



SUPERHERO SMACKDOWN

WITH OTTAWA COMICCON JUST AROUND THE CORNER, ROGER COLLIER PROFILES FOUR Hardcore FANS (AND CHECKS OUT THEIR SUPERHUMAN COSTUMES)

I had been standing in line at the first Ottawa Comiccon for an hour, reddening in the unusually hot May sun, when it dawned on me: I was a pretender. Yes, I collected comic books as a kid, and I still go to all the superhero movies. Sure, a sizable portion of my bookshelf is dedicated to Philip K. Dick and George R.R. Martin. True, I've seen every episode of *Battlestar Galactica*, *The Walking Dead*, and even *Firefly*, the short-lived but much-adored space western.

But I was not a true fan. Not of science fiction, fantasy, superheroes, or any other genre represented at the CE Centre (now the Ernst & Young Centre). I looked at the line, which seemed to stretch to infinity (and beyond), and decided to bail. Not worth it. William Shatner would have to get through the day without me. Of course, the fact that I was wearing a T-shirt instead of a costume also made it doubly obvious that I was merely a casual fan. It was a Superman T-shirt, but still. No hardcore fan would attend Comiccon in civilian attire.

Before leaving, though, I wandered around and chatted with real fans about their costumes. I talked to Starfleet captains, Klingons, time travellers, Jedi, alien predators, X-men, Watchmen, and Spidermen. I met Supergirl, shook hands with Darth Maul, and took a picture of Princess Leia in a leather-and-metal bikini (for journalistic purposes).

This year I took my research a step further. I tracked down a few of the 30,000 or so fans expected at the sophomore edition of Ottawa Comiccon (May 10 to 12). We are in a golden age of fandom, thanks to the Internet and, in particular, to social media. Thankfully, Facebook also makes it easier than ever to find mega-fans of all stripes.

So I sat down with these guys and gals in coffee shops and pubs around town to find out why they were so passionate about *Star Trek* or *Doctor Who* or whatever. I also grilled them on their knowledge of trivia about their genre of choice to determine whether they were, in fact, true fans. Turns out that, unlike me, they were all the real deal.

Movie appeal: "The biggest reason I loved it from the get-go is that despite its being a comedy, *Ghostbusters* taught kids that science is your friend and that using science to combat your fears and nightmares can help you achieve any goal you set your mind to."



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THE GHOSTHEAD

Name: **Matt Provencal**

Age: **27**

Occupation: **Videographer and graphic designer**

Moved to Ottawa from: **Montreal**

Affiliation: **Member of The Ontario Ghostbusters and co-host of Cross the Streams Radio Show, a Ghostbusters podcast**

lights and sounds."

Favourite Ghostbusters memorabilia: A scale proton pack signed by cast members Dan Aykroyd and Ernie Hudson.

Insider knowledge: 1. The Bill Murray role was written for John Belushi, who died before filming began. 2. Pee-Wee Herman actor Paul Reubens was chosen to play villain Gozer the Destructor, but the part was recast with Serbian model Slavitzja Jovan. 3. The original script was set in the distant future and featured interdimensional travel. 4. Though he auditioned for a voice part in the cartoon series, Ernie Hudson lost the role he played in the movie to Arsenio Hall. 5. The iconic white Ectomobile was originally black but didn't film well at night.

Watched the movies how many times? "Can't even count. I've seen the first and second films over a few hundred times. Easily. But let's be honest, the second movie was there to sell toys."



Top websites: Spook Central, protoncharging.com, ghostbustersnews.com, gbfans.com, ghostbusters.org

What you need for a costume: Tan U.S. Air Force flight suit, *Ghostbusters* ID badges (eBay), pistol belt, elbow pads (actually volleyball knee pads), a proton pack kit. "The pack can be pricey. You can build one and aim for a \$200 budget. Or you can get a custom pack — the gun, the pack, everything — for about \$1,200, and it will have



THE WHOVIAN

Name: **Morgan Dunbar**

Age: **23**

Occupation: **Graphic designer and owner of Geek Charming (Jewelry and Crafts for the geekily inclined)**

Moved to Ottawa from:

Blind River, Ontario

Affiliation: **Member of The Doctor Who Society of Canada**

Cosplay (short for costume play) for Doctor Who: Easier than other fandoms.

"A lot of the clothing is everyday wear. Dressing up as a character from *Doctor Who* often involves a lot of modified shirts, jackets, scarves, and hats. In other fandoms, you might have to make armour or really detailed constructions, but because of the accessibility of the costumes of *Doctor Who*, pretty much every fan has made one."



Favourite episodes:

1. "New Earth"
2. "The Girl in the Fireplace"
3. "Silence in the Library"
4. "Vincent and the Doctor"
5. "The Doctor's Wife"

RIVER SONG IS THE GREATEST FEMALE CHARACTER EVER WRITTEN FOR TV. SHE'S FUNNY, SHE'S SEXY, SHE'S COCKY, AND SHE'S A BADASS //

There are about **800** episodes spanning **50** years.

