 8:00pm – 9:00pm**Godfather of Anime: Osamu Tezuka** by Andrew Davis and Anne Davis

Osamu Tezuka is known as the Godfather of Anime. In this panel, we will explore his early life, along with his early influences from his family and his surroundings. We will further explore his journey into how he became a manga creator, which has changed the industry. Throughout this panel we will explore some of his works including Astroboy, Black Jack, and Kimba the White Lion. Finally, this panel will explore the influences that he has had on Japan and America.

Friday 8:00pm – 9:30pm**The Heck is a Monster Hunter?** by Mary Rosado, Johnathan Rodriguez, Dailin Mercedes, Kevin Gomez-Sierra, Jonathan Ama

Monster Hunter, as a franchise, has seen consistent enormous success in Japan. With the release of Monster Hunter Generations, the series has finally achieved immense recognition in the US, being one of the bestselling 3DS titles, and with it, has opened the doors to a new outlook on social gaming in the states. With the immense success of Monster Hunter Generations, we wish to analyze: the reason of its success, how those aspects affect the game's mechanics, and how these mechanics have improved peer to peer gaming interaction; a deconstruction on gaming social life; most importantly, the social lives of the games players.

Friday 8:30pm – 10:00pm**EDO BUSHIDO: The Vibe of the Afro Samurai Concert** featuring Substantial, Asheru and DJ AARock

Take a musical journey from Japan to the Boondocks with **Substantial**: A pioneer of the sonic art form of Jazz Hop who worked with the legendary producer Nujabes, Marcus D and other great soundsmiths. **Asheru**: A formative underground contender responsible for the classic Judo Chop from the Acclaimed animated series "**The Boondocks**" and **DJ AAROCK**: A master on the Decks of Steel - cutting and chopping his way through various forms of sounds to take his listeners on a musical journey.

Friday 9:00pm – 10:00pm**A Transgender Journey in Cospositivity** by Jazmine Cosplays

I will be sharing my positive crossplay experiences in the last year, mostly sharing my views on the openness of the cosplay community. There will also be a Q & A on my journey and I will try to encourage new cosplayers.

Friday 9:00pm – 10:00pm**The Shape of Evil** by Monica Marier and Rachael Hixon of Tangent Artists

Why do villains look villainous? Why do heroes look heroic? Rachael and Monica, professional artists, talk about how colors and shapes are used in popular character designs to trick your brain and how you can use them in your *own* characters

Friday 9:30pm – 11:00pm**Get Your Comics and Projects Featured in Media Now!** by Erika Hardison, Bobby Geekington, Ira Cobbs, Lance John, Junae Bennett

Launching a new comic? Releasing new art? Need to know how to get your work featured on blogs? This panel of bloggers, podcasters and journalists will give you the professional insight on how to pitch to media. You'll learn how to find the right bloggers for your project and how to cultivate relationships with the bloggers. Learn how to make the media interested in your work!

Friday 10:00pm – 2:00pm**EDO BUSHIDO After Party**

DJ AARock takes to the wheels of steel to celebrate Blerdcon's first official dance. Just like the con itself, DJ AARock spins an all-inclusive East meets West set of energetic popular tracks from EDM to KPop and everything in between! This is far beyond your standard Con dance!

Friday 10:00pm – 12:00am**Certain Point of View's Star Wars Live Roleplaying** by Adonijah Thomas, Addy Thomas, Ben Milton, Case Aiken, Cory Putnam, Shawn Lyons, Jamichael Folson

Ben and Addy of the Certain Point of View podcast are joined by their friends on a live Dungeons & Dragons-style Star Wars Roleplaying Adventure! Expect an exciting Star Wars story mixed with some of the silliness and sarcasm of the podcast crew. Oh, and there's plenty of awkward acting.

Friday 11:00pm – 12:00am**Anti-Blackness in Fandom** by Cleopatra from the Bronx, Isake Smith, Tony Ray, Jay Justice

This panel of queer blerds will explore the topic of cosplaying and the intersections of race, gender & sexual orientation. The panelists include cosplayers of all different skill types and interests allowing for a wide spectrum of fandom, both in real life and online. Unfortunately, all the panelists have horror stories to share. We aim to dismantle the stigma of "Cosplaying While Black", Gender-Bending, & Pink Washing. At the end of the day, our central question is: What are ways we, as black queer folks, can push back against the idea that we shouldn't take up space in fandom?

Friday 11:00pm – 12:00am**Kinks in Color: Navigating Sexuality, Fetish and Kinks as a POC** by Maki Roll, Dark Eros, Antrice and Tony Ray

Sexuality has been a long standing, often taboo topic among the PoC community. The hypersexualization and unwanted fetishization of men and women in our community discourages many from seeking reprieve from the mundane or "vanilla". Maki Roll and a team of expert panelists from all kinky walks of life are here to show that kink comes in all colors, and is healthy, fun and lucrative when experienced the right way. We will lead an open discussion on sexuality vs. sexual objectification, professional (and amateur) sex work, negotiating safe, consent based play, fetish based business and more. From curious kinksters, to seasoned leather daddies; this panel has something for everyone (just don't come in expecting 50 Shades of Grey)!

