

DisCon III - the 79th Worldcon

Statement Regarding Updated 'Bid_Convention Clearinghouse' Document

The undersigned Worldcons and bids for Worldcon include this joint statement with our responses to the 'Bid_Convention Clearinghouse' prepared for SMOFCon 37 in preparation for the "Fannish Inquisition/Question Time" event.

1. The number of questions included in the questionnaire increased from twenty-one (21) in prior years to seventy-one (71) questions in the current version, significantly increasing the workload to respond.
2. The notice of the new questionnaire was published by SMOFCon 37 on November 18, thirteen (13) days before the deadline to respond of December 1, 2019. The initial notice was sent to the list of the members of SMOFCon, and to the general SMOFs list. It was announced at that time that efforts to contact seated Worldcons and bids would take place afterwards, i.e., those who did not see the original announcement would have even less than 13 days to respond.
3. During this time, this was further problematised as over half of the standing chairs and bid chairs were attending an event in Chengdu (hosted by the Chengdu Bid Team) or taking part in extensive international travel during most of this time. Immediately following this was a national holiday in the USA.
4. In the spirit of fairness, we object to the fact that the format of the questionnaire was released in a manner that is completely inaccessible to one of the declared bids. Google Docs are not able to be accessed in China.
5. The attached submission represents the best effort that each Worldcon or Worldcon bid was able to coordinate in such a short time and with the understanding that all of us are volunteers.

Signed:

Norman Cates and Kelly Buehler, Co-Chairs, CoNZealand
Bill Lawhorn and Colette H. Fozard, Co-Chairs, DisCon III
Helen Montgomery and Dave McCarty, Co-Chairs, Chicago in 2022 Bid for Worldcon
Chengdu in 2023 Bid for Worldcon
Cliff Dunn and Kate Secor, Co-Chairs, Memphis in 2023 Bid for Worldcon
Esther MacCallum-Stewart, Chair, Glasgow in 2024 Bid for Worldcon
Katharine Bond, Chair, Seattle in 2025 Bid for Worldcon

- Who is your point of contact at this convention?
 - Bill Lawhorn and Colette Fozard, Convention Co-Chairs
- Do you have an email address (and/or other social media or messaging inboxes) to receive questions? What response time can people expect?
 - chair@discon3.org and info@discon.org
- What City/Country are you hosting in?
 - Washington, DC, USA
- What dates are your convention?
 - August 25-29, 2021

Bill and Colette would like to heartily thank the efforts of Lisa Adler-Golden and our Committee for their incredible team effort in assembling the information for this questionnaire.

About Us

- Who is leading your committee?
 - Our convention co-chairs are Bill Lawhorn and Colette Fozard.
- Tell us about your committee's prior convention experience.
 - Our committee includes a number of Worldcon regulars and past Worldcon committee members and staff. In addition, given the expanse of local fandom in the Washington, DC-Baltimore area, we have been able to recruit a number of committee members with experience on local and regional conventions, including Balticon, Shore Leave, Farpoint, Ravencon, and Capclave. In sum, we have centuries of convention running experience.
 - Our senior staff, as of December 1, 2019:
 - Colette H. Fozard (Co-Chair): First Worldcon in 1995, volunteering for them since 1997; Vice Chair of Worldcon 75 and DDH Facilitation for Dublin 2019; chaired three regional conventions: Balticon, Katsucon, and Nekocon.
 - Bill Lawhorn (Co-Chair): DC convention runner. If you want to know more, ask.
 - Lisa Adler-Golden (Program DH): Lisa has been attending (and volunteering at) conventions since 2002 and has been the Programming Head at Balticon for 3 years. She is currently an at-large member of the Baltimore Science Fiction Society's Board of Directors.
 - Fred Bauer (Tech DH): Fred has been attending and providing tech for conventions since 1977, his first Worldcon (where he spent many hours helping to run projectors) was Noreascon 2 in 1980. Most recently he was a Tech Advisor for Worldcon76 in San Jose and Tech Director for Arisia 2019.
 - Joshua Beatty (Member and Guest Services DDH): First Worldcon 2017. Hugo Ceremony director 2017 & 2019. Has managed ticket sales and customer service for an annual rodeo for 10 years, and logistics for the Sakura Matsuri in Washington, DC for close to 20 years.
 - Carla Brindle (Outreach DH):
 - Jared Dashoff (WSFS DH): Jared has been attending and "volunteering" at conventions since 1987, with his first being the Boskone from Hell. He has served as timekeeper, deputy presiding officer, and presiding officer of the WSFS Business Meeting and serves on the Nitpicking and Flyspecking Committee. He has also assisted with art shows, masquerades, con ops, registration, and programming at the local, regional, and Worldcon levels.
 - Gadi Evron (Events DH):

