

Sue: Hi and welcome to Women at Warp, a Roddenberry Star Trek Podcast. Join us as our crew of four women Star Trek fans boldly go on our biweekly mission to explore our favorite franchise. My name is Sue. And thanks for tuning in. With me today are my co-host Andi.

Andi: Hey everyone!

Sue: And our special guest Laura.

Laura: Hi.

Sue: And Mira.

Mira: Hi.

Sue: So today we're going to be talking about cosplay!

Andi: Woo!

Sue: Andi's really excited about it.

Andi: Even though I know nothing about cosplay. I'm still really pumped you guys.

Sue: Really quickly we just want to go over our usual housekeeping which is that at this time our show is entirely supported by our patrons over at patreon.com and that support allows us to do things like upgrade equipment and promote the show at conventions and have things printed up. We recently had a banner made for Star Trek Las Vegas and every little bit helps. We appreciate every bit you guys do for us so much. And if you're interested in supporting the show monetarily you can do so at patreon.com/womenatwarp. That's patreon.com/womenatwarp. And as of the date this podcast is released this coming weekend I will be at Dragon Con so you can look for me there. And also coming up is New York Comic-Con and at least one member from every show on the Roddenberry Podcast Network will be at New York Comic-Con. We are at the very very beginning of figuring out if there is any kind of meetup we can do so more on that to come. And also there is more Star Trek Las Vegas audio to come in the feed. Is there anything I left out?

Andi: No, that was extremely organized and concise. I kinda wish Grace was here to sing something. She usually sings a song about giving us money that is helpful.

Sue: All right. Well, why don't we move on then. And for each of our guests, Laura and Mira, I'm going to ask you to introduce yourself a little bit. Tell us about your history with Star Trek, when you got into it and, for this episode, when you started cosplaying. So why don't we start with Laura.

Laura: Hi! Well my name is Laura. I've been a Trekkie for a long time. When I was living in New York and my parents like just were working and busy and to raise three kids they just put us in front of the TV and Star Trek was my babysitter. So essentially I grew up watching. They raised me really. And so The Next Generation. And so ever since then I've been obsessed with space and just traveling and Star Trek. Everything Star Trek. And I started cosplaying young because my parents would always dress me up because I always tell them "I want to do this. I want to do that." And then when I got older I was able to make things myself and be able to do it. So I've been doing it almost my whole life. And then Star Trek I really got into it maybe in my teens and then my 20s.

Andi: That's so impressive. I once tried to cosplay Doctor Who and I was like, I'll do Rose. And I just got some hoop earrings and I was like this is good.

Laura: No, that's cosplaying! That is! Because you're becoming the character. That's important.

Andi: I had a lot of fish and chips.

Sue: What about you Mira?

Mira: I'm Mira. And I'm actually like a fairly new Trekkie. I first saw Star Trek in 2013.

Andi: Hey me too!

Mira: Yeah! So about four years now and I still feel like brand new to everything because I've only seen The Next Generation so far and half of DS9. But I started cosplaying I think November 2015. I had the idea earlier that year basically to take Dr. Crusher's outfit and put a little spin on it. And actually it was supposed to be for Gates McFadden to wear. Like she was going to do it for me. And then when obviously I figured out well it's going to be pretty hard for her to be able to do this, I'm going to do it for her, you know? And since then I've just kind of expanded on what I've been doing since that time and still learning and growing and keeping it up, so.

Laura: I'm so jealous because you get to rewatch all the episodes for the first time. I mean, like, just going through that again.

Mira: Yeah.

Andi: The first time I saw Bollywood Bev I legit like gasped. And I think maybe it was Mission New York maybe you were cosplaying it and it came up on our Twitter feed for Women at Warp and I was like, Oh my God I love it! I love it so much. I tweeted it so fast you don't even know. I think I left smoke.

Sue: I got text messages about that picture and I think I was on a panel at Dragon Con because it was the same weekend. And my phone's on the table blowing up. What is Andi doing?

Andi: Sue! Sue! Somebody did Bev! You're going to love it! You have to see it!

Mira: Oh my gosh! I'm blushing right now.

Andi: Sue is number one Dr Crusher stan. So I knew she'd love it.

Mira: Always here for Dr. Crusher.

Sue: Always.

Laura: She is the best. Really.

Mira: Yeah.

Sue: I guess I'll give a little bit of my convention/costuming background. Once again I find myself being like the old lady of the podcast. My first Star Trek convention was in 1994 which I realize is not that long ago but it's still 23 years ago. Which is ludicrous. What I remember of costuming the from the early conventions I went to was that you mostly saw uniforms and you saw Klingons and that was pretty much it. There wasn't a whole lot of

like the deep cut cosplay that we see or the silly cosplay that we see at conventions now that has become so popular. And I didn't really start costuming until maybe 7 or 8 years ago. And yeah. I don't really do a lot of Star Trek cosplay but that is for reasons I want to get more deeply into later in our discussion.

