



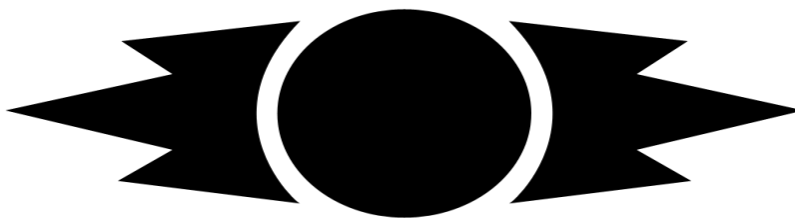
# THE DARK EMPIRE Costume Club

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## Official Member Handbook

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*The Sith Logo, used on all TDE Temple banners*

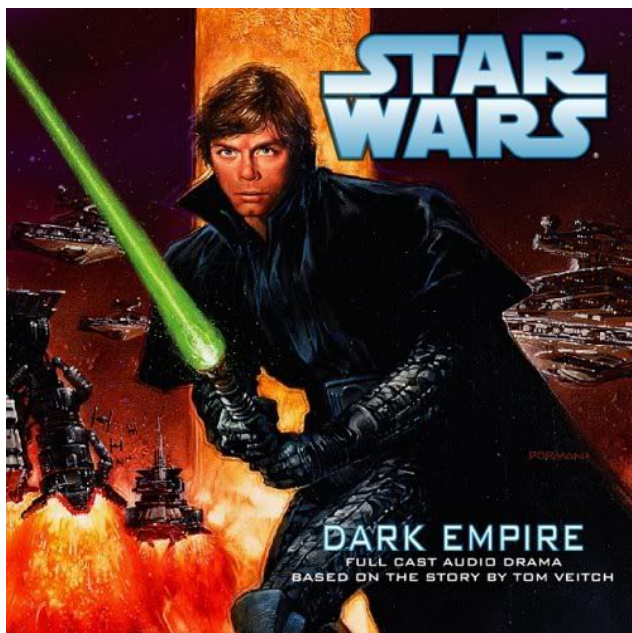
## ***Introduction***

Welcome to TDE! The first thing someone may say to you when you first register on our forums and introduce yourself in the “Roll Call” section. Despite being a dark side costuming organization, The Dark Empire is a very fun place. In fact, we like to say that “it’s cooler in the shade!” TDE is the premier place for custom dark side and gray side STAR WARS costuming. Of course, we also like canon Sith, Dark Jedi, and Gray Jedi costume and even some types of bounty hunters. In this manual, we’ll give you an in-depth overview of the club, how it works, how it got to be, how you can be a part of it, and how you can benefit from being an official TDE member.

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## ***Club Name and History***

The Dark Empire is named after the Dark Horse comic and radio drama *STAR WARS: Dark Empire*.



A lot of the terms used in TDE come from what is known of the ancient Sith language, such as *Sith'ari* (our club commanding officer), and from Dark Empire, such as the term *Sedriss* (regional Temple Spire leader).

The only canon Luke Skywalker costume accepted in TDE is the Dark Empire version, in which Luke wears parts of his father's armor as the apprentice of the cloned Emperor Palpatine.

TDE is primarily a custom Sith costume club, however, we also allow for custom and canon Dark Jedi, Gray Jedi, and even some types of bounty hunters.

Just like our namesake has an audio drama, we even have our own audio dramas that we use for a charitable purpose, much in the same manner we use our costumes for charity work. Visit [www.HoloNetAudioDramas.com](http://www.HoloNetAudioDramas.com) for more info on our club podcast and charity project.

For more information about our club namesake, visit this link:  
<http://www.thedarkempire.org/our-club-name.html>

The Dark Empire was founded in Tennessee in April 2007. Though the exact date remains somewhat “clouded by the dark side,” the observed date of the founding of TDE is April 10<sup>th</sup>. Club elections traditionally occur every April accordingly.