- Rick Kovalcik (Operations DH): Rick has been attending conventions including Worldcons since 1983 and started working them around 2000. He has worked Operations (as well as Tech and Member Services) at a number of conventions as well as being Worldcon Div Head for Operations (and Tech) before. He has also Chaired both Arisia and Boskone. While not Ben Yalow he has attended over 200 conventions including 29 Worldcons at this point.
 - Joyce Lloyd (Exhibits DDH):
 - Mike Nelson (Publications DH):
 - Brian Nisbet (Member and Guest Services DH): Brian has been running conventions in Ireland and Europe since the mid-90s, including chairing Shamrokon, the 2014 Eurocon. His Worldcon experience is more recent. He was DDH Turva at Worldcon 75, DDH Exhibits at Worldcon 76 and DH Logistics at Dublin 2019.
 - Mike Rafferty (Tech DDH): Michael has been volunteering for tech at conventions for 20 years, and is the Chair of Balticon 54 in May 2020.
 - Randy Shepherd (Exhibits DH):
- Operating a Worldcon is a complicated business proposition. What business structure or organization have you formed to support hosting/sponsoring your convention?
 - Discon III is a committee of the Baltimore Washington Area Worldcon Association (BWAWA), the same non-profit organization that ran the 1998 Worldcon in Baltimore, Bucconner. This provides legal and financial support. More information on BWAWA can be found at www.bwawa.org.

Location Information

- Is your venue in a city center or a suburban location?
 - City Center
- Travel to your host city
 - What Airport (or airports) serve your host city?
 - Ronald Reagan National Airport (DCA), Thurgood Marshall Baltimore-Washington International Airport (BWI), and Dulles International Airport (IAD)
 - Please provide rough estimates of flight costs into your airports.
 - National (Closest):
 - London: \$800 (1 stop)
 - Boston: \$150 (Nonstop)
 - Chicago: \$360 (Nonstop)
 - Los Angeles: \$280 (Nonstop)
 - Melbourne: \$1,500 (1 stop)
 - Tokyo \$1200 (1stop)
 - BWI:
 - London: \$800 (Nonstop)
 - Boston: \$150 (Nonstop)
 - Chicago: \$360 (Nonstop)
 - Los Angeles: \$260 (Nonstop)
 - Melbourne: \$1,500 (1 stop)
 - Beijing \$900 (non stop)
 - Tokyo \$1200 (1 stop)
 - Dubai \$1100 (1 stop)
 - San Paulo \$1400 (1stop)
 - IAD:
 - London: \$800 (Nonstop)
 - Boston:\$150 (Nonstop)
 - Chicago: \$360 (Nonstop)
 - Los Angeles: \$280 (Nonstop)
 - Melbourne: \$1,500 (1 stop)
 - Tokyo \$1200 (non stop)
 - Addis Ababa (non stop) \$900
 - Beijing \$900 (non stop)
 - Sao Paulo \$1200 (1 stop)
 - Dubai \$1100 (1stop)
 - What other transport options serve your city? Trains? Bus service?
 - DC has a major train terminal at Union Station serving Amtrak, as well as local regional train routes (Metro, MARC, and VRE).