Andi: When Sue and I did a panel at Dragon Con we were both in Doctor Who gear and I was like we are disappointing the Trek fandom right now.

Sue: Not to toot my own horn but I do a pretty good Donna Noble.

Andi: Yeah, it is good.

Laura: Remember that comics did a crossover between Doctor Who...

Andi: That you go! Shared universe. Marvel's got nothing on us.

Mira: That's true, that's true.

Sue: So mostly for the purposes of this discussion, we're probably going to be using the term cosplay in its most general sense meaning any time you get dressed up in a costume and go to a convention. There are people who draw distinctions between costuming and cosplay saying that you're not cosplaying unless you are staying in that character. We'll probably debate that a little bit more later. But yeah so cosplay - general use. Also we are going to try to do some focus on Star Trek costuming but I'm pretty sure that some other fandoms are going to sneak in here like they already have, so. But I think that the issues that we're going to talk about are true for all fandoms. So it's kind of a universal conversation.

Andi: Word.

Sue: So the first known convention attendee to wear a costume at a convention were... the two of them were Forrest James Ackerman and his friend Myrtle A. Jones and they wore homemade costumes to the very first World Science Fiction Convention in New York in 1939. They were the only two people in costume out of 185 attendees. And it is described in a lot of places as having "caught on" because the following year there were 12 costumed attendees at World Con.

Andi: I was thinking, like either you go and you're the first cosplayer ever at a convention and people are like "What are you doing?" Or you go and everyone's like "Oh my god what are you doing? That's amazing! I want to do that." That's pretty cool.

Sue: So as far as anybody knows, the first costume contest held at a convention was in August of 1965. A convention called Costume Con dedicated to costuming, the first one was held in January of '83. The International Costumer's Guild was formed at the third Costume Con in '85 and the term "cosplay" was coined by a Japanese reporter who attended the 42nd World Con in 1984.

Laura: That's interesting.

Andi: I mean it's got history, man. Not quite as long as fanfic though because if you really go for fanfic I mean we're going hundreds of years for fanfic. But this is still pretty impressive I think.

Sue: I think but the term cosplay feels a lot more recent to me but maybe that's just you know our lived experience.

Andi: I don't remember the first time I ever heard of cosplay but I feel like it wasn't that long ago. I feel like it was within the last ten years.

Laura: Yeah, I used to go to Comic-Con before and I'd dress up and there was really not many people. And so you kind of get embarrassed. And then you got to take it in pride that you're like no, I'm this character. I mean now it's like it is so cool and I'm like what?

Andi: You're the hipster cosplayer. You did it before it was cool.

Laura: Yeah, I'm just like I'm going to walk slowly into the convention.

Sue: There was definitely a stigma that I remember of "Oh you're going to a Star Trek convention? Are you going to wear a costume? Are you one of those weirdos who dresses up and hangs out at conventions?"

Mira: Oh my god, yeah.

Sue: Yeah. Yes, yes I am.

Laura: It's like in high school which I'm not going to mention when, people were like "Oh you're into Star Trek? You like Star Wars?" "You like like this?" and it's like oh no you have to kind of hide away. It's embarrassing. And then when you go to your 10 year reunion everyone's like "Oh my god. You go to the Star Trek Convention? That's so cool!"

Andi: I mean it's a good thing and it's something that I love to see more and more people get involved in fandom because it's so fun and it's such a bright spot in what is to me an increasingly dark world. So I really love seeing new people try cosplay out. I was really nervous when I did my first cosplay. It was the one and probably only time I ever do it was for Dragon Con and I did Arrow and it was like a gender swapped Arrow and I had like the dress and the bow and everything. And I just I felt so nervous but it was also very freeing. And like it wasn't anything special or anything and nobody was trying to get my picture. But I still was like I put time and effort into this and now I look like a way cooler Oliver Queen. And it was cool. It was fun.

Laura: Yeah totally. You should rock it. You worked so hard on it.

Andi: Pretty much what happened is I saw a dress that had a hood and it was like olive colored and I was like that looks like what Lady Arrow would wear and I was like well then. I better buy it. And then make it into exactly what Lady Arrow would wear.

Sue: That's how so many of my costumes have started.

Laura: Yeah, I feel like I go to the thrift store and I'm like, oh that would be a perfect this costume!

Andi: There's just a lot of creativity involved I think. Seeing things where there isn't anything yet.

Sue: Your experience there leads me into so many different ways we could go with this conversation because there are definitely issues surrounding cosplay or gender bending. But there are also issues surrounding bullying in cosplay. I guess why not start there. Is that there are definitely people who want to go out of their way to make somebody feel bad about their costume whether they don't think it's constructed well enough or they don't think that person has the right "body type" or even so far as well you bought your costume you didn't make your costume. So have you guys experienced that? What are your feelings on it?

Mira: Obviously I think all that is wrong. You know, because I really don't think that it's appropriate to make anyone sort of feel bad about something that they're trying to really celebrate. Why go to all that trouble to do that to someone when they're really just trying to enjoy something that really makes them happy and feels part of something.