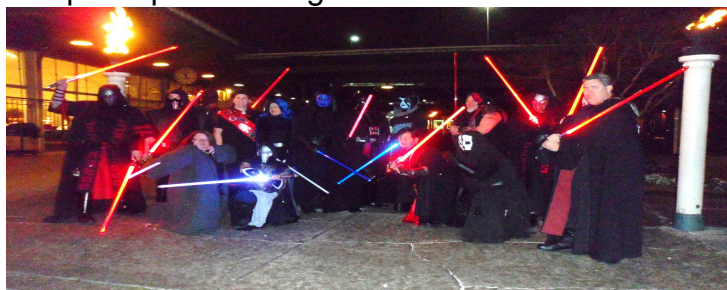
For the first few years, TDE was off to a rocky start, and membership remained relatively low. After a number of changes in our forums and website locations, and in leadership, the club underwent a complete overhaul in June of 2010, establishing a new Charter (our governing document with rules and procedures), working relations with Lucasfilm and other clubs, and a foothold within the STAR WARS costuming community as a premier fan group for custom dark side costuming.

One key principle that The Dark Empire operates upon is what we call the “*expression of creative imagination.*” TDE holds the belief that STAR WARS was created to invigorate the imagination of the viewer, and we encourage the expression of that club philosophy in two ways:

- ◆ **Creative Costuming** “Full” or “Official” membership in the club requires an approved costume conforming to a minimum set of standards, or CRL's, to ensure that the costume is readily identifiable as representative of the STAR WARS franchise. Our members use their costumes to “troop” in, doing work to raise funds and awareness for charitable causes.
- ◆ **Creative Writing** The Dark Empire is as much a fanfiction club as it is a costume club. Many of our members (costumed members and also members simply registered on our forums) have unique stories behind their chosen character names, as well as other stories to tell, and we encourage fanfiction as a way to both express the imagination and help promote literacy in the Fan Fiction section of our forums. Our club podcast and charity project, HoloNet Audio Dramas, also makes the fanfiction part of our club a charitable endeavor by helping to deliver quality narrated fanfiction with music and sound effects to sight-impaired fans of STAR WARS, children, and the public in general via free distribution at events and other venues.

The Dark Empire made it's first appearance at a convention as an organization at AdventureCon in 2009, when our first two Honorary Members, Dave Prowse and Ray Park were inducted.

After the club was reformatted and relaunched in 2010, TDE began to slowly rise in membership around the world. The club adopted ConNooga, an annual multi-fandom convention in Chattanooga, Tennessee, as its “home convention,” due to its venue and proximity to The Dark Empire's place of origin.



*Members of TDE at ConNooga 2013*

*Celebration 6, August 2012*



We made our first appearance as a club with a display at a STAR WARS Celebration event at Celebration 6 in Orlando, Florida.

TDE has grown into a respected international fan-operated organization dedicated to promoting the love of STAR WARS with a dark side emphasis through charity work. Who says the Sith are no good?



*TDE members in the DragonCon 2014*

In Article III Section 8 of our club charter, TDE states clearly our open-door policy of working with other clubs. When we create a charity event, like our annual STAR WARS Day event at an orphanage in southern California, TDE makes a practice of inviting the other major STAR WARS costuming clubs to join us.



*Members of TDE, 501<sup>st</sup> Legion, Rebel Legion, Saber Guild, The Jedi Assembly, R2 Builders, and Mandalorian Mercs at Hillside's orphanage annual STAR WARS Day, a TDE-sponsored event, August 2014.*

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## ***Mission, Costuming, and Fanfiction***

The mission of The Dark Empire is to celebrate STAR WARS with a creative emphasis on the dark side of the Force, and to use that celebration constructively by wearing our costumes for the promotion and encouragement of public participation in charitable causes.

The principle of “expression of creative imagination” applies to all that we do, and in the most **professional** way possible. *Everything* that we do, simply put, is family-friendly. Our appearance in costume, our fanfiction stories, and most importantly, our professional interaction with the public is key to our success as an organization.

