



DRAGON TALK



Dragon Con Membership Newsletter
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Hodgkin's Lymphoma Sisters Reach Out!

Alea Mayfield, a 24 year old from Nashville, was doing what many Dragon Con members are doing in the springtime, checking out the Dragon Con website to see which actors and artists were coming this year. When she happened to notice that the 2015 Official Charity was the [Lymphoma Research Foundation](#), she gasped "This is too perfect!", and immediately texted her sister to share the good news.

Like any good superheroes, they reached out knowing that they could help support our efforts, sending an email saying "The Hodgkin's Lymphoma Sisters Want to Help!!!!"

Meeting the Mayfield Sisters

After doing a little bit of schedule coordinating, the sisters live in different states and are both undergoing treatment, we were able to connect for an interview in early May. When I spoke with them they had just finished chemotherapy the previous day and were feeling pretty rough.

Gabby and Alea were diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma this past November within a few weeks of each other. After starting chemotherapy in January, they will luckily (and happily) be finished with chemo just a few months before the Con.

They totally understood the confusion about what lymphoma was and how hard it is to describe. "Lymphoma isn't a cancer you hear of too often; you typically hear the big ones like lung cancer and breast cancer. The type of lymphoma we have is more rare." The girls say they've stayed positive because if they were going to have a type of lymphoma, Hodgkin's lymphoma "is a good one to get, if any. It has a good outlook and you usually don't have to do radiation. Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma is a lot more aggressive."



The Mayfield sisters at Dragon Con

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Their Dragon Con Credentials

The Mayfield sisters have been attending the show for two years along with an uncle and aunt who live in Atlanta with their two children. Gabby says she is the least nerdy of the bunch, but she likes to cosplay. She mostly followed Alea's lead her first year, who points out what the people in costumes are dressed as, since she is familiar with a wide range of characters including gaming references.

According to Gabby, Alea is the biggest fan. She likes to read *Lord of the Rings* and *Game of Thrones*, play games like *Final Fantasy*, and watch *BattleStar Galactica*. Alea's boyfriend Scott, who is joining them, is into gaming and enjoys *Halo* and *Mass Effect*.

Gabby is more into movies and TV shows like *Breaking Bad*. Both girls like to cosplay.

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"It is not set in stone just yet, but we plan on being the twins from the Cartel from *Breaking Bad*...or Professor X...or Mr. Clean...it's kind of endless the bald headed possibilities."

The sisters had a memorable cosplay experience when Gabby was dressed as a zombie Dorothy from the *Wizard of Oz* and some folks from *Face/Off* stopped to talk to them because they liked her costume. On another occasion the two sisters, who are big fans of *Spongebob Squarepants*, got to meet cast members from *The Walking Dead* while they were dressed up as Mermaid Man and Barnacle Boy.

Gabby's Diagnosis

Gabby said, "I was 18 when my lymph nodes on my neck became really swollen." She went to the doctor but they thought it was "no big deal." But in July her blood work came back and her white blood cell count was elevated. The challenges continued when she had a lymph node in the middle of her neck that hurt really bad, including when she drank. Gabby shared, "The lymph nodes under my arms were also obviously swollen. I got one removed in October to do an entire biopsy. The surgeon called back a week later and nonchalantly diagnosed it as lymphoma. That was the hardest part for me, learning I had cancer in such an offhand way. I was so young and it was just so unexpected. I didn't tell anyone about it for a week; I was so shocked."

Gabby recently received a scare when they discovered a growth on her bone. Had it been cancerous, then she would have been at Stage III Lymphoma. Fortunately for her, the results came back as benign.

Alea's Story

Two days before her 24th birthday, Alea had plans to take a trip to down to Florida. Just before she was going to take the 12 hour drive, she discovered a lump over her left collar bone. This came as a complete surprise, because unlike Gabby, Alea didn't have any history of swollen lymph nodes.

"Mine didn't hurt at all, but it was really swollen," Alea says. "I did a Google search, and everything I looked up dealt with lymphomas." She had just moved to Nashville and was all by herself. She went to a doctor, who ruled out common causes of her symptoms. She had a biopsy done and learned she too had Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Alea found that the hardest part for her was discovering she was at Stage III, which meant the cancer was throughout her body and in her spleen in contrast to her sister who is at stage II which means it's restricted to her upper diaphragm.

