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# Entertainment

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THE ASIAN garrison members of the 501st Legion, with Filipino Marc Macalua (second from left) at the Star Wars Celebration 2015 in Anaheim, California

## SO YOU THINK YOU'RE A FAN...

Text and Photos  
By ANNIE S. ALEJO

Some people take fandom to such awesome levels it can sometimes leave others a little stunned.

Take "Star Wars" fans, for instance. If you think watching the six episodes a hundred times is showing love for the franchise, think again, Padawan.

Today of all days is especially significant. "May the 4th be with you" is a pun on the famous "Star Wars" line, "May the Force be with you," and it has become a heartfelt proclamation of the fans' love for the space saga.

The grassroots tradition has grown, with fans online and offline proclaiming May 4 as "Star Wars Day." Supported by Lucasfilm and the official "Star Wars" social media channels, fans all over the world announce and hold various activities tied to the saga.

The month is special to "Star Wars" fans, with all six live-action movies of the franchise debuting in May several years apart. "Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope" first opened in US cinemas on May 25, 1977. The saga's creator, George Lucas, was born May 14, 1944.

Fans will mark the day showing "Star Wars" their love, but something tells us even the most loyal fans have nothing on these guys:

### Those that suit up

Many people cosplay various characters in the franchise, with Darth Vader, Chewbacca, Boba Fett and the Stormtroopers among the most popular choices. The guys of the 501st Legion - which got its name from the fictional Legion (or the 501st Battalion in the Clone Wars) in the "Star Wars" universe - are all volunteers that make up this international fan-based organization dedicated to the construction and wearing of replicas of Stormtrooper armor, Sith Lords, Clone Troopers, bounty hunters and other villains.

While they portray the bad guys, these good men and women do not just do "trooping." Meeting a few of the Asian members of the legion at the Star Wars Celebration in Anaheim, California, they shared with us insights on this all-consuming hobby.

"I was born into a world with 'Star Wars' and as long as I can remember, I've always liked it, I've been a fan," said Dominic Zou, commanding officer (CO) of the 501st Legion - Singapore Garrison. "Making an actual costume - I needed to find people who are like that. I heard about 501st for a while then I realized, oh, they are in my country, too."

Wachilapat Intuputi, the CO of the Thailand Garrison, is also a fan of the saga who buys "Star Wars" collectibles. "I am the one who started the 501st in Thailand," he said.

The passion is the same for Marc Macalua, the only Filipino garrison member that made it to the Anaheim Celebration this year. The allure for Marc, however, goes beyond donning the gear. "I've been 'stalking' the 501st for about two years before I

joined them. Then during 'Yolanda,' they had a charity trooping - like a photo shoot and getting donations for the survivors." He was there with his two kids in Jedi outfits and his wife in costume as well. "It's really the



CELEBRATION FIRST-timers Joshua and Rebekah Knuth in costume, with their Boba Fett inspired car

charity angle that sustains people. It takes a different kind of crazy to be wearing that armor in Asian weather but the joy you see (in people)... It's really genuine for us to help others to don that armor; it's an honor actually."

### Those that collect

There are toys, and then there are toys for big boys the likes of "Star Wars" collectibles. California-bases Filipinos Ricky Resurreccion, Ryan de Guia and Borgs Segovia, as well as Earl Madriaga, who came in from Manila, all attended the Star Wars Celebration in Anaheim to possibly beef up their toy collection. "We used to collect girlfriends, but we stopped," Ryan joked. "Some of us even upgraded our collections to actual armor," Borgs said, showing off his Stormtrooper helmet. He said he's not yet part of the 501st Legion.

While most of them mix their collections to include action figures from

other movie franchises, Borgs noted he exclusively collects "Star Wars." He mostly collects Darth Vader, "because he is the most popular villain in cinematic history." Ricky tends to gravitate to Boba Fett, mainly because of the look of his armor. Asked how long they've been collecting, they joked, "Too long!"

Of course, the Celebration was the place to be to "spend more money." They added, with humor, "Financial independence is a requirement for this hobby." Still, these four guys are serious about their collection. In fact, Earl noted he keeps his in three rooms in his house. Apparently, their families have gotten used to their passion, but Ryan noted, "Space is a great controller of collecting; you tend to be more selective." Perhaps that's a good thing.