SATURDAY, JULY 1**Saturday 12:00am – 1:00am****Love and Madness (18+)** by Britany Marriott, Stacy Overby

We all do crazy things for love. How about bring the apocalypse? Or testing just how down for life your crew really is? Even better, how about killing all of those who stand in your "loved one's" way? Come join in a discussion about what some of our favorite anime characters are willing to do in the name of a crazy little thing called "love".

Saturday 9:00am – 10:00am

Appreciation or Appropriation? by Lauren Tillman, Lauren Edwards

Over the past decades, we have seen an increase in diverse anime and video game characters. Black characters have come a long way from Mr. Popo on Dragonball Z. However, the lines can blur when looking at black characters and wondering if the creators are appreciating the uniqueness of blackness or just dumping a lot of stereotypes into a brown character. Audience members will be able to decide if popular anime and video game characters are made out of appreciation or simply a walking stereotype. Are they even black or just dark skinned characters? Do the stereotypes help us identify with them more? This panel will be interactive with the audience, allowing for debate and expert knowledge about multiple characters, animes, and story-lines. Voices on both sides of the debate will be allowed to say their piece on whether a character is based off appreciation for black people and black culture, or if their their creator was lazy and pulled stereotypes for their own end.

Saturday 9:00am – 10:30am

DIY Cosplay: You Really CAN Do It Yourself by Denise Cross, Stephanie Cross, Joseph Cross

This panel will guide aspiring cosplayers through the process of making their first cosplay. Presenters will demonstrate and exhibit various cosplays that have easy construction, simple design and basic outfit pieces. Presenters will make a cosplay from start to finish in real-time and one lucky attendee will win a cosplay prize.

Saturday 10:00am – 12:00pm

Star Trek: Into Blackness by The Black Tribbles

There has been a significant Black presence throughout the entirety of Star Trek's history - it spans rank, political affiliation, and species, establishing a legitimate presentation of a cosmic African diaspora. As we've watched these characters through the years, we've experienced their individual trials and 'Tribbulations' alongside them. In solidarity, many of us compare the struggle of these beloved characters to the multitude of today's social issues. What would Uhura think of the mysterious death of Sandra Bland? As fathers, how would Worf or Sisko react to what happened to Trayvon Martin? Could Geordi tolerate the effects of the water crisis in Flint? Do the social justice obstacles of today's Black people run the risk of following them into the future? And if so, what steps can we take to prevent history from repeating itself? A good way to head off the evils of ignorance and intolerance is to have open discussions where problems can be voiced and solutions can be developed. The Black Tribbles can think of no better place to hold such a discussion than at BlerdCon. Over the course of its five-year history, this hilarious award-winning radio show/podcast has tackled a myriad of topics within the nerd genre, all from the lens of the Black American perspective. Through featuring independent writers, artists, and musicians, the show strives to establish an inclusive geeky voice to all who crave it.

Saturday 10:00am – 11:00am

The Future of Black/Multicultural Female Superheroes by Jazmin Truesdale

Discussing the presence/need for multicultural female superheroes and how we would like to see them represented.

Saturday 10:00am – 11:00am

Strong and Meaningful Story-Telling for your Comics and Novels by Eric Cooper, Phoe-nix Nebula, Jabaar Brown

This panel will dive into how to incorporate strong character development to help someone with the story that they would like to write or illustrate. We will also teach about outlining and plotting out an adventurous story that will compel the reader to not want to put your book down. Next what type of illustrators to work with and the what type of resources that are needed to finish the project. Lastly the, 'Art of Selling Your Creation.'

Saturday 10:30am – 12:00pm

Film Making: Concept to Completion by Tia Cherie Polite, Kevin Wendell Jones, Darlena Marie-Blander, Wendell Smith, Sr.

Most of us have sat and viewed various movies and shows via TV, film and the internet, but how many have watched and dreamed of making their own, but just didn't know where to begin. Two locally born creatives and their co-panelists, who have had their various works seen and heard from coast to coast, as well as internationally, show and tell you how they made it happen. Join award winning filmmaker, director, writer, visual effects artist, and actress Tia Cherie Polite (Owner & Founder of Black Rose Dagger Films) and award winning filmmaker, musician, sound designer, composer, cinematographer and VFX generalist, Kevin Wendell Jones, as they take you through the filmmaking process from concept to completion, including screenings of the short films "The Interrogation" and "Age of the Warrior", behind the scenes film clips and a live visual and audio effects editing session of a film.