Where's a newbie to begin?

"'Blink' is almost collectively considered the best *Doctor Who* episode. It's very dark, and it introduces the Weeping Angels, who I think are the scariest villains in *Doctor Who*. It's a great introduction episode for non-fans because it's so intense. It gives them an idea of the potential of the show."

Why Who?: "It has a lot of good characters, a lot of good storylines. It's a little cheesy sometimes, but it's fun to get into."

Favourite characters:

River Song, the Doctor, Jack Harkness, Rory, Rose Tyler. "River Song is the greatest female character ever written for TV. She's funny, she's sexy, she's cocky, and she's a badass."

Worst character: Mickey

Smith. "Mickey Smith is the boyfriend of Rose Tyler. Whenever he came along, he cramped the Doctor's style and really got in the way of the Doctor/Rose dynamic."



Doctor Who swag:

River Song Sonic Screwdriver; T-shirts; mug from Cardiff, Wales, from The Doctor Who Experience; fan art and posters; *Doctor Who* lunchbox





THE TREKKIE

Name: **Ryan Rozumniak**

Age: **29**

Occupation: **Seeking employment**

Moved to Ottawa from: **Edmonton**

Affiliation: **Crew member of IKV Phoenix, Ottawa's Klingon/Star Trek**

Costuming & Role-play Fan Club; lieutenant in the USS Magellan chapter of Starfleet, an international Star Trek fan association



Series ranking: 1. *The Original Series* 2. *The Next Generation* 3. *Deep Space Nine* 4. *Voyager* 5. *Enterprise* "I had a hate on for *Deep Space Nine*, actually. But as I watched more and more episodes, I realized it was deep. It had great storylines."

Favourite Star Trek

possession: First-edition (1975) *Star Trek Starfleet Technical Manual*, purchased last year at Ottawa Comiccon for \$10. "I saw it and was like, 'Wait a minute.' They were going on eBay for ridiculous prices."

Wants to get: Dress uniform from *Star Trek Insurrection* and *Star Trek Nemesis*. "It's all white. It's really nice and fancy."

Top websites: startrek.com, roddenberry.com, phasers.net, ex-astris-scientia.org

Best movie: *The Wrath of Khan*

Worst movie:

Star Trek: The Motion Picture
"This had a poorly thought out storyline and it was slow paced throughout. The acting was not the best either."

Little-known fake fact: "I'll let you in on a little secret. In the show *Enterprise*, they explain what happened between *The Original Series*, when Klingons didn't have ridges on their foreheads, and later on, when they got the ridges. It was a genetic defect."

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Love at first sight: Watched the first movie with her father in 1977 at the age of 11. "I was awestruck. In a daze. I would have seen it over and over if I could."

Movie ranking: 1. *Revenge of the Sith* 2. *Attack of the Clones* 3. *A New Hope* 4. *Return of the Jedi* 5. *The Empire Strikes Back* 6. *The Phantom Menace*

Favourite characters: Anakin Skywalker, Padmé Amidala, Luke Skywalker, Ahsoka Tano, Han Solo



Costume in the works for Ottawa Comiccon: Lego Slave Leia and Ewok

Bucket-list costume: Stormtrooper, Darth Maladi, Shaak Ti, Battle Decoy Sabe. "Making a trooper costume will run you \$1,000. Minimum."

Charities supported by Capital City Garrison: Children's Wish Foundation, Max Keeping Foundation, Make-A-Wish Canada, Ottawa Food Bank, Ottawa Dragon Boat Foundation. "The parents who see us have almost as much fun as the kids do."

Favourite of her 200 or so Star Wars novels: *Tatooine Ghost*

Memorabilia collection: Voice-activated R2D2, giant Darth Vader Pez dispenser, Wookiee coat, Stormtrooper Commander Sideshow Collectible, Darth Vader toaster (burns Vader's face into bread)

Best thing about fandom: "The friendships. I really threw myself into this whole thing. My best friends are part of it. We work on new costumes and go out for coffee."
END



PHOTOGRAPHY: LUTHER CAVERLY (SHOT AT DND)

I'M DATING MYSELF, BUT I'M ONE OF THE VERY FEW PEOPLE IN MY ORGANIZATION WHO HAS BEEN TO SEE EVERY MOVIE AT THE THEATRE ON ORIGINAL RELEASE



THE JEDI

Name: **Cindy Harper**

Age: **46**

Occupation: **Public servant**

Moved to Ottawa from:

Brockville

Affiliation: **Member of the 501st Legion (bad guys) and the Rebel Legion (good guys), both international Star Wars costuming organizations. Local group Capital City Garrison is officially part of the 501st, but Rebels are considered "associated" members.**