



A Guide for the Newly Initiated or What am I supposed to do over the next four days? (A brief primer on how to have a most splendid time at Capricon 38)

Help! I don't even know where to start!

- You're in luck as we have a few overview tours of the Con on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Our tour guides are friendly and they almost never put anyone in the hotel dungeon. Tours begin at Registration. Please check your program book or pocket guide for exact times.
- You can always flag down someone wearing a silver badge. These folks are either members of the Capricon Convention Committee (ConCom) or the Phandemonium Board. There are NO stupid questions. We want you to enjoy yourself and would be happy to point you in the right direction.
- Visit the Info Desk. That's why they're there (plus they have candy).

Why Do Some People Have a Gold Badge?

These favored few are our Guests of Honor (GoHs).

Why Do Some People Have a Silver Badge?

These are department heads and their deputies who make up the Convention Committee; they are volunteers helping run the convention.

Why Do Some People Have Ribbons on Their Badges?

Collecting ribbons is a long-cherished activity for many conventioners (and not just at genre cons). There are official con ribbons (such as the ribbon you received at Registration as a first time Capricon attendee) and others that you can earn by partaking in activities. There are also private ribbons that are given out by individuals. They may be promoting a book they've written, advocating for a cause they believe in, or just pure silliness. One ribbon to look out for is anyone whose ribbon asks you NOT to take their picture. Please respect their wishes. Otherwise most ribbons are just fun and purely optional.

Who or What is Capricious?

Capricious is our mascot, who just happens to be an anthropomorphic goat. He'll be walking around the convention from time to time, so say "Hi" when you see him. Just don't "Baaa" as that would be considered a "sheep shot."

How do I Know Where to Go and When?

- There is an old-fashioned GPS-like tool on page 76 of your program guide. It includes a map of all function rooms and the hours they are open to attendees. You will also find the pocket program indispensable. It is small, portable, and even more up-to-date than the program guide.
- Here's a time-tested tip for making sure you don't miss that once in a lifetime panel. First, go through the program guide slowly and circle everything that appeals to you. Include panels, author readings and autographing, films, anime, gaming and special events. Now sigh heavily as you realize you've circled nearly the entire program book. Next, open up your pocket program and highlight your chosen events. You'll quickly see your conflicts and can then prioritize and create your ideal day-by-day schedule (which is pretty much impossible to adhere to – so go with the flow). The pocket program is also available online at guide.capricon.org
- Each morning, get a copy of *Goat Droppings*. It is a single colorful sheet of critical information for that day (and program changes) printed front and back. You'll find copies in the Con-Suite, at the Info Desk, at Registration, and in Operations (Oak).
- Visit the Info Desk (and relieve them of chocolate).

What Do I Do About My Growling Tummy?

You have several options depending on what you're willing to "stomach."

1. The Con-Suite (Lake Michigan B) is always an option. All the food and drinks available are included in the cost of your membership. You'll have a variety of ways to wet your whistle and take the edge off your hunger. Available items include, but are not limited to: cereal, bread, peanut butter and jelly, and a wide variety of other snacks. Please remember though, that the Con-Suite is not a full-service restaurant, so make sure to check out the local establishments in the area.
2. Have you a sweet tooth? You'll definitely want to visit The Multiverse Café. The Café is in River C, and also serves as a central location for author readings, concerts, and other creative demonstrations. The Café specializes in baked goods, fancy teas and coffees, and is sponsored by Canticles Productions. Everything is complimentary, however donations and tips to encourage them to come up with even more splendid desserts next year are very much appreciated. And good news – those donations go to Capricon's charity of choice!
3. Dine out or carry-in to your room (or the Con-Suite). There is a wealth of good restaurants up and down Milwaukee Avenue and the Information Desk would be delighted to provide you options. You also might consider patronizing one of our two official restaurant sponsors: Rise N Dine Pancake Café and Spears.

Are There Any "Don't Miss" Activities of Which I Should Be Aware?