Laura: No I agree. I mean it's obviously wrong. And I just feel like if you're truly a fan of like Star Trek, how Roddenberry has always described it, like it's it's open for everyone, all types and it's all types of people. And we shouldn't limit ourselves to just one set of things. I mean it's really difficult because I do get a lot of hate from people regarding some of my cosplays. When I did do like a race bending. And you know I got called the "Asian Crusher" or the Asian version of things and it's disheartening. And it doesn't stop me from wanting to cosplay but it just kind of hurts a little bit. I try not to let them get to me but you know there's going to be people like that and it's just like it doesn't reflect Star Trek and Roddenberry and his vision. So I try not to let it get to me.

Andi: Yeah, I mean, I felt that way kind of when I was doing that Arrow cosplay. I was really really nervous that people were going to laugh at me and that's just not a great feeling. And it's not something that you'd want to foster in a fandom community. I think the point of fandom at its best is to feel inclusive and to make everybody excited about the thing that we all love. But often people use it as a way to talk about who is a "real fan." And you see that in all sorts of flavors but I feel like it's particularly against women. I think it's particularly against women who do kind of canon tweaking and the like the creative fandom so like we talked about this a little bit when we're talking about fanfic. About how fanfic is often very women dominated because they don't feel like they see themselves in the narrative so they write themselves there and then I feel like you have something similar in cosplay where I mean I've seen men do very creative cosplay so don't think that I am saying that they can't. But I feel like a lot of the kind of cosplay that's super creative and super like you we're talking Sue about how it used to be just the uniforms and now you see like joke cosplay or you know all of the bending the various ways of like changing the costume just a little bit like Bollywood Bev. I feel like a lot of that is done by women. And then it has a tendency to have backlash from like these guys that think they're the arbiter of who gets to be in the fandom and how their fandom is supposed to be portrayed.

Sue: Yeah, I see a lot of genderbent cosplay in the Doctor Who fandom and I don't know if it's still as popular as it was a few years ago but for a while especially right around the 50th anniversary it was a huge trend to see women cosplaying different Doctors. And there were so many think pieces written about it but it basically all boiled down to the fact that you know women are sick of being the sidekick and we want to see ourselves be the Doctor.

Laura: Yes. And we have a female doctor now! Yeah!

Sue: And you know what was so interesting about the day that that announcement broke was just scrolling through my Facebook feed. I saw so many cosplay friends write something along the lines of, "Now I can be the Doctor and now I can dress as the Doctor without having to alter something about the character." Which struck me as more powerful than I thought it would. Because you know you should not be limited by the gender of a character or by another aspect of a character. But there's something weird about it when you can I guess what's the right word? Authentic feels like it's the wrong word. But when the representation is there in the fandom for you and who you are.

Andi: I think it's just nice to have a character that is easy to identify with and you can look at and be like "That's me." And it tends to resonate more and women and people of color have this issue where we often have to fall in love with characters that don't necessarily look like us and we're very good at that because we have to do that and cool. I mean how many women cosplay the Doctor regardless. You know, they bend it but there's something special about not having to do that and feeling represented in the fandom and being able to feel like yeah that's me. I'm the hero.

Mira: Yeah.

Laura: Yeah exactly like that. Oh man, there's so much. I think it's just like a small percentage that actually cares about that and are willing to say crappy things like that. You know it's nice to feel included that we see in this new Star Trek receiving more inclusion. And you know we don't need to shy away from having to like gender bend or race bend because now we're the heroes and it's great to see you know back when I was growing up it was tough to see an Asian or any woman of color. And so seeing like in the leading role and not you know being the person who holds a plant to you know the people who don't know who they're cosplaying as. And it's nice to be in the lead role and we actually sit in the captain's chair without being like, "Oh you're Asian Janeway."

Andi: Although I will say I do love your Kaiko cosplay. It is mad cute.

Sue: Laura, you had some tweets that got a lot of attention too with the casting of Michelle Yeoh.

Laura: Yeah yeah. Because on when she was first announced as a captain I was so excited because I've been a fan for years. So it's been nice to see an Asian women in the captain's chair as captain. And a lot of people were like "Why does this Asian person have to be representative of you?" I'm like because I get to see myself sit there and be accepted. And it's nice that finally after years of watching this series I get to see myself being reflected on the big screen and it's just emotional for me because you know I've been a fan for years and you know I've had a lot of problems growing up like being raised around a white community and just not being able to identify myself. Eventually moved into an Asian community but it's kind of like I didn't have identity and because media is important. You see yourself every day watching television and so I can only see myself and I mean I'm fine now but I just feel like little girls out there who never saw themselves finally get to see themselves as a leader and that you're the boss and you can be captain. You can be anything you want and not just be the side characters that we've seen before.