Saturday 11:00am – 12:00pm

CosLove Presents: #icanbeaHERO by Patrick Michael Strange, Britany Marriott, Corey Morgan, Viva Valentina, Allen Ryde

Meet members of CosLove, DC Heroes, East Coast Avengers, Hope for Henry and The 501st as they provide tips on how to combine your passion for cosplay along with giving back to your local community and other charity efforts. Find out how you can reach out to local organizations,,other cosplayers/costumers to organize events as well as how to use cosplay to reach new patrons or engage students.

Saturday 11:00am – 12:00pm

Asian-American Nerddom and the Quest for Cool by Jo Fu, Joe Wang, Kim Nguyen, Jamie Noguchi

It's been a rough year for AAPIs, and we, as Asian-Americans, want to set the record straight on what Asian-American audiences are looking for in anime, comics, and representation in general. We'll discuss whitewashing, cool portrayals of AAPI in pop culture, and how AAPI nerds can support Blerds and BLM.

Saturday 11:00am – 12:00pm

LGBT Social Media Sensation by LGBT HQ (Matthew Levine, Jay Justice, Jazmine Cosplays, Nico Vasilo)

Discuss coming OUT online as not only gay, but as a cosplayer as well. Discuss the online vs. real life perception of our own LGBT presence and how it affects our day to day lives in today's pop culture atmosphere.

Saturday 12:00pm – 1:00pm

Nerdtino for Noobs: The Search for Latinx Geekdom and Diverse Nerd Culture by Thomas Delfi

Nerdtino is a social media community founded in August of 2016 to promote the history and presence of Latin American/Latinx, Hispanic, Xicano, Afro-Latin, Afro-Caribbean creators and fans in geek culture, from comic books and Sci-Fi novels to horror films and gaming. Launching November 18th, 2017, in Philadelphia, PA, Nerdtino will host the Nerdtino Expo, the first East Coast Latinx Comic Book Convention. Join Thomas Delfi, founder of the Nerdtino social media community and the Nerdtino Expo, on an exploration of Latin Geek History, the search for Diversity in Nerd Culture, and how to build a community.

Saturday 12:00pm – 1:00pm

How to Get Into Stunts by Jazzy Ellis, Curtis Lyons, Todd Terry and Gary Peebles

The personal stories of 3 film and TV stunt performers, Jazzy Ellis, Curtis Lyons, and Todd Terry. They're here to give you the inside scoop.

Saturday 12:00pm – 1:00pm

Frankensteining Patterns by Snow Tigra

Sometimes, the pattern you need for a costume simply doesn't exist...or doesn't come in the size you need. This panel by SnowCosplays will go into how to up-size patterns, swap out pieces, tips on tailoring and an all around how to guide on creating those strange shapes on characters that may not exist with standard patterns.

Saturday 1:00pm – 2:00pm

Rick and Morty: The Adventures of Bryan Newton

Bryan talks about working on Rick and Morty from pilot thru much anticipated Season 3. What it's like working on "adult" shows in American animation, producing animation as a POC, and industry struggles many artist face. Q&A

Saturday 1:00pm – 2:00pm

Beyond Creation: Diversity in Writing by Briana Lawrence

They say that if you want more diversity, you should go out and create it. However, that's just part of what needs to be done to get more representation. This panel will talk about three important elements to having more diversity in the world of fiction: creating it, representing it well, and supporting it.

Saturday 1:00pm – 2:00pm

The Changing Face of Cosplay by Valerie Complex, Brittany Marriott, JJ Griffin, Ronnie Roquet, T Stunning Spidey, Jiezl Yang

In the past five years, the cosplay fandom has moved away from the typical archetypal look of what cosplay represents. Now, cosplayers are as diverse as ever. There are subcultures of cosplayers that cater to everyone including PoC, disabled, and plus-size. However, this change has not been without its challenges. Many in the fandom still hold on to the old traditions, or that cosplay should only be one way, and for one group of people. This multicultural panel of cosplayers shatters any old perception of what cosplay is all about. They are a part of the ever-changing faces of the cosplay fandom.

Saturday 1:00pm – 2:00pm

AARock's DJ Workshop: 2 Turntables, and a mixer...and Computer...and a Controller

Learn the ins and outs of DJ culture and how DJing has led to a worldwide cultural phenomenon and has changed the sound of music since the early 70's. This workshop will cover the history of DJing and how it spawned the start of Hip Hop and has influenced and guided nearly every form of music since.

We will discuss pioneering and popular DJ's, learn tools, styles and Techniques, discuss how technology now plays a part, and the close relationship of DJing and sampling and music production.