- I scream, you scream we all scream for Thursday night's Ice Cream Social from 7:00 to 10:00 pm.
- If you're a reader, take in at least one author reading. It's a unique experience to hear the author reading their work directly to you. You can also watch a live interview with Timothy Zahn, our author guest of honor on Saturday at 10 am.
- Spend time with the Guests of Honor. They wouldn't come if they didn't want to meet their fans. The program guide lists the event schedule for each GoH.
- Attend Opening Ceremonies Thursday evening. You'll be introduced to the GoHs and get a good overview of the weekend. On Sunday attend Closing Ceremonies. You'll find out what you can look forward to at Capricon 39 and you can participate in the feedback session immediately following Closing Ceremonies. We want to hear from you. Let us know what went well – and what could have gone better.
- Go to the Art Show and look at all the cool shiny stuff. On Saturday evening, spend time at the Art Auction (this is not a staid and stately auction run by Sothebys – think "Storage Wars").
- Walk through the Dealers Room. You'll find new and vintage items that you just can't do without. Add to your collection or start a new one. Hint: This is also the best place to find books from authors that will be signing at the convention.
- If you're a fan of tabletop, board, or card games, stop by Lake Michigan A to see all that the Capricon Game Crew has to offer. Sign up for one of the many scheduled games, or just pick a game to play from our library. This year our friends from the Pathfinder/Starfinder Society will be with us and running Role Playing Game sessions all weekend. Also new this year is the Gaming Passport, which gives gamers an opportunity to participate in games for a chance at great prizes! Finally, don't forget to check out the Spaceship Bridge Simulator room, in River B.
- Enjoy "The Jedi Doth Return" performed by Girl Scout Troop 20863 at 4:45 pm Saturday in River C. Teen fans will present a dramatic reading of highlights from Star Wars Episode 6 in its "original" Shakespearean format.

What Can I Do at Night?

- Visit the room parties on floors 15 and 16 (check for flyers on the official notice kiosks). They want to ply you with liquor (if you're 21 or older) and exotic foods. They can win awards and they need your votes. Please be sure to wear your badge and bring your ID to the party floors.
- Take in a film or anime that you've been dying to see, or re-experience a classic.
- Soothe your savage beast with music. Learn what "Filk" is (it's not dirty...well not always dirty) or attend one of the many concerts.
- Go to Gaming (Lake Michigan A) for a pick-up game. It's open 24 hours so you never have to rush!
- Programming doesn't end at 7:00 p.m. After dinner: there are panels each night; you can help us figure out who killed Doctor Lucky; participate in the Art Auction; or enjoy a local improv group, SpaceTime Theatre.
- Blinkies begin Friday night at 6:30 in River A! What does that mean? Just "solder" on and find out.

Where Can I Go if I Encounter a Problem or Have Questions?

If anything occurs that you aren't sure how to handle, or if you have questions, please go to either the Info Desk when they are open, or to Operations, located in the Oak room, which is open 24/7 during the convention. You can also flag down anyone with a Silver Badge.

Does Capricon Support Any Charitable Foundations?

- Every year, Capricon sponsors a charity. This year's charity is The Freedom to Read Foundation (FTRF), a non-profit legal and educational organization that protects and defends the First Amendment to the Constitution and supports the right of libraries to collect – and individuals to access – information. Tip jars in the Café and on their ambassador table are in support of FTRF.
- All monies raised at the Critter Crunch, as well as specially denoted charitable items at the Art Auction are also donated to FTRF.

Con Terminology – or “What did you Say??!!!”

As you walk through the hallowed halls of Capricon, you may come across fans using a strange and exotic language. Alternatively, if you accidentally come across a strange and guttural language, you've slipped into the Klingon hallway. In any case, we're providing you a very incomplete list of some the terms you may hear over the course of the weekend.

Many of the following entries come from the website *Dr. Gafia's Fan Terms* by Rich Brown (http://www.fanac.org/Fannish_Reference_Works/Fan_terms/). We thank him for this contribution to Fandom.

Anime: Name generally given to Japanimation, and the people who enjoy it. Deleting lengthy explanations about exceptions and/or offense taken to this simplistic definition, it's easy enough to understand that the second term can give rise to offense if what should be pronounced "Japan-imation" is instead pronounced "Jap-animation." Let's not go there.

Bid Party: An open convention party sponsored by fans who are bidding against each other for the right to host a future convention, commonly the World Science Fiction Convention (Worldcon). The idea is to promote good will (and possibly secure votes) for their bid.

Board: The Board of Directors of Phandemonium.

Con: Short for "convention" – more specifically in our context, a science fiction/fantasy convention. These are gatherings of various fans and pros from distant points (usually held in a hotel, frequently for more than a single day and often discussing SF/fantasy where they have programs) as a one-time or annual event are "science fiction conventions."