- There are multiple bus companies that travel between DC and their hubs, including Greyhound, Bolt Bus, and MegaBus.
- International attendees
 - Do your airports offer nonstop international flights?
 - Yes, depending on the origin. There are currently 57 non-stop international destinations to IAD, including Beijing, Brussels, Dublin, Tokyo, and many more!
 - Does your country (at the time of publishing) participate in any visa waiver programs?
 - Thirty-eight (38) countries participate in a Visa Waiver Program with the United States.
 - Where can international attendees find customs, immigration and/or visa information about coming to your country?
 - Please see <https://discon3.org/international-traveler-information/> for more information, including a fact sheet we have compiled.
- Travel in your host city
 - How do attendees get from your airports, train stations and/or bus stops to the convention area?
 - From Reagan National, individuals can take:
 - Super Shuttle (avg. \$19/person, for a one-way, shared ride)
 - Taxi (avg. \$25)
 - Ride-sharing (prices vary)
 - Metro - Multiple routes, for an average of \$3 using a SmarTrip ® card.
 - From BWI:
 - Super Shuttle (avg. \$37/person for a one-way, shared ride)
 - Taxi (avg. \$90)
 - Ride-sharing (prices vary)
 - Express bus and Metro - The BWI Express/B30 (\$4.25 one way) goes directly from the airport to the Greenbelt Station on Metro's Green Line. From there, the Metro portion of the trip will average \$2.50, one-way, using a SmarTrip ® card.
 - Amtrak/MARC and Metro - Take the free buses marked Amtrak/MARC to the BWI Rail Station and purchase a ticket to Union Station (\$7 on MARC, appx. \$14 on Amtrak). From there, the Red Line can be taken directly to the stop outside of the hotel (avg. \$2.50, one-way, using a SmarTrip ® card).
 - From Dulles International:
 - Super Shuttle (avg. \$33/person, for a one-way, shared ride)
 - Taxi (avg. \$60)
 - Ride-sharing (prices vary)
 - Bus and Metro - Take the 5A bus from curb 2E (appx. \$7.50, exact fare required in either cash or SmarTrip ® card) to Rosslyn Station

served by Metro's Blue, Orange and Silver Lines. If taking the bus, from Rosslyn, take any train in the direction of Largo Town Center or New Carrollton and exit the train when you arrive at Metro Center, transfer to the Red Line in the direction of Shady Grove and exit at the Woodley Park-Zoo/Adams Morgan station (avg. \$3, using a SmarTrip® card). We are hopeful that the Dulles Metro Station will be open by the time of the convention, eliminating the bus portion.

- From Union Station:
 - From Union Station, you can either take a taxi to the hotel (avg. \$25) or board Metro's Red Line in the direction of Shady Grove and take it directly to the Woodley Park-Zoo/Adams Morgan station (avg. \$2.50, one-way, using a SmarTrip® card).
- What mass-transit options are available in your city? Are there weekly pass options to make transit easier for attendees?
 - The DC region is served by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority ("The Metro"), which operates both trains and buses.
 - The Metrorail (trains) does not accept cash as fare. You must purchase a [SmarTrip® card](#) and tap once when entering and again when exiting (fares are based on distance travelled).
 - The Metrobus currently accepts both cash (exact change required) and the SmarTrip® card. Fare is a flat fee based on the type of bus (\$2.00 for regular, \$4.25 for express routes).
 - Please note that the SmarTrip® card can be used to transfer from bus to bus for free, or between bus to train for a reduced fee.
 - Unlimited use seven-day passes are available for sale, with options of \$15.00 (bus-only), \$38.00 (bus and rail, with some time restrictions), and \$58.00 (bus and rail, no time restrictions). For additional information, please see <https://www.wmata.com/fares/farecard-options.cfm>
- What apps are available for taxi and/or ride-sharing services in your city?
 - DC currently has multiple taxi operators, as well as Uber and Lyft. The DC taxis use an app called Curb, where you can use it to hail a DC taxi.
- For people who have or rent cars, what is your city's parking and traffic situation?
 - Parking at the hotel is expensive and limited. Much of the on-street parking is limited by requiring residential permits and/or rush-hour restrictions, on-street parking is only really practical in the evening or on weekends. Please note that parking enforcement can be extremely strict depending on the location and time of day, and it's not unusual for illegally parked vehicles to rack up multiple tickets or be towed.
- What accessible transit options exist?
 - All Metrobuses are wheelchair accessible and all Metro train stations have elevators. Metro additionally offers the paratransit shared ride

service MetroAccess for those unable to access the regular system due to disability. Visitors to the region may apply to use the system for 21 days over a year. Please see

<https://www.wmata.com/service/accessibility/metro-access/eligibility.cfm#visitor> for more information about using the service as a visitor.

