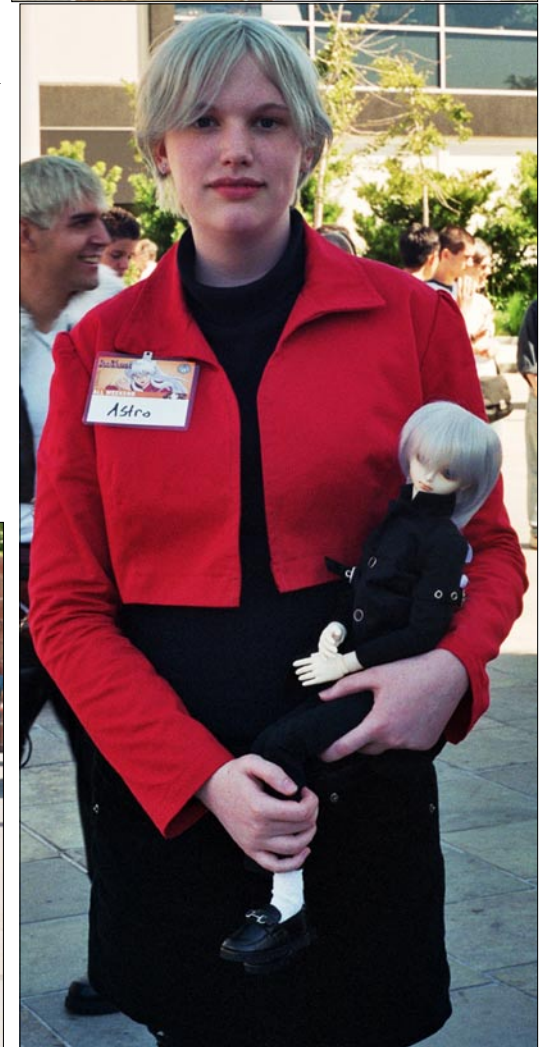




Top Right:
Ogami from
Sakura Wars



Lower Right:
Asagi Mika from
Gungrave





Top, Bottom Left: Selphie, Top Right: Squal Leonard, Bottom Right: two Yunas, all from Final Fantasy





Above: Squal Leonard, Bottom: Squal, Vincent and Sid, all from Final Fantasy





Left: Tifa from Final Fantasy VII.

Below: A terrific version of Deedlit from Record of Lodoss War. My personal favorite of the con. It's one of my favorite series, and I've never seen anybody do a character from it.

Bottom Left: two from Evanggellion.

Bottom Right: Haanyan Faery as Edward from Full Metal Alchemist.





Left: Fai from Tsubasa by Clamp with Kakashi from Naruto.

Below: Miaka No Baka as Caska and Nandobaka as Guts in court dress from Berzerk. The duo won for best group or couple in the competition. This pair are consistently among the best costumers at area shows. Nandobaka's Brandon Heat costume won at Tales of Anime, and Miaka No Baka's Lacus Clyne costume took third runner up at the Metreon Festival of Anime.





Top Left: Dorothy R. Wainwright from The Big O.

Top Center: A non-specific officer from Full Metal Alchemist.

Top Right: Yurika from Nadesco.



Top Left: Paine from Final Fantasy X-2 and Jack Sparrow from Pirates of the Caribbean, played by Con Artist Cosplay, had a very funny skit that I thought should have won an award in the contest.

Far Top Right: A group portrays the Magic Users Club from the anime of the same name.

Right: I really liked the idea behind this shot-up Vash the Stampede costume from Trigun.

Below Kohaku from the game Melty Blood with her cute little boxing cactus.





Two Vashes, one before the fight, the other after. How does he dodge all those bullets?



Top Left: Ryoma and Kamio from Prince of Tennis.

Above: Fugiko Mine and Lupin III from Lupin III series.

Left: A group from Mariasama Gamiteu.



Left: I think these guys are just in kimonos.





Above: the group photo shoot on Saturday. Below: A group of Final Fantasy/Square characters.





A page dedicated to Naruto—the series that’s currently rotting my brain.

Far Left: a twist on the Naruto headband wearing ninja theme with POSER replacing the tradition village emblem.