Same Disease, Different Experiences

While the sisters suffer from the same disease, both have had very different experiences. Gabby has been fortunate and has not suffered from nausea from chemo, although it makes her tired and "feel like crap." Alea, on the other hand, has had more nausea, "For a while they give you anti-nausea drugs, which make you drowsy. You start chemo on Friday night, then Sunday you feel better only for it to hit again. First it was just two days then it kept increasing to a week to feel better. The motion sickness patch has been helpful."

Alea has lost weight, about 15lbs., but Gabby has gained weight. "I don't even know how that's possible!" Alea began losing her hair after 2nd treatment. "I had never cut my hair until it started falling out and I shaved it." Gabby kept her hair for 3 months, thinking at that point she was going to keep it. They both say the good thing about losing all your hair is that you can get ready quickly. "I can get ready in 10 minutes!" says Gabby.

Being Young with Cancer

"Seeing other people with cancer, you realize everyone is different, but it's cool seeing that people for the most part have a good outlook. At the same time, you feel connected 'Hey you have cancer... that sucks for you too.'" Since they are so young, they also note that they get a lot of sad expressions when in treatment, as well as, many questions. Gabby also commented on the difficulty of telling friends that want to go out that she's too tired from chemotherapy.

Alea and Gabby have received useful advice from others who were being treated for cancer, including a tip that nausea is often in your head and it helps if you can go to a quiet place and focus on something else. "I never would have thought that, but it really helped." said Alea.

Despite it all, they have maintained a positive attitude. "When you research all the other possible side effects you could have, you realize you can deal with it."

They also noted that you "can't mope around forever, it just makes everything worse. We've never been the type to be Debbie Downers."



How They Want to Help

Although the sisters are not working with the [Lymphoma Research Foundation](#) directly, they wanted to do whatever they could to help with the awareness and diagnosis of lymphoma.

Asking them to leave us with a few last thoughts, Alea shared, "Shout out to people: Listen to your body, if you have a weird bump, get it checked out. Go to your doctor, have regular checkups, be in tune with your body." Gabby commented "Before, I never would have thought we'd have to deal with cancer, now I'm more aware". They realize cancer can happen to anybody, even someone young like them.

And last but not least, both ladies wanted to give a much deserved bit of recognition. "Mom has been more than helpful through all of it. She's handled it very well...shout out to our Mom!"

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Learn More, Help Out

- ★ Check out our [charity page](#) for "Fast Facts" about lymphoma, the work of the LRF, the 2015 charity auction, and more.
- ★ [Lymphoma Research Foundation](#) has an outstanding [Facebook page](#) with useful news, and resources.
- ★ Learn more comprehensive info on the LRF's [website](#).
- ★ Watch the [Dragon Con Store](#) for our 2015 Challenge Coins to go on sale, with all proceeds going to our charity.



I to r: David Cody, Pat Henry, Jennifer Sussman, Brian Sussman, Rachel Reeves, and Sherry Henry.

Fans Earn the Chance To “Grab the Dragon by the Ear”

“Grab the Dragon by the Ear?” Sounds dangerous! Well, not exactly. In 2014 as part of the Charity Auction, Dragon Con auctioned off two opportunities for members to have lunch and Q&A with the Dragon Con Board of Directors. Two awesome fans won the lunch dates: Jennifer Sussman and Lacey Aderhold, who brought along guests Brian Sussman and Jody Street. We want to thank them and everyone else who contributed to our fundraising efforts. Because of you, we were able to send over \$115,000 to the [Atlanta Community Food Bank](#), including the company match of over \$50,000.

The lunches took place on February 20 and March 10. The participants came prepared with well thought out questions and insightful ideas that they were able to discuss. They got to hear interesting behind the scenes information and also received some cool Dragon Con swag.

Jennifer, Brian, Lacey, and Jody, made many helpful suggestions to the board, and everyone came away considering it time well spent. We look forward to auctioning off lunches in the future. Stay tuned and come check out the Charity Auctions in 2015!



