

# Dressing the part at Memphis! Comic and Fantasy Convention

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(Photo: Michael Donahue)

**Nathan Clark** went the extra mile with his costume for the Memphis! Comic and Fantasy Convention, held Nov. 18-20 at the Hilton Memphis.

Or make that extra *miles*. In handcuffs.

Nathan, 17, went as L Lawliet from "Death Note," a Japanese TV anime cartoon. He was handcuffed to **Brandon Walker**, 18, who was dressed as Light Yagami from the show.

They were chained together for five hours, Nathan said. "I was handcuffed with my right hand to his left hand," he said. "I had to stay on his left side. Maneuvering was interesting. We were trying to avoid running over people and tripping them."

The characters were handcuffed on one or two episodes, Nathan said. "The detective, L Lawliet, who was suspicious of Light, decided the best way to confirm or alleviate his suspicions was to handcuff himself to

Light to observe his movements."

To approximate Lawliet's character, Nathan used a mixture of black, purple and blue coloring under his eyes to make him look like an insomniac. He wore a white training shirt and Levi Strauss skinny jeans. Instead of going barefoot like Lawliet, Nathan wore a pair of tan Vibram running shoes, which have slots for all the toes. "So many contaminants get into the floors," he said. "Yes, they might be cleaned regularly. However, people are always going to be there walking over it."

Nathan plans on becoming a doctor some day, so he looks out for his health.

About 2,700 fans took part in this year's convention, said founder **Joe Thordarson**. Another 900 took part in "Geek 101," he said. "On Friday morning before we open the door to the public, we have school field trips. We host special presentations. This year we had an anime presentation with **Chance Raspberry**, 'The Simpsons' animator."

They also had music creation with Unapologetic Studios, and **Andrew Olney**, director of the Institute for Intelligent Systems at the University of Memphis, "brought some cool robots."

A new attraction, the Piranha Room Gothic Ball, was "a big hit," Joe said. "There used to be a famous club in San Diego back in the '80s and early '90s called Piranha Room. It had The Smiths, The Cure, Peter Murphy and all those Gothic things. On the side they had artists painting on really big canvases. So we recreated that for this. Really cool music. We had art along the walls. We had artists drawing. We had black lights. So, they were drawing on these gigantic white canvases, so everything against a black light really popped. It's going to be an annual event."

## Memphis Music Residency

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Every third Tuesday of the month, University of Memphis music students take over Newby's when they participate in Memphis Music Residency. It's a chance for them to perform on stage, try out some new songs or debut a new band.

**Jesse Zwiener**, 21, was among the performers Nov. 15. "My first Memphis gig," he said.

It wasn't his first visit to Memphis Music Residency. "That was the first I'd ever performed there, but I'd gone one time to help out with audio and everything. I'm actually part of a project, The National Student Exchange. So I came to music with the dream to pursue the industry because that wasn't offered at (the University of Nebraska at Kearney).

He's been on stage before. "I want to be an artist. I want to perform some day. I know I'm still developing and everything, but I'm definitely getting better with time. Right now I'm graduating with a business degree. But music is definitely one of my big hobbies, and I plan on turning it into a career down the road."

Jesse performed two originals. Describing "Sidewalk Sessions," he said, "This summer I basically lived out of my truck in California and I made it work. I had a job, and I had to make ends meet, so I played guitar on the sidewalk. It went pretty well, actually. I went back with money and tried to pay for school."

"Get Into" is about "just going out with friends in college and making memories you never forget. And seeing what you can get into tonight."

Jesse is a fan of Memphis Music Residency. "I love the environment and the support from all of the people in the music scene in Memphis. It's a great scene for people like me to get a foothold and get some experience under my belt. That was one of the best things for me at this point in my career. Getting that stage presence and feeling the energy in the air."

He also is impressed with U of M assistant professor of music business **Ben Yonas**, who puts on the monthly event. "He's a great guy. Everyone in that class really supports each other's work. And I think that's really awesome."

Said Ben: "The Memphis Music Residency is an excellent opportunity for our students to showcase their talents. They spend time in classrooms studying marketing and music theory, but outside of class, they are all writing their own music. This monthly showcase gives students a chance to develop their talent, and perform their own music for other students within the U of M community."

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