Andi: Yeah I think that's super powerful. One of the other things I like is expanding the number of characters so like one pushback that I saw on some of your tweets Laura was like, "Well you had Hoshi and you had Keiko and Janeway is a captain." And getting kind of all salty with you about it. But I mean that's a handful of people. So like trying to fit like the complexities of like every different kind of woman that you could be into like these handful of characters not even like main main characters. It's just so limiting. Like how many white dudes have we seen. Right. So it's something that I think about a lot when we're talking about representation. If you have more characters you can show different types of characters. So like now we have a kick ass Asian woman in command. That's amazing. Maybe next we can have a villain. You know, just more. More please. More.

Laura: I feel like this is the first time....Well, it's been a long time. In the original series has Uhura with Nichelle. It's been years since we've seen a black woman in the lead. Ever since, like, that was in the 60s! Why did it take so long to finally see a black woman as a lead character? I mean we had the movies as well but it's still nice to like have a lead role in the series we all grew up with and I'm so excited for her. I'm so excited for her.

Sue: I think this idea of the availability of different characters leads really nicely into the concept of whitewashing versus race bending. And please correct me if you think that these should be defined differently but I would say that race bending is when a person of color, a cosplayer of color takes a white character and race bends them to cosplay them and whitewashing is when a white cosplayer takes a character who is of color and cosplays them. Would you say that's accurate?

Laura: For cosplay I think it's a little bit different. For whitewashing I feel like it's more media based where it's like Ghost in the Shell, it's an Asian woman who was played by Scarlett Johansson or Doctor Strange the

Ancient One is played by Tilda Swinton. For cosplay I wouldn't necessarily call it whitewashing unless they're fully yellow face or black face and I'll be like No, that's wrong. I mean technically it is white washing but it's not bad to do that, I think. Unless you're doing like the coloring of anything, darkening, then it's wrong. It's a hundred percent, million percent wrong. But yeah that's another thing we have to talk about.

Sue: Well, I remember reading a thread on Tumblr that the explanation of why a white cosplayer should not play a character of color regardless of if you're painting your skin, which you should never do, was that you know as white people there are so many different characters already for us to "choose from" and there aren't as many characters of color on screen. So it's almost like taking something away by choosing to cosplay that character. That is assuming that cosplay is a zero sum game which is not which it's certainly not. But it just makes everything a little bit more complicated.

Andi: Obviously, yes. Hashtag no blackface. That's just like please never. There is never a good time for that. It is always wrong. Just that we don't... don't @ us.

Laura: Well I think if it adds culture. If there's cultural stuff to it then don't do it. If it's the Dora Milaje for Black Panther, don't do it because that's African traditional garbs that they're using. And then also for like if you want like Asian-based where it's like traditional like garment and that's kind of touchy on it. But if you're playing Martha from Doctor Who and you just wear her clothes. No black face, just her clothes. Then I think that's fine because you're just dressing up as a character. But if anything regarding traditional, I think you kind of have to shy away from that. In regards to like an Americanized version where you're just wearing the clothes. I feel like that's fine. Like if they're normalized clothes. I've seen a lot of Bill Potts. And people are just wearing her outfit. They're not doing anything to their hair, they're not doing anything to their face. It's just the outfit because they love her clothes and her character.

Mira: I actually yeah I agree with that. I think in terms of cosplay it's not black and white in that sense. But if someone you know is really like inspired and just drawn to a character as long as they're not being openly offensive or anything, you know, absolutely. Just you know, hashtag no black face. Ever.

Laura: No black, no brown, no yellow face. That's definitely...

Andi: A hard and fast rule we can all agree on.

Sue: Yeah it is interesting it seems to me that is now the conclusion. I feel like a couple of years ago there was a standard idea of just like just don't do it even if you want to just don't do it. And I was recently in a cosplaying online community just reading through some posts and there was a white woman saying how she would really love to cosplay Tiana and but would never do it "because she's afraid of being called a racist." And the comments in the thread like sort of panned out into most people saying you know just don't do blackface and nobody's going to care. So that seems to be where things are going. Yes.

Laura: Yeah, I feel like because Tianna had the green dress and it wasn't like anything traditional or cultural, it would be more acceptable. I actually had that issue where I wrote to a Facebook group and I asked them, what can I do for Bill like Bill from Doctor Who. I'm like I have her clothes but I don't want to do anything insulting. So I really wanted to consult just so I didn't step any lines. And like they said if you're wearing the regular clothes that's not anything cultural or traditional. I feel like they think it's fine. You need to be respectful of course.

Andi: Man, some of these issues are there just so many layers to them.

Sue: It can be difficult for sure. As can gender bending right because there are people - I read an article recently that somebody wrote about... It's called "My Problem with Gender Bent Cosplay" and the breakdown of

it was that the problem is when women are the sexy doctor or the sexy Ghostbuster like the Halloween costumes. This is again what the article says. And when the men are like trying to be burly manly hetero normative guys in wigs so it becomes a joke. And feeling that that is you know not only turning the woman into an object but also like sort of insulting the trans community in both cases. But whereas when you are like I guess trying to just translate the costume without turning it into like lingerie was the implication is when it's not a "problem." There are so many things so many parts to this.