- Weather in your host city
 - What average high and low temperatures can attendees expect (C and F both, please)?
 - Traditional highs at the end of August are in the middle to upper 80s F (29-31 C), with evening lows in the upper 60s F (18-20 C).
 - What average humidity and precipitation chances can attendees expect in your city?
 - Washington DC is extremely humid in August, with precipitation likely on one-third to one-quarter of days, although it usually does not last long on any particular day. On days forecasted to be over 90 F (32 C), passing thunderstorms are common in the afternoon.
 - Is there anything about your weather that would surprise many attendees?
 - No, Washington DC is notorious for its summer humidity.
- Eating and drinking in your host city
 - What is the restaurant scene, particularly surrounding your facilities?
 - Within the immediate area of the hotel, there are dozens of restaurants ranging from McDonald's to more expensive sit-down places. Cuisines include Afghan, American, Cajun, French, Italian, Indian, Japanese, Lebanese, and Tex-Mex. Within walking distance there are dozens more and a one-stop Metro ride will take you to Cleveland Park or Dupont Circle, each with dozens more restaurants and bars. More information can be found via our interactive map at <https://discon3.org/map>
 - How do restaurants in your area accommodate allergies and dietary restrictions?
 - Many restaurants ask for diner's allergies and work to accommodate them. We are working on a full restaurant listing that will include allergen safe locations, as well as restaurants with options that meet dietary restrictions.
 - What is the nightlife scene, particularly surrounding your facilities?
 - There are a few bars in the Woodley Park neighborhood and a short bus ride or walk away Adams Morgan has an active nightlife scene with some of the most highly-rated bars in the city.
- Tourist attractions in or near your host city
 - Washington DC is home to the Smithsonian museums, the National Zoo (which is a short walk from our hotel), and countless other galleries, museums, sculptures, monuments, and memorials. More information on tourist sites can be found at <https://washington.org/topics/museums>.

Convention facilities

- Convention facilities
 - What facilities are you planning to use for convention exhibits, program, and events?
 - The Marriott Wardman Park will be the main hotel for DisCon III, with some activities taking place at the Omni Shoreham across the street.
 - Has your organization used this space before?
 - No, though some of our senior staff is very familiar with the space.
 - What other conventions similar to your convention in content and/or capacity does your facility host? Have you attended any of them?
 - Anime USA, an annual three-day convention of several thousand, has been hosted here since 2012. Also, our co-chair Colette manages the hotel relations for an annual Japanese cultural event, the Shinshun Matsuri, which is held in one of the expo halls.
 - What spaces are you planning to use for major events (Hugo Award Ceremony, Masquerade)? What is the size, layout and seating capacity?
 - Marriott Ballroom - 22,194 ft², seating between 2,000 and 3,000 depending on stage size. Sizes do not include balconies.
 - What spaces are you planning to use for exhibits (Dealers, Art Show, Fixed Exhibits)? What is the size and layout of the spaces?
 - The Exhibit level provides 95,000 ft² of exhibit space, with many divider options, which will be used for exhibits and other functions. Detailed spaces have not been allocated at this time.
 - How many rooms do you plan to allocate to programming? What are their capacity ranges?
 - Rooms have not been allocated at this time, but there are about 32,000 ft² of meeting room space (not counting the Marriott Ballroom or the Exhibit level.) Capacity charts are available through the hotel's website at <https://www.marriott.com/hotels/event-planning/business-meeting/wasdt-washington-marriott-wardman-park/>.
 - Does your facility provide internet access? Have you reviewed the convention facility's internet services under load?
 - Our contract provides for complimentary in-room internet and there is already free internet in the lobby spaces. We are examining options for free internet in the exhibit/program space.
 - Does your facility provide gender-neutral toilets (restrooms)?
 - We can and will mark some toilets as gender-neutral.
- Housing facilities
 - What hotels do you currently have under contract?
 - Marriott Wardman Park and Omni Shoreham