ConCom: Short for CONvention COMmittee. These are the fans who handle the details of putting on any given convention. This includes, but is not limited to: making arrangements with the hotel, artists, dealers and performers; arranging the program; feeding the fan; marketing the convention; and providing technical or other services.

Convention Chair: Chairperson of a particular convention. At Capricon, this is the person who went before the Phandemonium board, pitched their idea for a convention, had it approved, secured the GoHs, and found the volunteers to help them make the whole shebang happen.

Con-Suite: This is the convention's hospitality suite which is essential for the acquisition of complimentary snacks and beverages.

Door Dragon (see also Gopher): A volunteer checking for badges at the door to a room. Please, don't poke them, but feel free to feed them.

Fan: Short for fanatic - the term Hugo Gernsback hung on us when we wrote enthusiastic letters to his magazine *Amazing Stories*. Can be applied to any devoted aficionado, but in context (such as in rec.arts.sf.fandom) it means someone who enjoys (or once enjoyed) reading or viewing science fiction and/or someone who enjoys the company of SF fans.

Fen: Plural of fan.

Filk: Filk is a form of folk music that grew out of certain segments of the fannish SF community, and frequently addresses the interests of many fans, some even going so far as to say filk is music by fans and filkers, no matter what the subject. A lot of filk these days is more rock-style than folk-style, and indeed the musical form doesn't seem to be all that important, ranging from rap to opera. Presently the filk community overlaps the fannish community rather than merely being part of it, and there are now many filkers who don't participate in the SF microcosm at all. The term was a 1953 typo by Lee Jacobs for a piece entitled "The Influence of Science Fiction on Modern American Filk Music" about supposed SF incidents in folk song, but was actually an analysis of a number of thoroughly filthy "dirty songs." Not long after that, Karen Anderson, took Lee J's typo and defined it as musical parodies written by SF fans. But this origin story may explain why some people believe it to be an abbreviation for "filthy folk singing."

Furry Fandom (or "Furries"): Fandom which revolves around anthropomorphized animals. There is "Furry" art, fiction and games (which may or may not have adult overtones).

Ghost: Someone who comes to the convention but doesn't buy a badge. Don't be THAT person.

Gopher: A volunteer at a con. At Capricon, if a volunteer works sufficient hours, they earn back the cost of their badge.

Mundane: Those unenlightened souls who don't participate in the fannish community. (Proper Use in a sentence: "*The room next to me is full of vacationing mundanes. You should have seen their eyes pop out as Capricious strolled by.*")

Ops: Operations (also acts as security at Capricon).

Panel: A collection of people called together to conduct a discussion on a specific topic at a con.

Phandemonium: The legal organization that runs Capricon and sponsors other SF-related events and outreaches during the year.

Sci-Fi: This is now an antiquated phrase, often used by non-fans to describe "Science Fiction." The preferred abbreviation is "SF."

SMOF: Acronym for Secret Master of Fandom.

(1) Tongue-in-cheek term for the fans in smoke-filled back rooms who "really" decide the course of future Fandom.

(2) A tongue-in-cheek term for the notion that the anarchistic meritocracy that is Fandom is controlled by some powerful, behind-the-scenes group of fans.

(3) The tongue-in-cheek connotations remain from definitions (1) and (2), but SMOFs (the plural of SMOF) has been taken up as the name for a loosely organized group of experienced convention problem-solvers—who may be former Worldcon or major convention chairs, gonzo hotel negotiators, noted con programming types, etc.—who get together from time to time to pass on (or volunteer) their experience, and thereby ensure that Fandom gets to do what Fandom wants to do. It now takes more fans to run a Worldcon than once attended them.

(4) Phandemonium borrowed the acronym SMOF, revising it as **Supreme Minister of Fun**. The Phandemonium SMOF can serve as ombudsman for anyone who has a concern to take to the Board of Directors, but also keeps an eye on the Board and ConCom to help make sure everyone is having fun. This is, after all, a hobby.

Squee: A loud happy expression of fannish glee.

Worldcon: The one, the only, annual World Science Fiction Convention at which the Hugo Awards are given out. As a service mark, "Worldcon" should always be capitalized.

Written by Ed Friman

Marketing Head – Capricon 38