Laura: I feel like no matter what, you're going to insult someone. Even if you do it perfectly, someone's going to be insulted. I'm all for it if people want to do it respectfully and even if it's like a little sexy, I think that's completely fine because those people, you know, they're comfortable with themselves and should be able to showcase their love. And you know how they want to perceive it as well. I mean there's always going to be some situations. I just, I'm not really sure. It's a grey line. It really is. Like regarding that kind of issue.

Andi: I think as long as you're going into it with like respect you are probably going to be OK. And if you're even thinking about that kind of thing... If you're looking at a cosplay option and you're thinking "Is this respectful of the trans community?" I have a feeling that you're not the type of person that's going to be putting together a cosplay that's really offensive. You know like even asking yourself a question is probably pretty good. But yeah I mean I think cosplay kind of runs into these kind of identity issues a lot because it's you taking on another identity. So it comes fraught with a lot of layers that don't always happen in other aspects of fandom like nobody is going to get angry at you for collecting all of the ships. Unless maybe you snag one off eBay that somebody else wanted or something.

Sue: So when you guys have dealt with people angry for ridiculous reasons like angry that you know you race bent a character or you gender bent a character how do you deal with that?

Mira: When I did Bollywood Bev for Star Trek Missions in New York and I was in their costume contest and the official Star Trek Facebook page posted my picture as one of them you know main pictures to advertise the contest. And there were I guess there were these white guys in the comments like "I don't get it." And I was like you know it just kind of like taught me like one, don't read the comments section. Best to just not to. But I just didn't take it on. A lot of it has to do with your own resilience and just knowing that what you're doing is... For me, mine came with a message that I didn't have to look exactly like Dr. Crusher to cosplay as Dr. Crusher because she is my favorite character and she resonated so deeply with me and that's more about our essences rather than me looking like her. And so if our essences were very similar I could still look like me and and cosplay as her. And it's just about like being confident in that and not really I guess caring about what other people think or if they're clueless or if they don't get it. Because a lot more people liked it than that guy, so, you know.

Andi: I think it's interesting that you said that like they they were saying that they don't get it. Well, maybe it's not for you. I think a lot of white men especially are used to everything being catered to them so when they consider white men to be neutral they consider to be universal. So when it's something outside of that they're like, "But this isn't for me. I reject it." Well, maybe it wasn't for you. Maybe it was for Mira. Maybe it was for herself. OK.

Laura: When we cosplay it really is for ourselves and we have such a strong community. I feel like in the Star Trek community, because we all go to the conventions and we talk to each other online, I feel like we have a strong sense of community already that any of the other naysayers, they don't really affect us because we have such a strong great community. Like I know I can always count on my Star Trek friends for this strong community. And I did Cupid from the episode Cupid. I was Beverly Crusher in the Robin Hood gear and I had a group with us and they were like "No, Laura, you are Beverly Crusher. You are Doctor Crusher. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise. You're not Asian Crusher, you are Crusher." And so I mean I have such great

support system that I feel like if anyone says like “Oh, what’s an Asian doing there?” It’s kind of nice. No matter what, don’t read the comments and then also embrace who people who do appreciate it.

Andi: Yeah. And then one thing about these kind of people that have a tendency to be super negative on the boards and stuff. I feel I never see them doing anything for the fandom. You know what I mean? They always seem to be outside it almost. The most I ever really see them is like on Facebook or on Twitter and they say they’re fans but like I’ve never heard of you. Not to say that I know every fan or anything like that but like what have you contributed to our community lately that means that you get to decide you know whether somebody’s fandom is good or real. It’s always comes down to real. That drives me bananas. I don’t understand where that real fan thing came from but that’s always been interesting to me. It’s like never any of these fans that you know you see at conventions cosplaying or at least I’ve never seen that.

Sue: Well, I just don’t understand why people would think someone would spend so much time and so much money doing something that they don’t actually love to get someone else’s attention who likes things they don’t like.

Mira: Yeah.

Sue: Like why would I spend hundreds of dollars and probably hundreds of hours putting together a Star Trek costume and paying to go to a Star Trek convention if I don’t like Star Trek to attract someone who does? It doesn’t make any sense.

Laura: No exactly. And I feel like the people who are complaining are the people who never not see themselves having to worry about that stuff. Like I always said like the people who are so negative and saying these things it’s because they never had to fight or work hard to try to see themselves being represented.

Andi: They never had to make space. The space has always been about them.

Laura: Yeah.

Mira: Right.

Sue: And now they’re pushing back because they feel like it’s being taken away.

Mira: Ugh.

Laura: Yes.

Andi: It’s frustrating. I will say though that I have been seeing a lot of really great cosplaying. Vegas. I was not able to go to Vegas but man was I following it on Twitter and some of the cosplay there was so good.

Sue: I just love that people are you know finding something that was on screen for five minutes in one episode and cosplaying it. And I love it.

Laura: Because back then like when I just mentioned a few years ago there’s really no Asians other than Keiko and Hoshi that I cosplayed before already. I’ve had to think of kind of unique ways to cosplay so I was Spot the cat one year and I was a Borg Cube another year.