Saturday 1:00pm – 2:30pm

How to Make a Simple Leather Bracer by Allegriana

During this class, we'll be making a simple leather bracer and discussing some of the basics of crafting with leather. The fee is \$25 and you'll leave with both a finished piece and newfound confidence in your ability to tackle leather projects! (Maximum, 15 attendees)

Saturday 2:00pm – 3:00pm

Hip Hop & Video Games: A Historical Look at their Good, Bad & Ugly Co-Operative Moments! by K-Murdock

This presentation chronicles the journeys of both video games & hip-hop, two cultural phenomena that happened to run parallel in their respective growths as well as commingling with one another to yield some very good... and not so very good ways over the last 40 years! Moderated by Howard University Media Professor, avid gamer and veteran hip-hop producer Kyle Murdock who is most known for producing some of the first songs, along with notable "nerdcore" emcee Mega Ran, to bridge the gap musically between the video games and hip-hop aesthetics.

Saturday 2:00pm – 3:00pm

Introduction to Stage/Film Combat by BlerdVision, Andrew Kim, Jayme Shin, Gerald Jay

Ever wanted to film a fight scene? This workshop will help you get started with the basics. From selling hits to faking hits, we will cover what you need to help you on your way.

Saturday 2:00pm – 3:30pm

Are You an American? New Cultural Narratives by Vishavjit Singh

There is no American look. Yet how we perceive each other with our visual senses has a dramatic consequence as the soap opera of American life unfolds. The concept of race, identity, nativism, nationalism, class, community and stories we create is impacted by this most important of our senses. In this storytelling workshop, an American narrative spanning across race, identity and superheroes explores what lies beyond what the eyes can see. This will be followed by an interactive cartoon session inspired by our own stories. Bring your stories and imaginations along for a fascinating ride.

Saturday 2:00pm – 3:00pm

In the Trenches: How to Educate the Well-Intended on Social Justice and Diversity by Pros and Cons Cosplay, Brichibi Cosplay, Oona Sura, and Everybody Loves Tony Ray

What do you do if your friend asks you about racism in the cosplay community? How do you respond when a co-worker asks you about Whitewashing? What's the best way to talk to those well-intentioned people in your life that have questions about why we care so much about diversity and inclusion? This group of panelists will discuss ways of tackling these conversations with those in your life who you'd like to help, and give you tips for talking about these issues. It will be an interactive panel with time for questions at the end.

Saturday 3:30pm – 5:00pm

BUSHIDO LOUNGE by DJ AARock

Take a “break” as DJ AAROCK takes you on a Jazz-hop musical journey through mystic hip hop breaks and Samurai Champloo inspired beats and rhythms. Get up and dance to the boom bap of the drums or just chill and nod your head to the chill vibes of the melodies.

Saturday 3:00pm – 4:00pm

The Artist’s Infrastructure: A Business Crash Course for Creatives by Tony Weaver, Jr.

The internet has made it easier than ever for creatives of all kinds to find an audience online. However, for black creatives, paths to monetization aren’t easy to find. In this panel, we explore entrepreneurship as the solution to the starving artist, and provide actionable steps for turning your creativity from a side hustle to a full-time gig.

Saturday 3:00pm – 4:00pm

Figure Drawing Class by Monica Marier and Rachael Hixon of Tangent Artists

Need practice drawing from life? Want to work on your proportions and anatomy? Come get some practice with helpful guidance and tips from 2 professional artists. Bring your sketchbooks and pencils and just have a good time.

Saturday 3:00pm – 4:00pm

A Sci Fi Center of Gravity by the Museum of Science Fiction

Science Fiction is known to have influenced innovation, technology, and positive thoughts about our future. Join this panel discussion with artists, scholars, and technologists to recognize the impact science fiction has had on society – from inspiring cell phones and satellites, to providing a mechanism to explore socially controversial topics about diversity and inclusion. Our panelists envision ways to use science fiction to educate, inform, inspire, and motivate change.

Saturday 3:30pm – 4:30pm

Plus Size Cosplay and Confidence by Bellexi Cosplays, Richard Spicci and Michael Spicci

As a Plus Size cosplayer it’s always easier to put your heart and soul into crafting a cosplay but it’s not always as easy to put that kind of passion into wearing the cosplay. This panel revolves around gaining and maintaining confidence in a hobby where more traditional bodies tend to hog the spotlight.

Saturday 4:00pm – 5:00pm

Jay Funk’s Tutting Class

Join Jay Funk as he teaches the hip hop dance style tutting. Jay Funk used this style of dance to choreograph the hand spells in Marvel’s *Doctor Strange*.

Saturday 4:00pm – 5:00pm

POC Cosplayer’s Group Meet Up by Tiffyon Canzius, Maurice Watts, Tiphani Dixon, and Celeste Stewart

Meet the admins and fellow members of the POC Cosplayers group. We will chat about the group, community, and get to know each other a little and of course, take pictures.