- How close are your contracted hotels to your convention center?
 - N/A - we're not in a convention center
- Please provide a breakdown of room block sizes and composition in your contracted hotels.
 - Marriott Wardman Park: over 1000 rooms
 - Omni Shoreham: 200 sleeping rooms
- What are your hotel rates? Does this include all taxes?
 - Marriott Wardman Park: \$165+tax, standard room (single-quad)
 - Omni Shoreham: \$169+tax, standard room (single-quad)
- Do your contracted hotels include internet access for guests?
 - Yes, if person is a member of the hotel's rewards program
- Do your contracted hotels include breakfast?
 - No
- Have you contracted all the sleeping rooms and function space in any of your hotels?
 - We have all sleeping rooms and function space at the Marriott Wardman Park. We have 200 rooms and about 50% of the function space for the Omni Shoreham.
- Are you negotiating with or planning to negotiate with other hotels (you don't have to name them) to increase your room block?
 - No, although we may see about adding rooms to our block at the Omni Shoreham.
- Are you required to make a minimum room block, or is your housing "courtesy blocks?" Will people booking outside your blocks harm the convention's financial stability?
 - We have minimum room block requirements in each of our hotels.
- Party facilities
 - What space are you planning to make available for parties?
 - Suites at the Marriott Wardman Park will be set aside for party space.
 - Will party hosts have to use caterers authorized by the space? Will party hosts be able to bring in their own food and/or drink?
 - We have negotiated a corkage and forkage waiver at the Marriott Wardman Park; hosts in the designated party space will be able to provide their own food and drink.
 - Are party hosts allowed to serve alcohol? Where can party hosts learn about alcohol service regulations and facilities policies?
 - DC3 will provide the guidelines for this to registered party hosts (whether public or private parties).
- Accessibility
 - Has your access team reviewed your facilities for mobility device access? For access services for the blind? For access services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing?

- Our Access Area Head is going through her notes from walkthroughs and processing/disseminating the information.
- Does your facility provide ramps and/or lifts for event and program stages?
 - We will provide ramps for the main stage in the Marriott Ballroom. We plan to provide ramps for the business meeting, and as many other raised stages as budget allows (given the hotel has a very limited supply). We may provide a lift for the Hugos (in addition to the ramp), but that needs to be worked out.
- How do your hotels accommodate allergies?
 - Sleeping rooms: requests for accommodation via the room reservation;
 - Catering: menu cards listing ingredients for items
 - Restaurants: guidance from servers and specialized menus

Our Mission

- How are you fostering member safety?
 - Our Code of Conduct is published and on our website at <https://discon3.org/CoC>.
- What are you doing to engage young fans and families with children?
 - Family Pricing: DC3 is offering a free Kid in Tow rate, and a discounted rate for children and young adults. Young adults receive the discount regardless of student or military status. There will also be a household rate, coving up to four adults and multiple children.
 - There will be Children's programming offered for the duration of the convention with a variety of activities.
- What age-related policies and restrictions have you put in place (or are required to put in place) that apply to young fans?
 - For parties it is up to the hosts if they allow entrance of minors into party space. The legal drinking age is 21. Serving to minors is prohibited. The venue does not have a restriction on where minor attendees can be at various times – all minors (and adults) need to conform to the venue's Code of Conduct.
- What are your plans to handle childcare needs?
 - We plan to have childcare available for parents to pay for if they wish.
- Are you planning any membership discounts/rates?
 - Early Membership Rates are as follows, and feature significant discounts for Young Adult and Child attendees. A household membership for up to 4 adults and multiple children is planned for later. Special discounts will be offered to first-time Worldcon attendees.
 - Adult (Born on or before August 23rd, 1996)
Convention Attendance/Hugo Voting
\$155
 - Young Adult (Born after August 23rd, 1996)
Convention Attendance/Hugo Voting
\$80
 - Child (Born after August 23rd, 2009)
Convention Attendance
\$65
 - Kid in Tow (Born after August 23rd, 2015)
Convention Attendance
Free
 - Supporting
Non-Attending/Hugo Voting Rights
\$45
- What attendance level are you expecting for your convention? How are you calculating this estimate?

- Our current estimate is 5,000 to 7,000 based on past US and east coast Worldcons. A firmer estimate will be done at the end of December 2019 when we can compare our initial registration numbers with those of recent conventions. Going forward from there we are estimating 155 new members per month based on average monthly registration numbers of past Worldcons. That monthly estimate will be updated in August 2020 to reflect DC3 monthly registration numbers.