

Fannish Inquisition Survey: Orlando Worldcon Bid

Worldcon Bid: Orlando

What are the proposed dates for which you are bidding? September 2nd-6th, 2015 (Labor Day weekend)

What is your proposed convention host city? Is your convention site in a city center location or a suburb? If a suburb, what are the transport options into the city center? How far is the site from the city center?

We are bidding Orlando, Florida, specifically Walt Disney World. It is located about a twenty-minute drive from downtown Orlando. Walt Disney World connects to the LYNX Central Florida Transportation Authority at both the Transportation and Ticket Center and the Downtown Disney Entertainment Complex, and provides free bus service from your hotel to either location. By 2014, SunRail, Orlando's new light rail service, will run north-south and through downtown Orlando. Walt Disney World will provide free shuttle service to and from the nearest SunRail station in Kissimmee.

What is the typical current airfare to your closest airport from world cities such as London, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Melbourne? Atlanta?

According to kayak.com - to Orlando from London: \$541, from Boston: \$114, from Chicago: \$142, from LA: \$134, from Melbourne: \$1,788

Do international flights, as well as domestic, fly into your local airport? Which airlines? If not, where is the closest international airport? Are direct flights from the cities above flown into your local airport?

Orlando is a world destination. Over one hundred different domestic and international flights regularly fly to Orlando, including many nonstop international flights. International airlines that fly directly to Orlando include Aer Lingus (Ireland), AeroGal (Ecuador), AeroMexico, Air Canada, Air France, Air Transat (Canada), Avianca (Columbia), BahamasAir, British Airways, CanJet (Canada), Caribbean Airlines (Trinidad and Tobago), Copa Airlines (Panama), GOL Aereos (Brazil), LAN Airlines (Chile, Peru, Argentina), Lufthansa (Germany), TACA Airlines (El Salvador), TAM Airlines (Brazil), Virgin Atlantic (UK), Viva Aerobus (Mexico), and Volaris (Mexico).

How far is your convention site from the nearest airport/train station and what is the likely cost of getting to the hotels by both public transport and taxi from that airport/train station?

Walt Disney World is about a thirty-minute drive from Orlando International Airport. The cost of getting to the convention hotel from there is free. For all guests of Disney hotels, Disney provides a free motorcoach and luggage handling service called "Disney's Magical Express", which will also deliver your luggage directly to your hotel room. If you choose to not use the free motorcoach service, public transportation will cost \$2.50, and a taxi will run about \$45.

What hotel(s) are being used for the convention? How many rooms, what type, accessibility issues, etc.?

Our hotel is Disney's Coronado Springs Resort. It has 1,920 hotel rooms, including forty-six suites for parties and one hundred rooms for hotel guests with accessibility issues. The accessibility rooms have features such as roll-in showers, easier access beds, lower to the floor thermostats, touch lamps, TTS phones for the deaf, and more. All rooms are 314 square feet and are either queen-queen or king-bed and have a mini-refrigerator, coffee maker, clock radio with iPod docking station, sliding wooden privacy doors for the vanity area, and central air/heating in every room that is whisper-quiet - no built-in wall units.

What are your hotel room rates? Do these rates include breakfast? Do they include internet in the room? How firm are these rates?

Our room rates are locked in at \$139/night for up to four people with no resort fee. The rate does not include breakfast, but each room will have free high-speed wireless internet included.

What is the cost to *park* at the convention/hotel facilities?

The cost to park at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort is *nothing*. Even if you choose not to stay at Coronado Springs, and drive to Worldcon every day, you will not pay any parking fees whatsoever.

What is the distance from the main hotel(s) to the closest entrance of the convention site? What are the transportation options for those who prefer not to walk or who have mobility difficulties?

Our hotel is the same as our convention site. Disney's Coronado Springs Resort has enough rooms and convention function space to accommodate all Worldcon members. The hotels rooms are clustered around a small lake, meaning there will never be any elevator waits for hotel rooms. Most hotel rooms are only at most a few hundred feet away from the function space. For members who prefer not to walk to and from their hotel room to the function space, Coronado Springs Resort offers large fleets of golf cart-like shuttles that go all around the resort twenty-four hours a day. They can be called for from your hotel room, utilized when you leave the main building and function space, or flagged down if you are walking and a shuttle passes you on the walkways.

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If using overflow hotels (or hotels not directly connected) what is the cost of a cab ride door-to-door with the convention center?