Saturday 4:00pm – 5:30pm

3D Printable Cosplay Props 101 by Marcus Hemsley

I will be giving an introductory lesson on how to design props for a 3D printer. I will be going into the basics of designing stuff on websites like Tinkercad, and easy ways to get the hang of it. I will also be displaying some of the props I’ve printed, and how to make props both durable and lightweight, as well as painting and using other materials with a 3D printed item.

Saturday 4:30pm – 5:30pm

Cosplay Parenting by Corey Morgan and Noelle Morgan

Are you a cosplayer who wants to introduce your children into the hobby? Cosplay as a family can be one of the most rewarding experiences, not just for the child, but in the parent’s life. You are creating incredible memories with your child, and introducing them to a fun and, what can be, a very fulfilling pastime.

This panel will discuss the do’s and don’ts of family cosplay. How to introduce cosplay to your child. Is your child actually interested in cosplay (or are you pushing this onto the child)? What kinds of cosplays are appropriate? Who gets to choose

what you're cosplaying as? How do you care for a young cosplayer over the course of a long day at the con? What should you bring with you (or leave at home)? Also, how to keeping your young cosplayer safe (not every con-goer is your child's friend).

Saturday 5:00pm – 6:00pm

Love Your Cosplay Body by Brichibi Cosplays

One day, someone called Brichibi Cosplays “Princess Whale” and told her to go off and fry some chicken. So, she did just that, posting the pictures on the internet and writing an article for xoJane about being a plus sized cosplayer. While it's true that nicknames like “Princess Wonderball” or lovely requests to “stop acting white” or to die a “lesbian bed death” have come her way due to her race, size, sexuality, and general geekiness, this black, queer, plus sized cosplayer has decided not to let it get to her and to keep enjoying what cosplay is really about: having fun and showing love to your favorite characters. But is it really possible to ignore the hate and keep moving forward? Yes! And this panel will address how.

Saturday 5:00pm – 6:00pm

Surviving as Womyn of Colour with Mental Illness in Cosplay by LifebyMissy Cosplay, Queerly Femmetastic Cosplay, Delta Major, and Cleopatra from the Bronx

Being a person of color in the cosplay community has had its challenges for many, especially as womyn of colour. What happens when you are already part of a marginalized group and dealing with mental illness on top of the challenges already presented to you? In this panel, we would love you to join us as we discuss the stigma of mental illness as womyn of colour within the cosplay community and how we combat the daily struggles. Being womyn of colour is already difficult enough in today's society and we are happy to be able to offer a safe, open environment to discuss the challenges and help provide solutions that will help our sisters survive in the cosplay community and in the outside world!

Saturday 5:30pm – 7:30pm

Your Move: Creating Inclusive Gaming Spaces by Selvi Sriranganathan, Sylvia Gimenez, Margaret Riley

A gamer should be judged not by her gender, but by the content of her character sheet! We're here to discuss diversity in gaming, with a focus on the challenges faced by women within our community. This panel will be a welcoming and fun space to share stories and brainstorm solutions. This year we will talk more about women professionals - developers, journalists, academics, and e-sport players. Before the panel, feel free to check out our Facebook page at: facebook.com/YMCIGS.

Saturday 6:00pm – 7:00pm

FanFiction101: “I Suck at Summaries” by Chelsea Redding

Get your notebooks out and pencils ready! Whether you're new to the world of fan-fiction or just need a refresher course, FanFiction 101 will get you on the right track. Be a better reviewer, beef up your characters, avoid the dreaded hiatus and keep your story flowing! Mary Sues, reviews, and summaries oh my!

Saturday 6:00pm – 7:30pm

Controlling Our Narratives: Help Us Create the Next Blacks Sci-Fi Character by Shawn Alleyne, M'shai Dash, Tuere Ganges

In mainstream media, Black characters and other characters of color are often portrayed in ways that are not authentic to our experiences. This is especially true in the genre of Science Fiction, because oftentimes Black and Brown people aren't in control of the narratives. The science fiction genre's failure to incorporate people of color in all areas of the creative process within the stories portrayed on television and in film and literature only contributes to false stereotyping, and limits the diversity that exists within our experiences. Beginning a conversation and interacting with audience members to gain insight on character traits they'd like to see in Black Sci-Fi characters will help to showcase the diversity within our communities in an authentic way, with our own community members controlling the narratives. Only when people of color are participants in all areas of the creative process in mainstream media will efforts at inclusion be truly effective.

Saturday 6:00pm – 8:00pm

We're Not Daredevils: Stunt Safety for Film and TV by Jazzy Ellis, Curtis Lyons, Todd Terry, Gary Peebles

Join film and TV stunt performers Jazzy Ellis, Curtis Lyons, and Todd Terry as they demonstrate stunt safety.

