



[1]By Maria Jackson

Dragon Con 2017

12:19 pm EDT 9/05/2017 by [Maria Jackson](#) [1]

To be completely honest, I was not looking forward to Dragon Con 2017. None of my friends were coming in town for the event, I couldn't get all the days off I was hoping for, and the guests I was super excited to see cancelled their appearances. To top it all off there was the situation where [a con-goer and known cosplayer was spotted marching in Charlottesville, holding her partner's hand as he shouted "You will not replace us!"](#) [2]

When I brought this to the attention of the twitter account for Dragon Con and asked how they would handle this, I was presented with [a link to the harassment policy](#) [3] as a reply. While it's a good policy, it didn't address my concerns nor does it state whom con attendees experiencing harassment should report to. When I took my concerns to an unofficial Facebook group and advised folks to watch out and stay safe, I was met with dismissal, derision, and called "worse than a fat shamer". The lax response of the con's Twitter account and the attitude of my fellow con-goers left me wondering if this would be my last ever Dragon Con.

When I picked up my badge that Thursday, I was still troubled. This place I had loved without complication (in my naiveté), had suddenly become a minefield. Could I trust the attendees around me to, at least, keep any Charlottesville sympathizing underwraps? If they didn't, would the con actually protect me? How could I handle this without the guardianship of my friends?

After attending a party and unexpectedly meeting up with some friends and colleagues, I began to relax. I forgot how good it felt to share such similar interests with so many people already exuberant about coming together. Then I heard the voice of Alex Kingston as she walked past me, leaving me in a star-struck haze. I was decidedly feeling far less dreadful than I had been not a half hour before and I'm sure the drinks helped.

However, what really kicked my enjoyment into full drive, was little more than happenstance. I've been a listener of the [FanBros](#) [4] podcast for many years, but was totally surprised when I rounded the corner in the bottom of the Hyatt and saw [Tatiana King](#) [5] folded up in a chair. We embraced and started chatting. It was her first Dragon and she wasn't sure what to expect nor what to make of it. With Dragon Con having 77,000 guests spread over 5 hotels, I could sympathize, however, being a nearly decade vet, I knew just what to do.

Morphing into my favorite role, host, I took her through each of the three main hotels. I told her where and when you could find the best cosplay for photos and people watching and we were both surprised by the Hilton's remodeling. Once known as the quieter of the hotels, the ground floor became a club scene with flashing lights and a real DJ. We took photos and marveled at the creativity around us as attendees danced without a care. I left that night eager to return.



Friday night was even better, beginning with the Blerd Meetup at the [Joystick Gamebar](#) [6]. I reconnected to Tatiana and [Shareef Jackson](#) [7] of [Math Looks Good](#) [8] and became acquainted with [Deadly Diva](#) [9] of FanBros. Again, they allowed me to play host to the con and to the city.

The weekend continued with more fortuitous and unexpected meetings. I continued to play host to another first timer, the fabulous Sharronda of [Pay or Wait](#) [10]. We had drinks, we took pictures, attended panels, had a nap, and had a blast!

Thanks to all of these first timers, I was beginning to experience Dragon Con in a new way. It wasn't the same con I'd been attending for all of these years, but that was ok. It wasn't the safe haven I allowed myself to believe it was, but that didn't mean there wasn't plenty to be enjoyed. I learned to roll with the punches of changing plans, changed architecture, and was the better for it.

Dragon Con still has many things it needs to attend to; from taking a stronger stance on isn't acceptable, [clarifying the voting process for the Dragon Awards](#) [11], to being more [proactive at protecting con-goers from vandals when parties get out of hand](#) [12]. However, it remains a fantastic place to come together in the spirit of fun and shared interest. A place where you can learn more about yourself and expand your interests. And for many more, Dragon Con is a home away from home.

For more pictures & video: <https://goo.gl/photos/bNkqTdPZC7oBbGo8A> [13].

Parade video:

Panels & Cosplay:

Tags: [Dragon Con 2017](#) [14]

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Links

[1] <http://www.shakefire.com/profile/maria-jackson>

[2] <https://www.bleedingcool.com/2017/08/18/supergirl-cosplayer-went-charlottesville-guess-whose-side/>

[3] <http://www.dragoncon.org/?q=node/614>

[4] <https://soundcloud.com/fanbros>

[5] https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rc=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwj4-eDB6lzWAhXk6YMKHWvGDAlQ6F4IKDAA&url=https%3A%2F%2Ftwitter.com%2FTatianaKing%3Fref_src%3Dtwsrsrc%255Egoogle%257Ctwcamp%255Eserp%257Ctwgr%255Eauthor&usg=AFQjCNEG6Ua1w3laDTpEk4RneV6BbuEPtg

[6] <http://www.joystickgamebar.com/>

[7] <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rc=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwizvOv47ozWAhXF6iYKHciwA48QFggoMAA&url=https%3A%2F%2Ftwitter.com%2Fshareefjackson%3Flang%3Den&usg=AFQjCNGulcQ9oEJjf664Y2T0oODqDoyojw>

[8] <https://twitter.com/MathLooksGood>

[9] <https://twitter.com/DeadlyDiva>

[10] <https://twitter.com/payorwait>

[11] <http://nkjemisin.com/2017/08/withdrawing-from-the-dragon-awards/>

[12] <http://www.ajc.com/news/local/two-women-dragon-con-hit-chairs-thrown-from-hotel-balcony/uaZ5WPYuyiwROLdzZzvUgO/>

[13] <https://goo.gl/photos/bNkqTdPZC7oBbGo8A>

[14] <http://www.shakefire.com/tags/dragon-con-2017>