Our members are fully aware that we have no claim over the costumes we wear or the characters we represent while either in costume or in a work of fanfiction. When we wear a club-approved costume, we represent both the club and the STAR WARS franchise. When we interact with the public in costume, or even in attire with the club logo upon it, we represent both TDE and STAR WARS itself. As such, The Dark Empire maintains a policy of courtesy and professionalism in all of its dealings.

TDE is an international costuming home for fans of the dark side of the force. We welcome custom and canon Sith, Dark Jedi, and Gray Jedi.

Other dark side-affiliated custom and canon costumes accepted include force users and non-force users such as Sith Troopers, Sith Inquisitors, Imperial Agents, and Non-Mandalorian

Bounty Hunters and Pirates / Smugglers. These costumes must represent Sith-affiliated characters from any of the STAR WARS movies, or from any era within the Expanded Universe including books, games, comics, and animated series. *For example: In the Clone Wars animated series, Cad Bane was hired by Darth Sidious. Since there is a canon reference making Cad Bane a Sith-affiliated bounty hunter, we therefore accept Cad Bane as a costume for full membership in TDE.*

Just like the Dark Empire comic series, TDE has its own set of audio dramas that we use for a charitable purpose. We give free audio discs out to anyone, with an emphasis on the visually impaired, those that cannot read, and encouraging literacy.

The Dark Empire costume club holds sacred the concept of the “expression of creative imagination,” something that we believe STAR WARS excels at. Creative costuming and creative writing are highly encouraged in TDE, and fan-fiction can be shared on our forums, which can be accessed from our main website, at [www.thedarkempire.org](http://www.thedarkempire.org) Our audio fan-fiction site, which can also be accessed from our main site, is at [www.holonetaudiodramas.com](http://www.holonetaudiodramas.com)

## ***Club Organizational Structure***

***See Article V, parts “B” and “C” of the club Charter for more detailed information about Temples and Spires.***

The Dark Empire is organized regionally by two categories, *Temples* and *Temple Spires*.

**Temples** are actual physical regions of the globe. There are sixteen Temples internationally, all extremely large sections of land in which TDE has members. When TDE was first formed, regions of the Empire were divided up by countries and sections of the USA that members resided in. For example, the *Coruscant Temple* comprises the entire Pacific coast of the mainland United States, plus the state of Nevada. Ultimately, it was decided on a limit of sixteen Temple regions within the Empire. The regional leader of a Temple is called a *Jen'ari*.

◆ *When a new member joins TDE, they automatically become part of a Temple region.*

**Spires**, or Temple Spires, are localized areas within a Temple region with a concentration of five or more TDE members. Spires are therefore typically the most active regions of TDE. For example, the Yavin IV Temple comprises most of the southeast section of the mainland United States. However, the Spire of the Storm in central & southern Florida, and the Brotherhood of the Sith Spire (*B.O.S.S.*) in Georgia are the most active areas within the Yavin IV Temple.

Temple Spires can also bisect Temple regions. For example, the Obsidian Spire is in both Kansas and Missouri. Kansas is part of the Korriban Temple, and Missouri is part of the Iridonia Temple. However, the Obsidian Spire has its own regional leader, called a *Sedriss*.

- ◆ *A total of five (5) full members (members with approved costumes) are needed to form a local Spire.*

See this page on our website for a full listing of all current Temple Spires (click *Temples* at the top of the page for Temple regions):

<http://www.thedarkempire.org/temple-spires.html>

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## ***TDE Command Structure***

***For a detailed outline and explanation of all positions of office and their duties within TDE, refer to Article V, part “A” of the TDE Charter, and part “C” for Spire Sedriss details.***

The Dark Empire maintains a hierarchical command structure, as follows:

***TDE Council*** (five member global leadership team)

***Jen'ari*** (Temple Leader, large regional leadership area)

- Temple Officers (two recognized positions: *Assistant Jen'ari*, and *Temple Nes'ari*)

***Sedriss*** (Spire Leader, localized regional leadership area)

- Spire Officers (as needed only, not recognized as official positions of office)

### **The TDE Council**

All five positions on the Council are semi-permanent. A vacancy on the Council results only when a council member resigns, or is removed via disciplinary action (Article VII of TDE Charter). The TDE Council itself is a hierarchy in terms of a chain of command, with the Sith'ari being the most senior person on the Council. All matters of TDE policymaking, however, are done via a majority vote of the five-member council. In rare instances of a tie vote, then the vote of the Sith'ari is the deciding vote.