Saturday 7:00pm – 8:00pm

Pretty, Brown, and Nerdy Presents: The Nerd Confessional

We all do or have done some embarrassing things as nerds, and it's time to own up to them! This fun panel idea was inspired by our "Reading Old Fanfiction" and "Fictional Crushes" videos. It's time for fans to take a trip down memory lane and recount all of those cringey memories that helped shape them into the nerd they are today. Panelists will be reading cringe worthy fanfiction out loud.

Saturday 7:30pm – 8:30pm

Building Character: How to Write Fictional Heroes and Villains by Dave Joria and Monica Marier of Tangent Artists

Do your characters need a little more dimension? Are you having trouble finding out what makes your villain tick? The writing duo of Tangent Artists give attendees a high-spirited panel on the art of character creation, from soup to nuts. Perfect for all types of writers, be it prose, script, comic, or haiku! (Okay, maybe less so with the haiku, but you get the idea.)

Saturday 7:30pm – 9:00pm

Dragon Ball Ascended by Robert Screen, Jr., Marcus Jones, Johnathan Musgrove, William Holmes

We are a Facebook Dragon Ball fan group (Dragon Ball Ascended) dedicated to enjoy all things Dragon Ball. We currently host debate tournaments and art contests, we have a art page that features members artwork as well. We offer out prizes for a majority of the contests we hold and truly try and give a safe and family like experience in our DBA home. Right now, we are expanding our operations to include a weekly podcast that we just begun, and just looking to recruit anyone who calls themselves a fan of Dragon Ball.

Saturday 8:00pm – 9:00pm

Designing Functional Cosplay by Dean's Lyst, Barr Foxx Cosplay, Sidney Younter, Tanya Woods

This is an informative panel discussion, providing tips on how to tap into your inner hero and/or outer villain to give personality and pop to animated, movie, and comic book characters. Live models and visual aids will enhance the discussion and be used to illustrate how to design for functionality while maintaining integrity.

Saturday 8:00pm – 9:00pm

The Stunning Spider-Man Poses/ Tricks & POC Insight by T-Stunning Spidey

A masterclass of sorts teaching kids and adults different Spider-Man poses and basic tricks to implement into their cosplays. As well as discussion on how to obtain suits, fitness and to speak on my experience portraying a primarily white character while being a POC.

Saturday 8:30pm – 10:30pm

NPC Collective Concert featuring K-Murdock, EyeQ, D&D Sluggers, and Maverick da Roninn

Saturday 8:30pm – 10:00pm

Supergirl's not Black!: On Being Black, Queer, and Cosplaying by Cleopatra from the Bronx,, Isake Smith, Tony Ray, Jay Justice

This panel of queer blerds will explore the topic of cosplaying and the intersections of race, gender & sexual orientation. The panelists include cosplayers of all different skill types and interests allowing for a wide spectrum of fandom, both in real life and online. Unfortunately, all the panelists have horror stories to share. We aim to dismantle the stigma of "Cosplaying While Black", Gender-Bending, & Pink Washing. At the end of the day, our central question is: What are ways we, as black queer folks, can push back against the idea that we shouldn't take up space in fandom?

Saturday 9:00pm – 10:00pm

Con Self vs. True Self: Bridging the Gap by Chelsea Redding, Dan Sullivan, Ni'esha Wongus, Kelly Johnson, Britany Marriot, Abe Klein, Jonthan Young

Having two personalities sounds like something straight out of an anime! The enigma of being one person during a convention and another person in "real life" is a real mystery! Join our EchoCast moderator and six panelists from the world of cosplay, photography, gaming, and beyond to hear how they deal with this phenomenon, or how they don't! Win raffle prizes, ask some questions, hear stories, and maybe tell a story of your own!

Saturday 10:00pm – 11:00pm

Blerdlesque: The Art of Undressing your Favorite Superheroes and Sheros (18+) by Maki Roll, Allen Ryde, Kimono Jones, Carlita Caliente

Have you ever wondered what nerdlesque is all about, or how it differs from classic or neo burlesque? Maybe you're a budding burlesque star looking to break into nerdlesque or break out of spandex without tripping over it. International cosplayer and performer Maki Roll and her expert group of panelists will share the ins and outs of crafting, creating and navigating in the nerdlesque community through the eyes of persons of color. And yes; we will teach you how to get out of pesky spandex suits before your song ends.

Saturday 10:00pm - 11:00pm

Sexuality in Cosplay (18+) by LGBT HQ (Matthew Levine, Jay Justice, Tony Ray, Jazmine Cosplays, Allegriana, Nico Vasilo, Kevo Risse, Les Levi, Ryan Dietrich, Aaron Paul)

Public Pop Culture figures from minority groups who overcame adversity, disability, and/or prejudice to find success in their chosen fields.

Saturday 11:00pm - 12:00am

Kaybear After Dark (18+)

Saturday 11:00pm - 12:00am

Okumura Hip-Hop Performance by Okumura of Earthbound Rejects

DMV Hip-hop duo Okumura of Earthbound Rejects seek to bridge the gap between the cultures of hip-hop and anime.