### Those that are driven

All sorts of folks join the Star Wars



COLLECTORS RICKY Resurreccion, Ryan de Guia, Earl Madriaga and Borgs Segovia

Celebration, but a handful caught a lot of people's attention. These guys stood by their vehicles, all decked out in "Star Wars" theme from mere custom paint jobs and sticker wraps to actual construction.

A Los Angeles-based man decked his personal Nissan car out to be a Z-Wing Carfighter with the dome of an Artoo unit sticking out the back. He's been fixing up his car for three or four years, "and I'm still working on it," he said, adding proudly that he takes the car everywhere.

A couple from Wisconsin, Joshua and Rebekah Knuth, joined the Celebration for the first time this year not just in variants of Boba Fett costume but with their car Ivor Fett, wrapped to depict the character. Rebekah, who designed the car, loves the character of the bounty hunter for being "just cool." She thought about designing the car on and off for about two months before printing the sticker wrap at work. "This is my every day car," she said. "A lot of people go, 'What is that?' But for those who know 'Star Wars,' they're like, 'Oh my God!'" Her husband Joshua added, "We're both big 'Star Wars' fans; have been since I was a kid." When his wife told him about wrapping the car, he immediately said,

"Yeah, go for it!" While some people give them funny looks thinking their car is just all scratched up, he said, "Boba Fett fans are just honking and waving and giving us thumbs up."

### And those that build

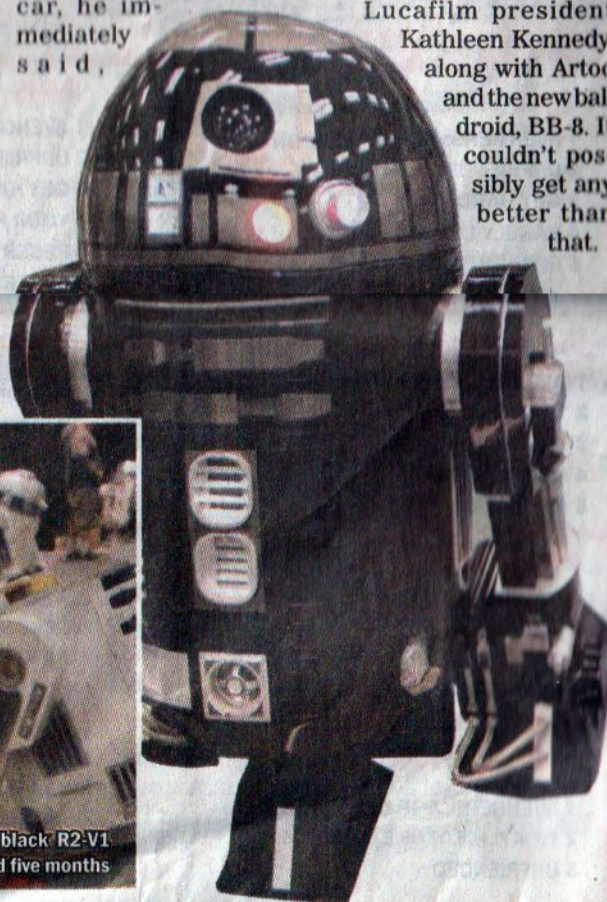
The Star Wars Celebrations have been home to hobbyists who build stuff from life-size sets and vehicles to things like the most popular robot in cinematic history: R2-D2.

The R2 Builders' Club had an entire room on the second floor of the Anaheim Convention Center to display their wares - several amazingly built Artoo units in many varieties, some with sounds and remote controlled functions. They are so good at what they do, fully dedicated and truly passionate, that two of their own - Lee Towersey and Oliver Steeples - were handpicked by the people behind "Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens" as the builders of the new R2-D2 for the film that premiere in December.

The two shared the stage at the first major panel in Celebration with director J.J. Abrams, producer,

Lucasfilm president Kathleen Kennedy,

along with Artoo and the new ball droid, BB-8. It couldn't possibly get any better than that.