Andi: Oh my gosh, if I had seen you as Spot the Cat I would have run you down and been like take a picture here with me immediately!

Laura: I will bring it next year. If you go to the con I will wear it again for you.

Andi: Oh my gosh. It's like personal cosplay. I love it.

Sue: See, even in the days when it was mostly uniforms and Klingons I feel like the great thing about Star Trek cosplay is that anyone can put on that uniform and be a Starfleet officer.

Andi: Yeah that is true.

Sue: Regardless of gender, regardless of race and I think the one issue that still does come into play though is that there's not a lot of body diversity in Star Trek. So, myself included I think a lot of people in those early days when it was just you know uniforms you could buy at Party City did not want to put on a spandex jumpsuit you know for fear of

Andi: What?

Sue: Either being ridiculed by other people or just feeling uncomfortable yourself.

Andi: But spandex is so forgiving and flattering. Why wouldn't you want to just cover yourself in polyester spandex? No, I feel you though, Sue. That has been something that has kept me from like when I was doing it that one year that I did it. I remember and you were there so you remember I was like taking all these selfies I was like, I don't know. I don't know if I can go out and have people look at me. Like it's a real thing and like if you think about Star Trek there really is like no body diversity on Star Trek. Like the one thing that immediately pops to mind is the Pakleds in that one episode and they basically cast them because they were like "How do we immediately show that they're stupid?"

Sue: "Let's cast fat people."

Andi: Yeah, that talk slow.... Feelings!

Laura: Definitely. I feel like there's not - like for men there is. For women. Yeah. I don't see any body diversity for women at all.

Andi: Yeah, you don't want me to be polyester minisuit, okay. Hey nobody wants that especially me.

Sue: Well and that's why I shied away from a lot of Star Trek cosplay for so long. But you know recently more things have become available like I can get Nechayev's Admiral tunic which I feel is more flattering on me and I had plans to wear that at Dragon Con. And people are doing different things. There was somebody at Star Trek Las Vegas who cosplayed as Troi as the cake. You know she was carrying a table around on top of herself.

Andi: I'm also a sucker for ship cosplays. So like somebody did Enterprise that was amazing. I always love the TARDIS ones. I always say those are really cool and interesting because what's more classic than the Enterprise? I mean what is more emblematic of Star Trek than the Enterprise.

Sue: But mashups are becoming more and more popular too. So like if you feel uncomfortable. First of all, don't let anybody shame you for wearing what you want to wear. So let's start there. Like if you want to put on that spandex jumpsuit, do it. Screw everybody else. But if you feel uncomfortable doing that you can mash it up with something. Like there are people who do you know Starfleet uniform meets a 50s poodle skirt. Meets a Victorian dress. Meets the Love Boat, right, the old SNL sketch. So you can do just about anything and it

becomes recognizable. It can be a visual pun. It can pick up on something that a joke that somebody made forever ago because somebody is going to recognize it.

Andi: This is really random but Laura did you do a Rihanna "Sledgehammer" cosplay?

Laura: I did.

Andi: Oh my God. I was about to bring that up and I was thinking back to the picture of it and I was like you know what. That actually looked like Laura. Was that Laura? Oh my God, it was Laura! Yeah I loved that.

Laura: No one actually - only a few people got it. They were just like "Oh what alien race is she?"

Andi: I saw it 'cause @EnterpriseExtra was really...

Mira: Oh, Jim.

Andi: Yeah. Jim lovely Jim was like "Amazing!" and he tweeted it in my timeline and I was just like so pumped about that. I mean there's just. Star Trek has such depth you can find just the smallest characters. Like who would think "Hey, now I get to cosplay Rihanna and it's totally Star Trek cosplay." That's amazing.

Laura: I know I was just like oh I have the music in the background so people could understand. And yeah a lot of people were like "Oh I don't get it." I'm just like "No, I'm the alien like Rihanna." And they're just like "Oh we didn't see that." I'm like "Oh."

Andi: See this is why Jim got it right away. It's cause Jim embraces all of Star Trek including new Star Trek and a lot of people who are like the convention goers are a little bit wary of the new stuff. I was also all about it because I love that music video and I think that song is beautiful but it just goes to show though that like the creativity that you can find all sorts of costumes.

Laura: Oh yeah. There's so many different things you can do and that Rihanna one was so comfortable. I mean like oh my God these are just - everything's loose.

Andi: It's so flowy.

Laura: Yeah and it's flowy. When there was wind it was so long that I could blow the wind through her arms. It was just it was such a comfortable cosplay. I'm like maybe I should do it again, it's so comfortable. The only problem was the makeup. The face makeup. That was a pain. But anything other than that like... Yeah I mean I feel like you could honestly be anything. And I saw people as tribbles. People actually made themselves a round tribble like the little puff ball. And like I feel like honestly in Star Trek, especially at our convention, it's so open and so embracing. People are so for it. I think it's only the online community, online trolls, that are just the haters.

