



LUKE WHITTAKER PHOTO

Luna and Corveaux Millions, co-owners of Versus Comics



COSPLAYPNW PHOTO

Twin sister cosplay act Double Mischief at Sakura-Con in Seattle, Wash.

IF YOU GO

VERSUS COMIC CON

When: 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday, July 21; 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday, July 22. After-hours events follow both days.

Where: Seaside Civic & Convention Center, 415 First Ave., Seaside

Tickets start at \$15 for a Sunday Pass and range to \$80 for a two-day Family Pass. They can be purchased at the door or securely on the Versus Comic Con website. Kids under 10 get in for free. One dollar from each ticket will be donated to Magic Wheelchair (which will also be on site), an organization that helps outfit disabled children as their favorite superhero or cartoon/comic book character.

For more information, tickets, a full event schedule, site map and local hotel discounts, visit versuscomiccon.com

you've been sucked into the black hole of Nerdism, there is no escaping."

Kraus, building upon her interest, is now a costume designer and cosplay model. For Versus, Kraus plans on wearing two different costumes as a featured cosplayer. "I really want to take advantage of the beach for photo shoots!"

The cosplay fun will go on all weekend with a two-day, three-round Cosplay Contest consisting of costume design, karaoke and a dance-off.

Bazaar-o world

This con will boast about 100 vendors, ranging from independent comic book publishers to handmade handbags. The exposure offered by Comic Cons is huge for like-minded small businesses and services.

Zachary Weitzel, of Pretzelbot Props out of Vancouver, Wash., began attending conventions in 2014. Weitzel, who is also a TSA agent at the Portland International Airport, builds lavish, custom-built cosplay gear and costumes.

"Comic conventions are probably one of the most important things for a business like mine," he said. "I may not sell anything while there, but just to have people see you and get pictures of and with you helps out a ton."

Lacy Hayes, the owner of Prism Visions Photography in Spokane, Wash., also understands the value of a picture.

"Our favorite part is always meeting and working with cosplayers," she said. "Cosplay is an art, and we absolutely love being able to be creative and interact with other artists."

With her daughter, Baily Hayes, a full-time student, as her assistant, Lacy runs a traveling side business, CosplayPNW, offering professional photography services at conventions around the Northwest.

CosplayPNW will be attending Versus and appointments can be made by Facebook. Their most popular Con-only offer is a mini-session, which starts at \$65 for 20 to 30 minutes, and includes editing, high-res images and prints.

Illustrator Kevin McCoy, whose

work will be featured in the Versus Artist Alley, knows firsthand that Comic Cons can be life-changing.

"I have been doing this for five years now," he said. "I started this as a side gig with my day job as a graphic designer. I left my cushy job this past January after landing gigs worth pursuing. Now I illustrate full time and work from home. Hard work pays off."

Origin story

Event coordinator Luna Millions and her husband, Corveaux Millions, co-owners of Versus Comics, a publisher out of Rockaway Beach, dipped their toes into conventions last year with the Northwest Comic Con in Tillamook.

"We actually kind of accidentally got into the con business," Luna said. This was after a customer convinced Corveaux to plan last year's event in Tillamook.

The Millions (both pseudonyms) are happy to see their convention move north up U.S. Highway 101.

"Seaside is a happening little city and a nexus point on the coast," Luna said. "The max capacity on the building is 3,000 per day. We're hoping to hit at least that for the weekend. Our first year in Tillamook we had more than 1,000 attendees."

Dark night

Superheroes prowl the graveyard shift, so why should Versus be any different?

After the Convention Center is locked up Saturday night, there will be a cosplay pub crawl through Seaside. For the closing event on Sunday, Luna Millions promises "music, sand, cosplay."

When a con comes to an end, the return to the real world can sometimes taste a bit sour, something Hannah Kraus said cosplayers refer to as "Post-con depression."

But memories have been made, and there's always next year.

"The best moments are when kids' eyes light up seeing their favorite characters walking among them," McCoy said. "Even more so with adults — the idea that you are welcomed to geek out, nerd out, dress up or just hang out and be yourself." 