Our hotel has 1,920 rooms - we do not anticipate the need for an overflow hotel. However, should our Worldcon be one of the most successful of all time requiring even more hotel rooms (what a lovely problem to have!), we would utilize Disney's Port Orleans Resort which is a ten minute drive away from Coronado Springs and would cost about \$12 via taxi. We, however, would recommend utilizing Disney's bus transportation system which takes you all throughout Walt Disney World for free.

Please describe your convention site facilities. For example, the quantity and sizes of rooms, tech options, accessibility issues, etc.

The function space has over 225,000 square feet, and is one of the largest single-level convention hotels on the east coast of America - no escalators, stairs, or elevators. It has over forty-five breakout rooms, five permanent registration counters, four large shaded patio areas adjacent to the function space, over ten loading docks for dealers and exhibits, booth-controlled A/V, closed-circuit television, satellite uplink capabilities, free high-speed wireless internet throughout the entire function space, and fiber-optic capabilities. In addition, because our convention site is the same as our hotel, we will have the opportunity to run events twenty-four hours a day. All Worldcon members will also have free parking at Coronado Springs, even if some members choose not to stay at Coronado Springs.

Where will your large events (i.e. Hugo Ceremony and Masquerade) be held?

The Hugos and Masquerade will be held in the Coronado Ballroom, one of the largest ballrooms in the South at 60,214 square feet.

Please describe the restaurant scene near your site.

Coronado Springs Resort has six different restaurants on-site. Walt Disney World has over 220 restaurants, ranging from inexpensive fast-food like McDonalds, to extreme fine-dining such as the thirteen-time AAA-Five Diamond award winner Victoria and Albert's. Disney restaurants can be accessed via Disney's free bus transportation system. Orlando has over 5,300 restaurants featuring cuisine from around the world and also features restaurants from celebrity chefs such as Emeril Lagasse, Cat Cora, Wolfgang Puck, Norman Van Aken, and Roy Yamaguchi.

Please describe the policies / laws regarding smoking in your hotel(s), convention center, and city.

Walt Disney World, the City of Orlando, and the State of Florida does not allow smoking in any public place or in hotel rooms.

What type of weather can we expect at the time of year your convention is to be held?

During Labor Day weekend, the daytime high temperature will be 90°F (32°C) and the low 70°F (21°C), with an average humidity of 75%. If there is rain, the rain will last for about ten minutes at the most and occur at around 2:30 in the afternoon.

Concerns have been expressed about the possibility of super storms or hurricanes affecting any convention on the East coast especially one in Orlando. Please provide some facts and figures about the history of bad weather in this region and the probability of Worldcon in 2015 suffering a catastrophic weather event. How do we get to higher ground in the event of flooding during a hurricane?

Since Walt Disney World opened in 1971, the resort has only closed twice due to hurricanes - in 1999 for Hurricane Floyd (which mostly missed Florida) and in 2004 for Hurricane Charley. Prior to Hurricane Charley, the last major hurricane to hit Orlando was Hurricane Donna back in 1960. The chances of a catastrophic weather event interrupting Worldcon at Walt Disney World during Labor Day weekend is extremely low. If a major storm passes near Florida, because Orlando is as far inland for Florida as you can get, Orlando generally just gets a lot of rain. However, if a major storm does hit the Orlando area one of the safest places to be is Walt Disney World. Orlando locals are encouraged to book rooms at Disney resorts if they cannot leave in the event of a major hurricane because Walt Disney World builds their hotels and buildings to withstand winds up to 220 miles per hour (334 kilometers per hour) before damage occurs, which is more than twice what the State of Florida requires by law. In the event of a major hurricane, Walt Disney World's hurricane policy is to have all guests move to the main building and/or function space and wait until the storm subsides. Cast members (workers) work around the clock to make sure all guests are safe and that the buildings are secure and do not leave until the storm subsides. In both instances where Walt Disney World closed, the resort and theme parks were open for business the very next day with no major damage.

What are some of the main tourist attractions of your city?