I to r: Pat Henry, Sherry Henry, Robert Dennis, Rachel Reeves, Mandy Collier, Lacey Aderhold, Jody Street, and David Cody.

Dragon Con Superheroes



After a fantastic first year, the Dragon Con Superheroes have continued their mission of community service in 2015. In addition to having a great time, people who participate in any of these service projects receive a Superheroes T-shirt, and will again be invited to an exclusive celebration during this year’s show.

The first Superheroes project on March 21 saw a return to our partnership with the [Atlanta Community Food Bank](#), with a half-day of work in an [ACFB](#) supported community garden in Northwest Atlanta. We cannot thank all participants enough. It was a great opportunity to truly see an immediate impact in the community, with local residents coming by and thanking us for our help.

For the second project on April 11, we participated in the [Lymphoma Research Foundation’s](#) Lymphoma Walk, held at the Wesleyan School in Norcross. The Superheroes not only assisted the walk by staffing tables and cheering on participants, but our team also raised \$14,305 to become the second highest fundraising team for the event.



Check It Out: Your Dragon Con Member Benefits

Hello Fabulous Dragon Con Members!

We are always on the lookout for ways to make your Membership even more valuable. Here are some additional Member Benefits, including discounts, free publications, workshops, and year round group events.



Dragon Con offers a fun filled member benefit through our partnership with **Six Flags**, which brings you substantial savings off the main gate price as well as discounted season passes. Click [here](#) and provide Username: **dragonconog** Password: **SixFlags10**.



Workshops

Receive instruction from award winning professionals at great member rates.

We offer: **Writer's Hourly Workshops** with Michael A. Stackpole; **Writer's Workshop** with Jody Lynn Nye; Erin Gray's **Tai Chi Workshop**; the **Acting Workshop** by Amber Benson; various **Special Effects Workshops** with FaceOff's Roy Wooley and RJ Haddy; and more. Click [here](#) to get the details.



Member Events

Enjoy discounted rates to fun group events like **Dragon Con Night at Turner Field** and our two sold out events at **Medieval Times**. And don't forget our upcoming **Dragon Con Night at GA. Aquarium**, which has become one of the biggest events on Saturday Night of the convention.



Event Horizon Publishing Group offers 15% off all e-books purchases. Just type in the coupon code **DCebook15**. This is a better price on these titles than on Amazon. Plus, get free shipping on trade paperbacks using coupon code **DCFREESHIP**.



Dragon Con Store

Members receive 25% off Dragon Con Store merchandise purchases. At the show, we have stores in the Sheraton, the Marriott, and in the Vendor Halls at the AmericasMart. But your discount is also good in our [online store](#) all year long on great Dragon Con gear and souvenirs.



Receive discounted* airfares with Delta Air Lines. If originating within the United States or Canada, please [click here](#) and enter **NMKL6** under Meeting Event Code. For ALL others, please [click here](#) and enter **NMKL7** under Meeting Event Code.

*Some restrictions apply.



Dragon Con Superheroes

Are you looking for a way to stay connected with fun Dragon Con people throughout the year and give back to your community as well? The **Dragon Con Superheroes** just might be for you! Click [here](#) to learn more about the program and stay abreast of future opportunities.



Publications

You know it's Dragon Con time when your *Progress Report* arrives in your mailbox in July! We want to help you prepare for the show and get the most out of it while you're here. You also receive *Dragon Talk* (which, you're reading now), our *Souvenir Program Book*, and the *Pocket Program*.



Olympus Worldwide Chauffeured Services offers members 10% off their services. Roll up to the convention or your next special event in style! Call 1-877-OLYMPUS, and mention the discount code **Dragon Con**.



Get discounted rental car rates with **Enterprise and National Rental Car**. Click [here](#) or use the following codes: Enterprise code: **XZ03A67**, pin: **DRA** or National code: **XZ03A67** This is one of our most popular Member discounts so be sure to remember it for your next trip.



Scootaround provides Dragon Con rentals for around \$60 a day, plus \$30 off the total if you rent all five days. Plan ahead and rent [online](#).