*'ari* is a term in the ancient Sith language meaning “Lord.” Not all positions of office have the term *'ari* attached to the office title, however, all leaders in TDE are respectfully referred to as *'ari*, or *Lords*.

*Sith'ari* - Commanding Officer of The Dark Empire. Responsible for ensuring the overall operations of the the club.

*Anik'ari* - Executive Officer. Apprentice to the Sith'ari, responsible for assisting in club operations. The Anik'ari also serves as the club treasurer, or officer responsible for the keeping of all club financial records and disclosure of funds raised by the club for charity.

- Regional leaders of TDE refer all issues requiring global leadership assistance to the Anik'ari or the Sith'ari.
- All regional leaders or event organizers report charity totals (funds raised for charity at events), to the Anik'ari directly.

*Tyran'ari* – Public Relations Officer. Club liaison to media and other organizations, tasked with representing TDE to Lucasfilm and other entities as its official ambassador. In charge of TDE social media and other matters of club representation to the public.

- Only the Sith'ari and the Tyran'ari have authority to contact Lucasfilm on behalf of TDE concerning club affairs.

*Nes'ari* – Membership Officer. Oversees recruiting, applications for full club membership (the Dark Trials), the maintenance of the Costume Reference Library (CRL's), and all matters concerning the morale and well-being of club membership.

*Imperial Hand* – Forums and Policy Enforcement Officer. Regularly monitors the TDE forums and ensures that posts are within Code of Conduct guidelines (Article III of TDE Charter). Also responsible for the handling of administrative and corrective actions, when needed.

The *Tyran'ari*, *Nes'ari*, and *Imperial Hand* all have the power to individually select an *apprentice*, or assistant, to help them in their duties and learn the ways of club administration.

### **Jen'ari**

A *Jen'ari* is the “Lord” of their Temple region within TDE. They report directly to the Council concerning the affairs of their region of the Empire. Temple Jen'ari (plural is spelled and pronounced the same) are elected annually. Elections for two additional Temple Officers are also held annually.

### **Sedriss**

A *Sedriss* is the local leader of a Temple Spire, and is also elected annually. Although a *Sedriss* is overseen by their *Jen'ari*, a Spire *Sedriss* can form their own administrative cabinet of Spire Officers to help them govern their Spire, although cabinet positions within a Spire are not recognized positions of office in TDE. This is a policy the Council allows for, because



although it is unlikely that more Temple regions will be added, it is expected that in time many Temple Spires will be added to the Empire. When a new Spire Sedriss is elected, that person will be responsible for selecting their new administrative Spire cabinet.

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## ***What it means to be an Official Member of TDE***

As a “full” or Official Member, you will have first registered for our forums, introduced yourself in the Roll Call area, familiarized yourself with the club, and have passed the “Dark Trials,” in which you have successfully met all criteria in the CRL's for your costume to qualify for full membership and have gotten it approved by our membership team. Full members that have passed the Dark Trials receive a TDE number designation (for fairness, TDE numbers are not selected by members, but granted by the Nes'ari in chronological order of membership approval), and their own page on our website which shows a photographic representation of all costumes you have approved within the club.

Only Official Members of TDE can qualify for positions of office, vote in club elections, and purchase club merchandise bearing the TDE logo. At trooping events, only Official Members of TDE can represent the club in an approved costume.

In the next section, we discuss the two types of events that exist. Only Official Members are allowed to represent TDE in costume, however, forum members can also represent the club at events as *handlers* (personal helpers to costumers requiring extra assistance), photographers, or at display tables. It is generally preferred, but not required, for forum members to wear TDE or STAR WARS shirts or similar attire at events while serving the club in one of these capacities. Handlers, or support staff, are just as vital to the success of a trooping event as the costumers themselves.