AT THE R2 Builders' Club exhibit, with a Black R2-V1 built in a span of one year and five months

## Xian: On being Kim's Mr. Right

By ALEX VALENTIN BROSAS

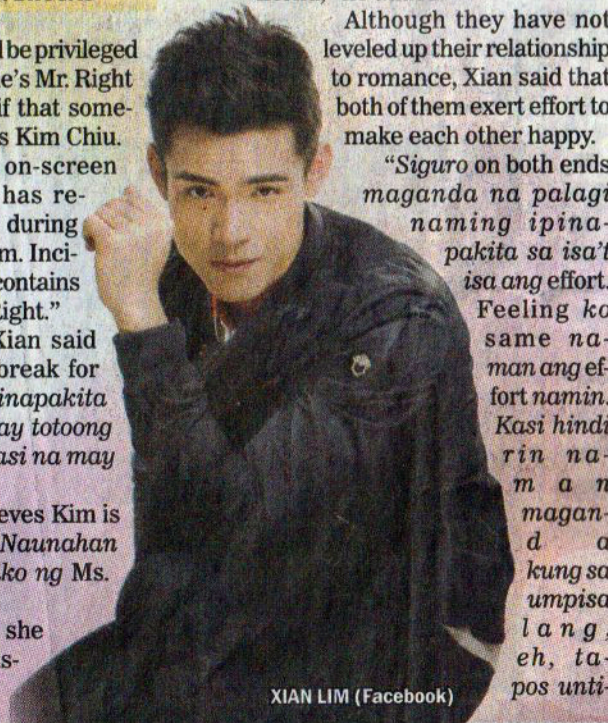
Any man would be privileged to be someone's Mr. Right - especially if that someone is actress Kim Chiu.

Xian Lim, Kim's on-screen partner, knows she has referred to him as such during the launch of her album. Incidentally, Kim's album contains the song called "Mr. Right."

"Nakakatuwa," Xian said during the pictorial break for GIBI Shoes. "Ang ipinapakita ko naman sa kanya ay totooong ako. Pangit naman kasi na may sugarcosting..."

Actually, Xian believes Kim is Miss Right as well. "Naunahan ako, sana gumawa ako ng Ms. Right," he quipped.

"I always say this, she has all the characteristics of an ideal girl-



XIAN LIM (Facebook)

friend," he added.

Although they have not leveled up their relationship to romance, Xian said that both of them exert effort to make each other happy.

"Siguro on both ends maganda na palagi naming ipinapakita sa isa't isa ang effort. Feeling ko same naman ang effort namin. Kasi hindi rin naman maganda kung sa umpisalan g, eh, tapos unti-

unting nawawala," he said.

### The downside

Xian is aware of bashers accusing him of using Kim for mileage.

"I think 'yan ang isa sa pinakamasakit na accusation. Hindi ko alam kung paano 'yun ide-deal kasi digital na ngayon, maraming pwedeng mag-salita. (Ang mga) bashers, as much as possible, hindi na namin pinapansin. Basta kami alam namin ang ginagawa namin. It would be really unfair kung magsisinungaling lang kami, 'yung parang joke, joke lang ang nangyayari," he explained.

Although he's learned to roll with the punches, he finds time to share how he feels with Kim.

"Pinag-uusapan namin. Dati hindi kasi medyo nagkakapaan pa kami, parang hindi pa namin kilala ang isa't isa. Pero isa 'yan sa na-a-appreciate ko ngayon. Hoy, heto na naman, nangagamit daw ako, ganu'n daw."

In the end, he feels it's wiser not to stoop down to the level of his critics.

Aside from Kim, Xian draws strength from his mom when he is down.

"Siyempre ako uuwi ako sa bahay pagkatapos ng mga nangyari. Parang sobrang bigat sa dibdib. Parang what did I do to deserve this? Hindi naman ako masamang tao and yet ang daming nangyayari. Parang deserve ko ba 'to? At least nandiyan ang nanay ko, 'yun naman ang kainaman noon."

He nevertheless acknowledges that criticisms give him a broad perspective, especially about himself.

"Partly sasabihin ko rin sa sarili ko, baka meron din naman akong kailangang ayusin. Baka meron din naman akong pagkukulang. 'Yung saying na you can't please everyone, hindi naman pwedeng doon na lang tayo palagi," he said.