Year-round, you receive a 10% discount on any rental taking place in Orlando, Florida or Las Vegas, Nevada. Call 888-441-7575 and use the code **Dragon15**.

Get to Know a Track: Table Top Gaming

The Table Top Gaming Track: Delivering Panels about Gaming, by Gamers, for Gamers and Anybody Else Who's Interested!

When you think of board gaming at Dragon Con, what do you picture? A room full of people involved in animated conversations and intense decision making? Tables full of game boards, cards, dice, tokens, manuals, and miniatures?



"Hey, those are my people!"

Well then, you would be right. Dragon Con is chock full of opportunities to play board games, strategy games, card games, miniature games, and much more. Whether you want tournament play, campaign gaming, or just a casual game with old and new friends, you can get your fill of all of these over at Board Gaming in the Hilton Galleria.

But Wait, There's More!

Want to expand your knowledge about the games you love, discover in depth information about the gaming industry, get tips from skilled players, and share war stories with other gamers? Then we recommend you check out the Table Top Gaming Track. It's located in Grand Salon C on the 2nd floor of the Hilton.

We talked to Rucht Lilavivat, track director of Table Top Gaming, to learn more about what makes this track special. "We have quite a few panels hosted by top-level designers. For example, year after year Jason Bulmahn, the lead designer for the Pathfinder system comes to our convention. Darwin Bromley, the father of modern board games also comes every year. Monte Cook and Tracy

Hickman have also graced our halls. Last year, we had our Dungeons & Dragons panel hosted by Robert Schwalb, one of lead designers of the latest edition. Our fans turn out in droves for these guests."

Besides the guest panels, Rucht says the most popular panels have to do with dungeon mastering, world-building, or game design. "The vast majority of our audiences are gamers and they want something they can use to take back home and use in their own games."

Even though the primary focus of this track is on table top style games, they also are able to draw big crowds and provide unique perspectives because of their cross-disciplinary panels. "We're able to host panels with a pen and paper designer on one side and a computer game designer on the other. That means we draw people from all over the gaming spectrum because—as we know—there's no such thing as someone who "just" plays board games or "just" plays computer games."

What's Coming in 2015

One of the biggest panel surprises was the success of the Psychology in Gaming panel, which debuted in 2014. It featured a panel of experts discussing the psychology that occurs among people who are playing games, as well as exploring how psychologists have used gaming in therapy. "That panel was packed wall-to-wall with a huge over-flow line. We hope to have the Psychology in Gaming panel back."

The track will have Robert J. Schwalb back to host a panel on Dungeons & Dragons, which should be popular since the latest edition of D&D is "flying off of the shelves." "We'll be doing a panel on how to be a great player at a table top role playing game, not just a great game master. Also, we are offering a panel on technology in table top games and how one informs the other. We will be featuring some

panels on miniature gaming as well."

"Every year, we have people wander into our track and have a great time. That's because our track also has a lot to offer writers, creators, and video game designers. There's a lot you can learn about world building, writing, game-making, publishing, and the overall creative process at our track. I think that's why it continues to be so popular."

Fans Review Some of Their Favorite Table Top Gaming Panels From 2014

Cults, Conspiracies, and Other Weirdness

"Funny and amazingly informative. First time I've ever taken notes during a panel."

Gamer Girls Unite! "Very cool, very funny and very informative."

Killer Breakfast with Tracy & Laura Hickman "This was a total blast! We will absolutely return for this fun filled session at future Dragon Cons! Wonderful! Marvelous! Fun!"

40 Years of Dungeons & Dragons "Great stories and compelling insights from great contributors to a fan favorite."

30 Years of Dragonlance

"The Hickmans are great speakers and it was an honor to hear them."

Cthulhu in Gaming "Both panelists were highly knowledgeable on the subject and very good (and funny!) presenters."

Game Mastering 101 "A lot of great information for Game masters, new or old."

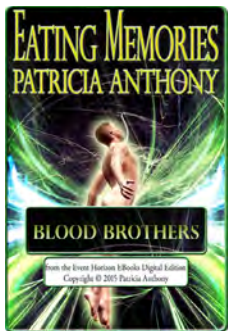
Psychology in Gaming "Fantastic panel with professional and knowledgeable presenters. Interesting and important subject matter."