SUNDAY, JULY 2

Sunday 12:00am - 1:00am

Geek Girls After Dark (Adults ONLY) by Bunny Wilson, Mandy Kitana, Phoenix Fya

This is an adult ONLY panel. Target audience is 21+ Bunny, Mandy, and Phoenix discuss sexuality and women's right to express sexuality thru anime/hentai; cosplay/role-play in the bedroom and beyond; building confidence and self-esteem for the geek-girl introvert. The girls will share stories that relate to topics mentioned above, as well as take questions from the audience. Photo ops are allowed before & after panel, with some autographed prints of each girl.

Sunday 12:00am - 1:30am

Let's Dub a Hentai 2: The Electric Boogaloo by Shaun Mason

Wanna get hot and heavy with people you don't know with your clothes on? Then let's dub a hentai!

Sunday 9:00am - 10:00am

Being Better Fans: When Enthusiasm Becomes Entitlement (and How to Rise Above It) by Tee Morris, Nick A. Kelly, Nina Osegueda, and Colby Clay

We love being nerds. We love our passions be they television, film, or gaming, but do we love them too much? Why do we sometimes adopt the term "real fan" when new fans step into the community? What brings on the toxicity into fandom, and how can we as a community do better? Inspired by the Geektitude podcast, panelists offer their own experiences in fandom and challenge to be more.

Sunday 9:00am - 10:00am

Sword and Soul: Inclusive Fantasy by Dedren Snead

Dedren Snead is the founder of Atlanta-based GREENE COUNTY CREATIVE and lead writer of SORGHUM AND SPEAR, a sword and soul fantasy series exclusively featuring women of color as the heroines of the story. A brief history of the genre will lead into a review of contemporary works and into our experience in creating our own. We will speak to world building, social commentary and sorcery, and the experience of being a new creator in the "*Blerd Renaissance*" that we are witnessing today.

Sunday 10:00am - 11:00am

Harada Hates Tekken: A Tale of 2 Tekken Movies by Christopher Powell, Dwain Shaw, Arris Waterman

3BlackGeeks podcast will be LIVE talking about the highs and lows of 2 Tekken movies from 2011: a live-action Tekken adaptation and Tekken Blood Vengeance.

Sunday 10:00am – 11:00am

LGBT Responsibility in Comics and Pop Culture by LGBT HQ (Matthew Levine, Jay Justice, Danny Lantern)

Are publishing houses really listening to the LGBT community for flushed out non-throw away characters? Are they pandering, or investing in the LGBT and Diversity Community. Discuss the advancement of LGBT minorities, and diversity issues in pop culture and how we as a comic book pop culture geek community can get involved as, readers, activist, patrons, defenders, and/or supporters.

Sunday 10:30am – 12:00pm

Evil Genius (for Kids) by Elizabeth Kitsune. Elizabeth Culbreth. Greg Culbreth, Lydia Culbreth

A workshop hosted by Invader Zim, Gir and Gaz, teaching kids how to make disguises, popsicle stick catapults, balloon racers, hero/villain capes, and more. All supplies will be provided by Cosplay Kingdom and EVERYTHING is kid friendly. Evil Genius and Rule the World backdrops will be available for pictures. Attending children get free grab bags with goodies and an Evil Genius certificate.

Sunday 11:00am – 12:00pm

True Life: I'm a POC Cosplayer by Charlie Rocket, Samara Brown, Ronald Seaman

As nerd culture swiftly becomes more mainstream, cosplay has become a rising art form. Cosplayers wearing and creating costumes to show appreciation for the characters they love are starting to flood our social media. But with little diversity in comic books, anime and movies, how do POC cosplayers approach their craft? Are we stuck in a box of cosplaying characters our own color or are we able to break free of society's expectations? Join Charlie Rocket and a panel of diverse cosplayers as they address some of the known and unknown issues faced as a minority cosplayer.

Sunday 11:00am – 12:00pm

Photoshop Shortcuts for Busy Artists by Rachael Hixon of Tangent Artists

Being an artist is awesome, but it's rarely a full-time job! How then do we find time to make quality art on a time budget? Rachael Hixon, professional artist, goes over quick fixes and secret techniques for the Weekend Michelangelos.

Sunday 12:00pm – 1:00pm

#TotallyAwesomeAsians: A Celebration of Asian-Americans Creators and Heroes and Future Representation by Patrick Michael Strange, Keith Chow, Moana McAdams

Inspired by Greg Pak's ground-breaking, Marvel Comics' "Totally Awesome Hulk #15" where-in Pak pulls together the world's first (and largest) Asian American superhero team-up in mainstream comic book history. Join us for a panel discussion celebrating the contributions of the many Asian American and Pacific Islanders working in American comics and advocating for a more diverse representation within the pages.