Andi: Yeah. Are there any cosplays that y'all are looking forward to doing like any ideas that you have?

Mira: I did. Back in September I did... I call her Daisy Dax which is Jadzia Dax. You know did the Trill spots on it and her version of the uniform in addition to Bollywood Bev. And what I really would like to do and this is going to take me quite some time. The wedding look for Dax. Her wedding to Worf.

Laura: Oh my god.

Mira: I would love to do a full Indian bridal sari look for Dax. That's going to take a while because that's elaborate.

Andi: Yes that's pretty amazing. But here's the coolest thing about stuff like that is like because it's unique. It gets noticed like Gates McFadden actually like noticed you.

Mira: Mmhm.

Andi: I mean that's that's huge.

Mira: Yeah.

Andi: She called you adorable.

Mira: Yes she did.

Andi: I would put that on my damn tombstone. OK. "Called adorable by Gates McFadden."

Mira: Yes. She's great, yeah.

Laura: For me I've been working on this for a long time. A Livingston costume.

Andi: Oh my God!

Laura: Everyone's like "That's okay. You were Spot. You should be Livingston." So I was like okay, challenge accepted. I will work on this. I've worked on this for two years.

Andi: I feel like that's like such a level that I could not even comprehend. Me and my Rose Tyler hoop earrings are just like "What?" I have no idea how to do that. But I'm sure it'll be amazing and I look forward to it and I look forward to seeing it.

Sue: See, I love this because I feel like fandom has stopped taking itself so seriously. And like you have people who even just a few years ago like that's not screen accurate! Rah rah rah. And I witnessed this at conventions.
I

Andi: Haha, I'm sorry, I'm just picturing someone going up to Laura and being like "You're too big to be Livingston. That's not screen accurate."

Laura: People were like "Wow, Spot is so big!"

Sue: Like ten years ago you'd get side-eyed for dressing as a cat at a Star Trek convention. And like it wouldn't be funny it would be like disrespectful in the eyes of the "true fans" and that's what I mean by people taking everything less seriously. Like they can laugh at things. They can embrace like the ridiculousness that is sometimes Star Trek.

Andi: OK. So I will never do these 'cause I am terrible at cosplay I've learned. But these are the things that I wanted to do. I wanted to do like a femme Gorn and I actually saw someone at a con this year actually wearing it because the Gordon wears a really cute dress guys.

Sue: She was Miss Universe.

Andi: Yeah! It's like checkered. I want to do that but like then you have like a crown with eyes and then you're green. Oh my god I would do such like if I had any skills at all, I would make the coolest fem Gorn costume. I also would want to do that Lady Gaga-looking girl from TOS too.

Laura: Oh yeah, she's pretty. Yeah, that was pretty.

Andi: And just like some of those TOS costumes are just so rad. I also have little black cats that could easily be Isis so maybe someday I'll do Space Bond and Ninja Cat.

Laura: Oh my God! That would be so cute!

Sue: Last year for Star Trek Las Vegas as like last resort - and I actually didn't even end up wearing it. I went and ordered you know the \$18 Ruby's TOS tunic from Amazon and that like sparkle fringe that you get for little kids parties. And I was like I'm just going to wear the tunic and like wrap the streamers around my waist and say I'm mid-transport.

Laura: Oh my god that would be so cool!

Sue: That is an open source idea anybody can have that now.

Laura: I just love the creativity that like everyone has and that's the cool thing. At Star Trek Las Vegas, I feel like everyone could do that and not be judged and like get so much love from that.

Andi: That's one of the most things fun things about cons in general is just walking around and seeing what people come up with cause they come up with just like such cool stuff. Are they doing Mission New York again this year?

Sue: Not this year but it says "Stay tuned for 2018."

Andi: Oh, okay. Cause there was some really cool stuff at that one too.

Laura: There's just so many ideas. You know it's funny because me and my friend she goes to conventions too and I we just message each other like what should we do? We should do this! and it's like we always come out with the most random costumes. We're like yeah, let's do this! It's always so fun because like you can do anything in Star Trek.

Andi: Well that's the beauty of sci-fi and why we love it so much is because of the open ended possibilities.

Sue: It's also really the beauty of the Internet and I think that's a huge part of why cosplay has increased so much. It's because it makes things so much more accessible.

Andi: Yeah.

Sue: Like twenty years ago how are you going to figure out how to make you know Klingon armor? If you live in a small town where are you going to find you know molding foam to make things out of, to make props out of. But now we have places we can order from online then they'll ship you supplies and you can watch YouTube videos and tutorials to learn how to do this stuff and it's just made the whole hobby much easier to get into and much more inclusive I think.

Andi: Plus, you get to see all the pictures of everybody doing everything and like how much fun they're having and it's just so aspirational and like oh man, maybe I can do that.

Mira: I actually never intended to cosplay. Like, I'm never going to ever dress up in costume. I could never see myself doing that. Now it's like what am I going to work on next?

Laura: It's become a lifestyle.

Mira: Yeah.