Orlando's nickname is "America's Playground". The largest concentration of theme and amusement parks in the world is located here. A small sampling includes Walt Disney World's four theme parks (Magic Kingdom, Epcot,

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Disney's Hollywood Studios, and Disney's Animal Kingdom) and two water parks (Typhoon Lagoon and Blizzard Beach); Universal Orlando's two theme parks (Universal Studios Orlando and Universal's Islands of Adventure); SeaWorld Orlando; Legoland Florida; Gatorland; and the Holy Land Experience. Other activities to do in the Greater Orlando area, many of which are inexpensive and won't break your bank, include: The Kennedy Space Center, Wonderworks, Orlando Science Center, Ripley's Believe it or Not Orlando Odditorium, I-FLY Orlando Indoor Skydiving, Medieval Times Dinner and Tournament Show, Titanic – The Experience, Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Cirque du Soleil: La Nouba, Blue Man Group, Bok Tower Gardens, Fun 2 Dive Scuba and Manatee Snorkeling Tours, The Richard Petty Driving Experience, Orange County Regional History Center, Dinosaur World, Fun Spot USA, Pirates' Dinner Adventure, ...look, we could keep going like this for a long time, but put it this way – we have a saying down here, "If you're in Orlando and you're bored...there's something wrong."

Who is on your committee? Who is your bid chair? What experience do they have in general? In running this convention in particular?

Our bid committee consists of Bid Chair Adam Beaton, Robbie Bourget, Mary Dumas, Colette Fozard, John Harold, Katie Katz, Pam Larson, Patricia McConnell, Lynda Manning-Schwartz, Thomas Safer, Arthur Sanders, Charles Schwartz, Eva Whitley. The committee brings decades of con running experience to the table, with most having been convention chair of at least one fan-run convention. One of the committee members, Robbie Bourget, has co-chaired a Worldcon (Anticipation 2009). Others on our committee have diverse convention leadership experience heading up regional science fiction conventions (Colette Fozard with Balticon and Eva Whitley with Capclave). Several others have also chaired fan-run conventions: Adam Beaton (Ohayocon - 13,000 person anime convention); Colette Fozard (Katsucon – 7,000-person anime convention); Mary Dumas (New England Fan Experience) and Pamela Larson (Nauticon). Our Worldcon experience is strong and diverse: ranging from Robbie Bourget as a former co-chair, to Colette Fozard having been a Department Head at the Millennium Philcon 2001, and being on Treasury and Facility staffs for Chicon 7 and LoneStarCon3 respectively. Adam Beaton was a Department Head and Area Head for Renovation, and is a Department Head for Lonestarcon 3. Mary Dumas was a Department Head for both Renovation and Chicon 7, and Tom Safer has staffed and provided programming content to many Worldcons.

If known, who will be the chair of the convention? What experience do they have?

The convention chair will be the same as our bid chair, Adam Beaton. A veteran con runner, during his seventeen years in fandom Adam has worked on over sixty conventions all over the United States. He was the convention chair of Ohayocon in Columbus for many years, while serving on its Board of Directors, Division Head of Operations, and Department Head of Guest Relations across several other years. Adam was asked to serve as an advisor to start-up conventions such as San Japan in San Antonio and Tekkoshoccon in Pittsburgh, both of which have been highly successful. He has worked in multiple convention roles from co-Division Head of Operations at A-kon in Dallas; running the Masquerade at Otakon in Baltimore; Department Head of Gaming at Kunicon Denver; Department Head of Vignettes and also running multiple video rooms at Renovation in Reno; working guest relations at Anime Festival Orlando, Katsucon in Washington D.C., and Nekocon in Virginia Beach, VA; and working programming and guest relations at Anime Central in Chicago.

What arrangements will be made for evening socializing and party space? Do you have a corkage waiver?

Coronado Springs Resort has forty-six suites that we will have available for socializing and parties. There are thirty-one Junior suites that are 660 square feet, ten VIP suites that are 960 square feet, and five Executive suites that are 1570 square feet. We are currently negotiating a corkage waiver for the function space. Disney's policy has always been to allow outside food and drink into their hotel rooms, so no corkage waiver for Worldcon parties is needed. This policy enables us to conduct the parties and events in rooms and suites that Worldcon members enjoy so much. We will also make sure that policy is written into our contract.

Are you planning to have any membership discounts for certain groups, such as young adults, military, or seniors?

We will have membership discounts for young adults as previous Worldcons. We are also offering discounts for first-time members who have never attended Worldcon before. We will also be opening up Supporting Membership to something we call Virtual Membership - supporting members will be able to participate in select panels and workshops via webcams and chat rooms we will set up. In addition, the Veracruz Exhibit Hall will have free admission and be open to the public. This will include the dealers room, art show, Worldcon exhibits, and other assorted activities, along with a secondary registration area for people that come for the free admission and choose to buy either a day or full membership for the rest of Worldcon.

Are you participating in pass-along funds?

Yes, Orlando will participate in pass-along funds.