

I'm sure that Star Trek-themed parties exist, so why has no one ever scheduled one as a Microsoft holiday party?

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I dreamed that I was attending a *Star Trek*-themed company party. Nobody was dressed as a Starfleet officer or anything exotic. Half of the people ignored the party theme and came in cocktail attire, and half were dressed in Renaissance or Elizabethan clothes, but they represented *Star Trek* aliens because they were not all white Europeans, and some of them had funny hair. And because we were told that it was a *Star Trek*-themed party, and in dreams you don't question this sort of thing. I recognized some of the aliens as staff members from the previous *Star Trek*-themed party and concluded that most of the aliens were ringers that were included in the party package. (Note: This detail means that in my dreams, I have now attended not one but two professionally-staged *Star Trek*-themed parties. In real life? None.) When the dinner portion of the party began, the attendees split up into groups. About half of them went into a banquet room where I heard the emcee welcome guests from a local non-profit organization, another local non-profit organization, and a major bank. I had clearly gone the wrong way and was steered to another part of the event facility where the Microsoft people were gathered. The staff member apologized for putting us so far away from the main hall. I followed the signs through the facility and as I neared the location, we were offered very sharp pointed bread sticks, elegant hand towels with enigmatic messages like *On my way there*, a small flat object made of pressed straw that purported to be some sort of chair, and a ceramic object shaped like a small anvil that identified itself as a grill. I was told that my wife was already at "the gutter." I pulled out my cell phone to call her, to discover that it wasn't mine but rather belonged to one of my colleagues, with whom I had chatted during the cocktail hour. How I ended up with his phone (and presumably he with mine) was never explained.

As I got close to the dinner location, I saw the line of people waiting to go in. I never did learn what "the gutter" was, but my guess based on the clues so far was that we were all sitting on the curb or on the ground like hoboes.

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