Worst. Gaming. Story. Ever.

"A fun panel that involves us, the attendees, not just panelists."

Featured Short Story: Blood Brothers

We're happy to bring you this thought provoking short story, compliments of Patricia Anthony and [Event Horizon Publishing Group](#). We hope you enjoy it.



I don't know whether I'll ever like rain again. When I was a kid I loved it, Even living in Washington State I loved it. And we got a lot of rain there. We had a window seat at home in a cranny on the second floor.

From fifth grade until I got too sophisticated for that kind of stuff, sometime around my senior year in high school, I'd crawl into that cranny and read novels about Mars while the soft rain padded up to the window, nuzzled my shoulder and curled beside me to sleep.

Here in my room I've got a pictograph of a forest in the Pacific Northwest. In it the sun's shining. On the other wall is a window that looks out over red flats splattered with lichens. To the east Olympus Mons rises from its gray shroud. I can sometimes track the blocks of ice as they make their incandescent way down the close, dark sky.

I know it was cold here to begin with, but sometimes I imagine the ice makes it colder. I imagine it carries baggage between the mass driver on Europa and here: suitcases full of chill, valises empty with solitude.

The loneliness drives you crazy after a while. That, and the never-ending torrents of rain. Out in the flats in the ATV's with their bare half-inch of insulation, you go deaf. You start shouting at your driver and he starts shouting at you just to make yourselves heard, When you start to blame each other because the food's cold or because your underwear's damp or because the splintered Martian rocks are so ungodly barren, it's time to come in.

I slogged through the compound, my boots making obscene sucking noises, an accompaniment to the timpani of the monsoon. Rain played frantic Impressionist Rock and Roll on my helmet. The door slid open as I approached and then slid shut behind me. In the deafening silence of the building I took my helmet off.

"Cap'n Henson, sir," the guard said, bringing up a hand in a salute. I realize it was because he wasn't shouting.

I cleared my throat, "Harrison," I answered with a disoriented smile. It always took me an hour or so to unwind from outside.

"Sir, the doctor wanted to see you as soon as you came in. Should I tell her you're on your way?"

"I'll see her later," I told him as I ambled down the hall toward the cafeteria. But the doctor must have been waiting. Halfway down the corridor she stepped out of the lab and into my way.

"Greg," she said. "You look tired." Her brown eyes scrutinized me in a way that would have been flattering had it come a younger, less perceptive woman. "You feeling okay?"

"Sure."

Helen's question was standard. My answer was, too. She'd been querying me after I came in from outside ever since Marvin Torres had committed suicide. He hadn't coped well with the solitude...

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Important Stuff You Should Know

Your Safety at the Show

We pride Dragon Con on being a safe place, where everybody is welcome and anybody can be whomever they desire. Even so, certain kinds of offensive or harassing behavior are not tolerated. To the best of our ability, we intend to eliminate inappropriate conduct from the convention. [Click here](#) for our full policy which includes ways you can report inappropriate behavior, such as: alerting one of our 1800+ volunteers; going to Security in M102 of the Marriott where we have a private screening area, staffed by an Atlanta Police Department officer to counsel individuals who feel they have been harassed; or by calling 911 for the APD.

New Location For Blood Drive

The main [Blood Drive](#) was previously announced to be moving to the Americas Mart, however, it will no longer be doing so. It is still moving, and will be going to the Galleria in the Hilton with Gaming. The other Blood Drive location in the Sheraton is not moving.

Don't Panic! We Still Have Rooms

We've made the [hotel page](#) on our website easier to use. Featured at the top of the page is now a bulleted list of the hotels that have availability. Click on the link for rates, booking details, and locations.

App News

We have some helpful things in store for the [app](#) this year. No longer will you have to track down a different app for each year, you will merely need to update your current app year to year. We'll be adding useful content tags to the programming schedule including: "General," "Kid Friendly," and "Mature Audience," that you will be able to search on to find the events that are right for you.

Guest announcements, trivia, events, polls, and other mania. Don't miss out! Follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