Left: a bright orange Naruto with a home-made headband, not storebought like so many other Naurto cosplayers use.

Bottom: Team 7, with Sasuke in a variant costume, Sakura and Naruto in demon fox form.



The Sacramento Anime Show 2004

The Sacramento Anime Show, held over a weekend in August, was quite different from any other convention I've attended.

First off, it was free. In my book, FREE covers a multitude of sins. I don't ask for much when something is free.

However, the poor directions given for those of us not from the local area tested my love of free to the limit and added more than an hour to my travel time. First of all, it wasn't in Sacramento. It was in some place southeast of Sacramento. Following the directions that said head toward Sacramento sent me in the wrong direction. They should have said to head toward Reno. Second of all, telling to me turn toward Citrus Heights/Orangevale might make sense IF I KNEW WHERE CITRUS HEIGHTS/ORANGEVALE IS. If I knew where Citrus Heights is, I wouldn't have needed directions. They might also mention that it was several miles, through a couple of towns and across a river, to the mall where it was being held from the freeway off ramp. I almost turned around several times thinking it just couldn't be THAT far.

Once I got there I had a good time. I only attended on Saturday as it was a long drive from the Bay Area and Saturday seemed like it would be the best day to go. It was a lot different from what I expected

Costume Contest Winners, contest host in yellow shirt and hair



though. When I heard it was going to be held at a mall, I envisioned some run-down old relic with lots of closed storefronts and the major retailer a 99 cent store. I knew that the video program was being held in the now-closed McDonalds space and when McDonalds pulls out, you're on the downslope.

Instead, this was a major regional mall on a very busy Saturday. There were lots of regular shoppers running around. This made things crowded and made for a strange vibe. It just didn't seem as comfortable to me as a regular convention where the convention goers are insulated from the outsiders. I didn't see any cosplayers that I knew, so I don't know if they felt hassled by the regular mall patrons. I felt uncomfortable asking cosplayers to take their picture as I didn't want to be seen as some weirdo just taking photos of young girls at the mall. The mall setting also seemed to skew attendance toward the very young, mall rat population. I didn't see too many adult cosplayers there, which added to my discomfort. So I only took photos at the costume contest.

Also, at a con, I can figure that if somebody is wearing a weird costume, they are cosplayers and therefore approachable with a request to take their photo, even if I don't recognize their character. Here I saw a girl with multiple facial piercings, a tight top, mini skirt, chains, and white torn stockings on top of red torn stockings on top of black torn fishnets. Must be a Final Fantasy character, I thought. After due consideration, and seeing how the people with her were dressed, I came to the conclusion that was just the way she always dressed on a Saturday afternoon out at the mall. Too bad, it would have been a great cosplay outfit.

The video program was quite good. I saw some excellent episodes of Naruto and Samurai 7. There weren't enough chairs for the most popular shows, and the amount of light coming in from the windows was distracting, but on the whole, not bad for what it was. And it was FREE.

The dealers were spread out on tables throughout the mall, tucked here and there in between the regular kiosks. While I am a big believer in the freedom to buy and sell what you want, I did notice two dealers selling hentai material even though the show's organizers said such items would not be allowed. This bothered me as I saw a number of minors looking at and buying this stuff. It was out in the open enough that it was easily visible to the regular mall goers passing by. I don't really care that the teenagers were able to buy it, or that it was for sale, but I really don't want to see some outraged moral majority twink getting a crusade started against anime and manga. It's in our best interest as fans to keep this stuff out of the public eye. I've seen

More Costume Contest Winners





too many stupid crusades against the role players and Harry Potter books and such to want to see it happen to my hobby.

So while I can't say I'll be back—the drive was just too long—I did enjoy it once I got there. It certainly was different from any other con I've ever been to.

And hey, it was free.

Right: From *Wolf's Rain*

Lower Left: a trio of EGLs (Elegant Gothic Lolita's)

Lower Right: No Face from *Spirited Away*





Left: Yomiko Readman from Read or Die

Right: Haruko from FLCL.

Below: Crowd favorites from Super Mario Brothers do a rap number.





Left: Bridget from
Guilty Gear X

Right: From Zelda



Team Seven from Naruto:

From left: Naruto, Saku-
ra, Sasuke