The minimum qualifications for Official Membership are:

- Be at least eighteen (18) years of age.
- Have a costume that passes the Dark Trials

Children of Official Members, regardless of age, are considered *TDE Apprentices*, and can troop in costume at events, as long as they have a parent or guardian present in a TDE-approved costume. TDE Apprentices are NOT required to undergo the Dark Trials, however, it is expected that the quality of their costumes either meet or exceed that of their full member “Master,” with as much attention to detail as possible and attempt to meet CRL guidelines.

Note: See the “Links” section of our website, [www.thedarkempire.org](http://www.thedarkempire.org) for links to other major LFL-recognized fan groups that focus on other areas of STAR WARS costuming.

- ◆ Movie-Era Imperial / Villain / Expanded Universe canon costumers should join the

501<sup>st</sup> Legion at [www.501st.com](http://www.501st.com)

- ◆ Rebel Alliance and Jedi costumers should join *The Rebel Legion* at [www.rebellegion.com](http://www.rebellegion.com) OR *The Jedi Assembly* at [www.thejediassembly.com](http://www.thejediassembly.com)
- ◆ Mandalorian (Boba Fett-type) costumers should join the *Mandalorian Mercs* at [www.mandalorianmercs.com](http://www.mandalorianmercs.com)
- ◆ Costumers that are also lightsaber combat enthusiasts should join *Saber Guild* at [www.saberguild.com](http://www.saberguild.com)

## ***Events and Trooping***

In TDE, we often refer to trooping events as "*campaigns*," or "*missions*." After a trooping event has been completed, we like to say that we "*conquered*" the event (even though we might not have been the only club there - we are mostly Sith, after all!).

After an event has been "conquered," it is the duty of the either the Jen'ari, Sedriss, Temple or Spire Officer, or club organizer for that event to write a brief *Mission Report* on the TDE forums, usually just a paragraph, describing the event, how TDE members assisted in the event (posing for photographs, etc), and including how much money was raised for charity (if applicable), and which charity the event was designed to raise funds and/or awareness for.

There are two types of trooping events:

### **1. Official Events**

These are events in which The Dark Empire receives an *invitation* or *request* from Lucasfilm, Disney, one of their licensees, or another costuming fan group like one of the ones listed in the last section. Only Official Members of the club may represent TDE in their approved costumes at these events.

#### ➤ **Face Characters**

Face characters are simply canon characters within the STAR WARS universe, such as Darth Vader, Emperor Palpatine / Darth Sidious, Darth Revan, Darth Nihilus, Darth Talon, etc. Sometimes, a specific "Face Character" is required for an event, such as a Darth Vader, for example. As a result, there can only be one Vader for that event, even if another club is scheduled to troop that event alongside TDE. In order to avoid a conflict of interest with other clubs about multiple costumers of the same Face Character at an event, detailed event planning and communication

with the other clubs prior to the event are critical.

***As a general rule of thumb and etiquette, there should only be one type of each "face character" representing TDE at any Official Event.***

For example, even though there are different styles of costumes for Darth Sidious (Ep.1 or 2, or ROTs or ROTJ variations), there should only be one Darth Sidious costumer at the event. So, if a Temple or Spire has two or more of the same canon character wanting to troop an Official Event, prior planning should decide which full member will troop as that character. This rule does not apply at Unofficial Events, like conventions.

➤ **Specific character requests for Disney / Lucasfilm / licensee-sponsored events**

On occasion, Lucasfilm, Disney, or one of its licensees may contact TDE and request a specific Face Character (or possibly even a specific custom character, if applicable), usually to promote an event or product. These types of events must first be vetted (approved) by Lucasfilm, or be referred to LFL (Lucasfilm Ltd.) for approval first, before we can proceed with these type of event.

- *This rule does NOT apply to private charity events.*

In addition to specific Face Characters, the request from LFL requires the character to meet certain height and other physical requirements in costume prior to the event; high-resolution photographs of the character are required for approval by Lucasfilm prior to the event in question. The specific "Face Character" approved for this type of event will be paid and therefore under the employ of Lucasfilm / The Disney Corporation for the duration of the event.

