

Fannish Inquisition Survey: Toronto Smofcon Bid

Smofcon Bid: Toronto in 2013

What are the proposed dates for which you are bidding? Dec. 6-8, 2013

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?

The host city is Toronto, Ontario. The convention site is at the Fairmont Royal York hotel, downtown Toronto, directly across from Union Station. Many will be familiar with it as the party hotel during Torcon 3. A shuttle from Pearson airport travels frequently to the Royal York. It's fairly easy to get there by a city bus and then a subway to Union Station. There is also the option of flying Porter Airlines into Billy Bishop Airport in downtown Toronto, from which you can take a free shuttle to The Royal York, a short distance away. Porter has daily flights from most Canadian cities, as well as Boston, Chicago-Midway, New York, and Washington. Porter flights tend to be more expensive than other airlines but that cost is somewhat offset by the free shuttle and the time saved.

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

(Expedia searches for midwinter dates, direct flights, eight weeks in advance, includes all fees)

- London = \$697
- Boston = \$536
- Chicago = \$548
- Los Angeles = \$803
- Melbourne = \$3172

Note for those flying in from the US: International flights tend to be more expensive. Flight costs are often cheaper (in the low 3 figure range) if you fly into Buffalo NY. This is two hours from Toronto and buses leave directly and frequently from Buffalo Airport.

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?

Yes, Toronto is the largest city in Canada. All major airlines fly direct into Pearson Airport. Additionally some North American cities have direct flights into the downtown airport as outlined above.

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?

The site is across the street from the train station and a few blocks from the main bus station, although Greyhound goes right past the Royal York and will stop there if you ask. A taxi from Pearson would cost around \$60 and there is a free shuttle from Billy Bishop. (If you insisted on using a taxi anyway it would likely run you less than \$10) Airport Express Shuttle from Pearson is \$40 both ways and you save 5% if you order online.

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

The Royal York Hotel is fully accessible. Standard rooms are King or Double/Double. Larger rooms and suites are available.

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

\$159/night for single/double. Additional persons at \$30/night. Rates do not include breakfast. The hotel has complimentary internet access for all members of the Fairmont President's Club loyalty Program. There is no start up fee associated with the Fairmont President's Club.

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

Alas, parking is expensive in the big city. The Royal York parking is valet only and is \$45. We are currently looking into more economical options nearby and will post this information to our webpage.

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?

Not applicable. The main hotel is the convention site.

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

We have three breakout rooms that will fit 50-60 people for program items during the day and a large room in the evening for the Friday night mixer and the Fannish Inquisition. They are accessible and a projector for power point presentations will be available.

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Please describe the restaurant scene near your site.

Extensive, pretty much anything you want, anytime you want it. The Royal York also links directly to the Path, an underground walkway that links to almost 30 kilometers of shopping and a wide variety of restaurant, from fine dining to national chains. It is, should the need arise, entirely possible to do the Death March To Sushi in your shirtsleeves.

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

The hotel has a single smoking floor for individual rooms. No smoking is allowed anywhere else. The Smoke-Free Ontario Act prohibits smoking in workplaces, and enclosed public spaces, including motor vehicles when children under 16 are present.

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

Well it's not going to be beach weather, and I expect that only the hardiest of Canadians will be up for a cold beer on the patio. However, while certainly possible, it is unusual to get any significant snowfall until much later in December, and this has been particularly true in the last several years. Most of the Christmases I can remember have been green ones. Indoor temperatures are consistently held between 68 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit.

Average December temperatures for Toronto are: low/high -8/0 C (18/32 F);

Average daily temperature for December 8th in Toronto is: low/high -6/2 C (21/35 F);

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

The Royal Ontario Museum, (Museum subway station on the same line as Union station), has more than 40 galleries of art, archaeology and natural science including a Chinese temple art display that contains three of the world's best-preserved temple wall paintings from the Yuan Dynasty, and a large permanent display of dinosaurs is housed within the Michael-Lee Chin Crystal, an impressive new wing opened in June 2007.

The Art Gallery of Ontario, (St. Patrick's subway station, same line as Union, and a short walk or streetcar ride), reopened with a new Frank Gehry design in November 2008. The AGO contains the largest public display of Henry Moore sculptures as well as masterpieces by Anthony van Dyck, Claude Monet, Pablo Picasso, Vincent Van Gogh and many others.

Hockey Hall of Fame, (one block, a few minutes walk from the hotel). There are many sports fans among the Smofs. It's said that in Canada everyone is a hockey fan (probably true to a first approximation), and the Hockey Hall of Fame is an great facility, full of interactive exhibits that puts visitors in the heat of NHL action, except that nobody is punching you.

Others easily accessible by public transportation, or a short cab ride, include the Bata Shoe Museum, Kensington Market, Yorkville, Casa Loma and the Distillery Historic District.

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

- Chair - Diane Lacey
- Ruth Lichtwardt - Vice-chair and Registration.
- Mark Olson and Jeff Orth - Programming
- Priscilla Olson -Friday night mixer
- Catherine Crockett - Hospitality
- Debra Yeung – Hotel Liason

All except Debra Yeung have had years, and in some cases decades, of experience at Worldcon and Regional levels. Debra is local to Toronto and has worked on all 3 years of SFContario, most recently as program director.

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

Diane Lacey has previously worked on Noreascon 4, LACon 4, Anticipation, Renovation, and Chicon 7. She has co-chaired SFContario 3 and worked as a department head on several Minicons. She has attended every Smofcon since Boston in 2007 and is a co-chair of both the Kansas City in 2016 and Montreal in 2017 Worldcon bids.

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

We have a corkage waiver for our consuite. Most of the evening socializing will take place there. Our consuite will be run by Catherine Crockett. There are no definite plans yet for the traditional Thursday outing, and we welcome any ideas people have, but we have been thinking about it. One possibility we're considering if there's enough interest is an outing to the Royal Ontario Museum including a behind the scenes tour.

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

Not at this time.