Laura: I appreciate you guys doing this episode because especially now that we're seeing like more inclusion than ever seen in the Trek world, especially with fans. And like I've seen the increase of a mixed group of people and it's so refreshing to have us talk about it because it's so important. And now we're in a world where you know there's so many problems and there's protesters like horrible people like saying horrible things and I feel like this kind of thing, especially going on in cosplay communities so I really appreciate there's a discussion on it like on Women at Warp. It's so great to be able to talk about it.

Andi: I think that Star Trek is really needed right now. I feel like it's the perfect time for more Star Trek. And I have to say when I saw that that trailer, that first trailer they dropped and it was basically nothing but two women of color talking to each other. I was just so floored. And it looked so beautiful and so interesting but the whole time I was like in 10 seconds they blew the Bechdel-Wallace Test out of the water. Ten seconds in the trailer alone and I was just like this is the kind of Star Trek that I need right now. You know?

Sue: There's one season of Enterprise where they're... for the entire season, I think there's four minutes that passed the Bechdel Test.

Andi: That trailer won over that.

Sue: Over an entire season of Enterprise.

Andi: I actually teared up and like it looks like an amazing show and I was really really interested in the trailer from like a fan perspective but there was just this part of me that was just so touched by it as well. And the fact that they're actively trying to you know show a gay character and you know the the way that the actors and the writers have been on social media talking to the fans already has me just super pumped and I feel like this is the perfect time for a new Star Trek. And there's just... So excited!

Sue: But it feels like they purposely made it difficult for cosplayers doesn't it?

Laura: Oh my God, oh my God!

Andi: See, I could just go pretty costumes! Laura has to be like, how do I do that?

Sue: So Laura, you were one of the first people to cosplay Discovery.

Laura: Yeah I saw a girl, I went to Denver Comic-Con. She had it too and I was just like I need to do this. And plus, you know, Michelle Yeoh and I was like I definitely need to do this because you know her birthday also about weekend at the Star Trek convention. So I'm like this would be perfect. And so I really started working on it and messaged the... I tweeted out to the costume designer. I'm like, "As a Star Trek fan this is the best most beautiful uniform I've ever seen but as a cosplayer I really hate you."

Andi: It is really pretty though. I really love it. I love this the gold like the gold stripes and stuff.

Laura: The Deltas were a pain. Oh my god.

Andi: I believe it. I believe it

Laura: I'm going to work on it so it will be better. That was such a last minute thing where I actually had time because I had Comic-Con so I was like no and now I have time to make it. And that was like a really short time. So I'm going that now that I have more time on my I'm going to make sure by the next convention I'll have an official looking one.

Andi: Well, I can't wait. I can't wait for the new round of pictures for me to retweet. And just geek out over you guys' awesome cosplay. And maybe someday I will do some Trek cosplay of my own because I do get ideas especially when I'm watching the show and I'm like man that would be so cool.

Laura: I know Mira's amazing at her work and I'm like, I'm OK.

Andi: Well, thanks so much for joining us you guys. It was really fun and Sue knows how long I've been wanting to do this episode so I'm really glad that it worked out that we could have you both here.

Laura: Thank you.

Mira: Thank you.

Sue: So Mira where can people find you online if they want to follow your cosplay adventures?

Mira: I guess that would have to be on Twitter. My handle is @xlovelucy like I Love Lucy but an X and I update over there. Until I can do something more official with it. Yeah.

Sue: Awesome! And Laura?

Laura: Yeah they can find me on Twitter. I'm always on there and like I'm always on there. It's @Isirikul. So that's my name. But like yeah you can find me on there. I'm always tweeting about cosplay and Star Trek and Star Wars and Doctor Who.

Sue: Yeah I saw you working on a Rose cosplay. A Star Wars Rose cosplay.

Laura: Yeah. Yeah. Oh my God that's a lot. It's getting a lot of work because I just got the pattern and I'm trying to find a color. And like I'm waiting for them to actually display it, like have it on display. Usually they have it on display to really look at it.

Sue: Yeah there are not many photos of that yet cause I have another friend who's trying to make that as well.

Laura: I'm just very happy that they're like, I'm starting to see more myself in the fandoms I grew up with. I'm just waiting on Doctor Who to have a companion that, you know.

Sue: Absolutely.

Andi: Well, they haven't announced the new companion yet. I'd love two ladies. That would be pretty awesome.

Sue: Alright Andi, where are you on Twitter?

Andi: I am @firsttimetrek. I tweet a lot about Star Trek and also you know drag race stuff. Lots of gifs. I swear a lot. It's a good time.

Sue: It is. And on Twitter I am @spaltor. That's @spaltor. If you want to get in touch with the show you can reach us on Twitter @womenatwarp. On Facebook at Facebook.com/womenatwarp or by e-mail at crew@womenatwarp.com. And for our blog you can find that at womenatwarp.com. And for more from the Roddenberry podcast network you can find that at podcasts - with an s - .Roddenberry.com. Thanks so much for joining us.