**Events of this type are considered "*Official Events with specific character requests.*"**

It is important to note that the person being paid in this particular type of case is the costumer directly, NOT *The Dark Empire* as an organization.

## **2. Unofficial Events**

These types of events include forum member that can represent the club, such as at a table display at a convention. Unofficial Events are normally conventions and/or similar events at which the general public can attend without prior invitation.

The Dark Empire, as a club, maintains a policy of not accepting any payment for its appearances at events. Instead, if a venue insists on making a payment to The Dark Empire, then TDE can suggest that the venue make a donation to a reputable charity (there is a list of charities on our website that TDE has worked with and recommends), or TDE can accept the funds and make the donation to a charity as a club. In either scenario, the amount of said funds must be immediately reported to the Anik'ari as part of the clubs annual record-keeping of money raised for charity.

At Official Events involving specific Face Characters requested by Disney, LFL, or LFL- licensee, the approved Face Character being paid for that event is being paid on a personal level as an employee for that event, not specifically as a member of The Dark Empire. In such cases, although TDE advocates strongly for the donation of such funds to charity, The Dark Empire does not get involved in the private financial transactions of its members (*in other words, if you are paid by Lucasfilm or Disney for the event, it's your money; we can't tell you what to do with it*).

*Charity Events are usually considered Official Events.* If The Dark Empire creates an event, like our annual STAR WARS event at Hillside's orphanage in southern California, it is an Official Event, because it is a private affair and not open to the public. In such cases, TDE also makes a practice of inviting other STAR WARS costume clubs along, with careful planning to avoid conflicts of interest involving multiple "face characters" of the same type. Any event that TDE receives an invitation to is always considered an Official Event.



*Members of TDE at Celebration Anaheim 2015*

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## ***Representing TDE***

As an Official Member of The Dark Empire, you are expected to be polite and professional at all times when representing the club. Representing TDE includes:

- ◆ trooping in costume
- ◆ wearing of club merchandise or attire containing the TDE logo
- ◆ posting and communicating on our forums
- ◆ speaking about the club to other people for recruiting purposes, such as during table duty at conventions.

When representing TDE, adherence to our Code of Conduct (Article III of the TDE Charter) is required at all times.

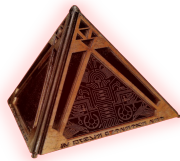
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## ***About the TDE Charter and final expectations***

The TDE Charter can be found on our website, here:

<http://www.thedarkempire.org/tde-charter-online.html>

The Charter is our governing document containing all of our rules, procedures, and by-laws, and is on file with Lucasfilm. It is literally a holocron of knowledge and wisdom that cannot go unheeded. Violations of our club Charter are therefore taken very seriously in TDE, and can result in disciplinary action, as defined and outlined in Article VII of the Charter.



As you can tell from reading through this manual, there is a lot expected of you as a member of The Dark Empire. Always use your "chain of command;" go to your leaders whenever you need an issue addressed. If they can't resolve it, then either you or they can take the matter further up the ladder, to the Anik'ari or Sith'ari if need be. We are a professional organization of volunteers, and we therefore require such of our members at all times. We are, after all, an

organization of Sith and darksiders, and the dark side can be very demanding!

Above all else, however, there is one expectation that supercedes all others. *We expect you to have fun!* People join TDE because they are fans of STAR WARS, and TDE is a fan group of folks that share the same fandom of what TDE represents. If you are looking to have fun, then you've come to the right place; the dark side expects it of you. It's cooler in the shade!



*This manual was authored and prepared with approval of the TDE Council by "The Brutal One" Lord Bruticus TDE-021 – club Tyran'ari and webmaster, and head of HoloNet Audio Dramas, our club podcast and charity project.*

***The Dark Empire is an international Star Wars dark side costuming organization comprised of Star Wars fans, and is not sponsored by Lucasfilm. However, The Dark Empire is recognized by Lucasfilm as a premier fan-operated organization. Star Wars, its characters, costumes, and all associated items are the intellectual property of Lucasfilm.***

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