Sunday 12:00pm – 1:00pm

The History of Stunts: Cowboys and Minstrels by Jazzy Ellis, Curtis Lyons, Todd Terry, Gary Peebles

Join film and TV stunt performers Jazzy Ellis, Curtis Lyons, and Todd Terry as they tell the history of the stunt industry.

Sunday 12:00pm – 1:00pm

Size, You: Perfect Fitting Costumes by Marianne Pease, Jacalyn Boggs

This panel is a beginning level cosplay panel, discussing issues of costume sizing and fit in a body-positive manner. Almost no one fits into the standard sizes that patterns are printed in but with minimal work that pattern can be tailored to the cosplayer for a perfect fit, no matter the size!

As a panel, we will be discussing standard fit and sizing and demonstrating how to measure yourself accurately and not being afraid to be honest with the number on the tape. Commercial pattern companies fully expect and hope that their customers will tailor the fit of their patterns to the individual and include several tools to help do so. We'll be showing cosplayers how to

read the pattern and markings and to achieve a custom fit no matter what curves (or lack thereof) you have! We will also save a few minutes at the end for a Q&A on personal fitting issues.

Sunday 1:00pm – 2:00pm

Creating a Safe Space for Black Girl Gamers by Junae Bennett, Akua Harris, Anastasia Chase

We need to bring awareness on how to create a safe space for Black Girl Gamers. Some of us are afraid to use our real avatars for the ridicule we have faced while playing our favourite games. The group Black Girl Gamers creates this safe space and encourages each gamer in the community.

Sunday 1:00pm – 2:00pm

The Monster Panel by Jeff Carroll and James Ellerbee

This is a panel for writers and other creators discussing the ever-changing world of Sci-Fi and how they fit in. They will discuss their projects and critique the films, books and other things in the market, all from a diverse perspective. The panel is an open panel where any and all writers at the convention can participate.

Sunday 1:00pm – 2:00pm

Intro to Cove: Pirate Mercenary's Return! (A Character Design Workshop) by DJ AARock

HE'S NOT JUST A DJ... Bring your pencils, sketchpads and a wild imagination! Graphic Illustrator AAROCK will take you through the basic steps of putting your character ideas to paper. Known for his own groundbreaking character designs from his books 'World of Neb and Cove: pirate Mercenary', Aarock will teach techniques and skills used by the industry as well as his own unique ways of design and Illustration. Learn accurate anatomy, perspective and how to exaggerate your designs just right. You will learn the proper tools, techniques and skills to put you ahead of the game. This workshop allows you to learn a little more than the basics while allowing you the freedom to have your own style. As an added bonus you will get a first look at new designs for the return of his acclaimed action adventure graphic novel "Cove: Pirate Mercenary"!

Sunday 2:00pm – 3:00pm

Being Comfortable Being a Geek by Brandon Dortch, Christopher Craig, London Fogg, Daron Cooper, Kevin Hinton

Are you comfortable being a geek? If yes, why? If no, why not? How can we help each other be more comfortable being who we are? The Loading Snacks Crew will open the discussion with the definition of "geek" and how it has changed in recent years. We will discuss how our level of comfort with this and other labels has changed as more obscure pastimes such as reading comic books, playing video games and watching anime has bled over into the mainstream.

Sunday 2:00pm – 3:00pm

The Magical Sewing Pattern: Slopers and Flat Pattern Manipulation by Marianne Pease and Jacalyn Boggs

This is a cosplay panel for intermediate to advanced skilled seamsters. Cosplay stretches a seamster's skill in ways that most home sewing enthusiasts never even have to think of. Character's clothing may have unique designs, strange shapes, and completely baffling seam line placements, and we as cosplayers have to find a way to recreate it. Most of us get very good at fudging commercial patterns or draping the patterns on a dress form, but there is another way too. Flat patterning doesn't need to be intimidating once you know the basics, and this panel aims to introduce the basics of how to manipulate a sloper to create a flat pattern from scratch. In the first half of this panel we will be talking about what a sloper is, different methods for customizing one, and fit and design ease. With the bare basics out of the way, in the second half, we'll be diving straight into pattern manipulation with how to move darts and seam lines to showing examples of more extreme ideas of transformational reconstruction by Shingo Sato and Tomoko Nakamichi.

Sunday 2:00pm – 3:00pm

Cosplay 102: Hacking the System by Sarah Brice, Meghan Blair, Jennifer Rast

"Cosplay 101" is about the basics of construction and wearing of costumes. In "Cosplay 102: Hacking the System" we'll explore techniques like staying warm in that tight outfit during the winter weather and remaining cool when the heat levels are over 9,000. We'll also cover how to find a photographer, how to build a cosplay community at home, how to design business cards and more.

Sunday 3:00pm – 4:00pm

