



by Ruth Thomas

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t's for sure."**
Adrienne
wilkinson

Above: Stripping down to his boxers is all in a day's work for Greg Lee.

Below: A family reunion? Xena's daughter with the arch enemy who caused her conception...

revealed some behind-the-scenes anecdotes to accompany them.

After lunch, it was time for the guests to make their appearances – each took the stage for an hour, during which time they entertained and amused the audience with stories of their *Xena* experiences and more. In order of appearance, these were: Ted Raimi (Joxer); Jennifer Blanc (Kendra in the science fiction series *Dark Angel*); Karl Urban (Caesar, Cupid), who replaced Jennifer Sky when commitments forced her to cancel her appearance at the last moment; William Gregory Lee (Virgil in *Xena* and Zack on *Dark Angel*) and Adrienne Wilkinson (Eve); and finally Callisto's more sane alter ego, Hudson Leick.

Details of the guest speeches can be found later in this article, but first a look at one of Saturday's main events: the fancy dress parade, which took place in the evening. There were over 20 entries this year, ranging from the big blue Destroyer (son of Gabrielle's evil daughter Hope), to characters from the *Evil Dead* movies (produced by Ted Raimi's brother Sam), to a cute purple dragon from the *Pokemon* universe.

The guest judges interacted with the entrants, as they had done at previous Starfury events, and enjoyed themselves immensely. Highlights included Karl Urban's reaction when a suitably dressed Aphrodite took the stage. Karl stepped up to the stage, put on his best Cupid voice, and asked his stage "mom" for a hug, to which the costumed fan happily obliged. Even more amusing was the actors' continued hilarious persecution of the unfortunate entrant who had dressed up as the prophet Eli. The judges eventually decided to award every single entrant a prize!

Following the fancy dress parade, the main hall was reorganised for that night's disco, for which many of the guests turned up again to strut their stuff on the dance floor.

Sunday opened with more photo sessions, *Xena* episodes and the dealers' room, where merchandise was selling like hot cakes. All the guests appeared on stage in main hall for a second time, with eager fans returning for another hour with each of their favourite actors.

First up were Jennifer Blanc and William Gregory Lee, who launched straight into some anecdotes about one of the many challenges that actors can face in the middle of shooting an episode: having to cry on cue. "Sometimes you've got about a hundred people watching you, and a camera right in your face," Jennifer explained, "and you'll have a make-up artist blowing this stuff in your face to make you react." To demonstrate this difficulty, they brought audience members up onto the stage, giving each two minutes to see if they could produce realistic tears.

After the first two contestants failed to cry realistically, Greg continued by discussing the more amusing difficulties that could occur while filming dramatic reactions on set, especially in the presence of a certain practical joker. "Sometimes you have someone on the set like Ted Raimi, who's making funny faces at you while you're trying to cry!" Greg then demonstrated this by peering over the shoulder of another contestant, a big burly fellow, and making him laugh in the middle of his attempt at being sad.

Eventually, first place went to the last contestant, a young boy, who received a hug from Jennifer for his efforts.

Both Jennifer and Greg told the audience how much they enjoyed British conventions, as the guests generally had more opportunity to mingle socially with the other attendees. "At some cons, we're just there for an hour and a half for our speeches," explained Greg, "but here it's like school. You're just walking around, going, 'Hi! How are you?' It's great."

One highlight of the session was the ongoing phenomenon of Greg slowly stripping down to his underwear, which solicited interesting reactions from the audience! Impressed with the fans' approval, Greg complimented them on their support of the shows... and their obvious good taste! "The fans are what make this worthwhile," he said.

Adrienne Wilkinson appeared on stage to catch the end of the speeches. "What did I miss?" she asked, before catching sight of Greg's lack of attire. "Well, I'm not taking my clothes off, that's for sure," she added quickly.

Adrienne started off her afternoon's talk by discussing the episode *The God Who Walks* and



Photo by David Sumner