

A Proposal for Minicon 49

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We propose to run a convention called “Minicon 49” over Easter weekend 2014, April 18-20, with Joel as chair and Matt as sub-chair.

We would like approval soon so that we can begin hotel negotiations and so that we can begin inviting guests.

As with Minicon 48, here's what we mean by “chair” and “sub-chair”. Joel and Matt expect to make most decisions together. However, Joel will have priority in case of disagreement. If a decision looks like it needs to be made quickly, Joel can make it without consulting Matt, but Matt is supposed to consult Joel unless it is a very minor matter. Since Matt lives in Chicago, much of this will happen remotely. Fortunately, Matt and Joel are happy talking on the phone a lot. Matt hopes to be able to attend around half of the concom meetings in person by taking Megabus red-eyes up to Minneapolis.

The Con

We plan for Minicon 49 to be a rather similar convention to the last string of Minicons. We propose to hold it at the Bloomington DoubleTree (Sheraton (Radisson)) and for it to be an all-volunteer-run convention with the usual assortment of activities and no significant shift in policies from previous years.

Budget and GoH

We are planning to invite one author GoH and one other GoH. The other GoH will probably be an artist, but we would like to leave our options open. To limit airfare costs, both will be domestic, or one international and the other local (or a cheaper combination, naturally). In either plan, we assume any GoH will bring a partner, and that we will pay their way.

We could also additionally invite a third GoH who is local; this costs about \$700. Alternatively, we could use the same money to do more unspecified cool things and/or have more contingency for unexpected expenses.

We leave registration rates where they are for Minicon 48.

For all numbers the follow, we assume the same membership totals as at Minicon 47. This ignores the fact that since Minicon 42 we have been growing at about 10 members per year. Additional members in these sorts of numbers make all of the dollar figures rosier, since most of our expenses are independent of the number of members and we are nowhere near any cost breakpoints, such as where we would need to start using more function space. Therefore, these are conservative estimates. Were Minicon 49 to be 20 members larger than Minicon 47, it would add about \$600 to the bottom line.

Here, then, is an outline of our projected budget, based on Minicons 47 and 48. Lines annotated with "lGoH" show the impact on the budget if adding a third, local, GoH.

Income:

Memberships: \$17000
Dealers' tables: \$1000
Profit on art show: \$100
Profit on t-shirts: \$0
Total: \$18100

Expenses:

Hotel, including GoH rooms: \$3000 (lGoH +\$500)
 GoH rooms: \$139+tax/night, 3 nights/GoH assumed.
GoH travel: \$1000
GoH food stipend: \$400 (lGoH +\$200)
Badges: \$600
Consuite+Bar: \$5000
Publications: \$1400
Room parties: \$400
Misc: \$1400, rough possible breakdown follows:
 Music: \$325
 Programming and kids programming: \$75
 Moving truck: \$200
 Work Parties: \$200
 Dealer Dollars: \$100
 Youth activities: \$300
 As-yet unanticipated misc: \$200 (without lGoH +\$700)
Total: \$13900

Grand total: \$4200 profit

This is tailored to the understanding that Mnstf's financial situation is the same as for Minicon 48, except that it will be spending about \$1000 on a lawyer to secure our 501(c)3 status. Therefore, Mnstf bylaw VI.4 is still in effect, such that the club will be shooting to lose \$1000 in 2014. Assuming the club's budget is the same as in 2012 and 2013, it looks something like:

Meetings + storage locker + PO box and other misc: ~\$4000
Lawyer: ~\$1000
Loss target of the fallcon : \$200
Subtotal: ~-\$5200
Amount Minicon 49 should make: ~\$4200

Organization

During the planning of Minicon 47 so far, we have been trying to

- Run better concom meetings
- Have better understandings of what each department does so that how Minicon works is less mysterious
- Have better control over and understanding of our budget

We have *not* instituted a division/department structure as suggested by our Minicon 48 proposal, because after various discussions and sundry thought, it seemed like it would not help in the way we had hoped. Instead we are attempting to structure our meetings to attain the same goals. The most important change is to schedule the meetings *after* consulting department heads about their availability, and making specific goals for each meeting so we know what department heads need to be available for the meeting to be worthwhile. Matt is making an attempt to write and circulate an agenda ahead of time so that people see a reason to come (or not), rather than each meeting being just an abstract discussion time.

Further, Matt is trying to involve the whole committee in more of the sorts of decisions that recently the chair has just been making unilaterally outside of meetings. For instance, we decided as a committee in July on the big space usage issue, and Matt hopes to involve the whole con more directly in budgetary decisions. This, hopefully, will both be an incentive for more people to attend meetings, and should also help make more department heads feel that they are part of the (imaginary) core committee, i.e. someone who says “us” instead of “you” when talking about Minicon.

Youth

At Minicon 49, we will continue to try to draw in more younger people. Minicon 47 had a total of 21 members who joined as “students” (13-20). A good goal would be to have doubled that by Minicon 49. At Minicon 48, we have a new youth-oriented department (“Minicon: The Next Generation”) tasked with adding activities to the con that are attractive to younger fans. We would like to continue and build on this at Minicon 49, but since we have not yet gotten very far into Minicon 48 planning yet, it's hard to say more than that.

For Minicon 48, we dropped the student rate down to \$20 pre-reg and \$25 at the door, compared to the adult rate of \$40 pre-reg and \$60 at the door. We think this is the lowest we can set them before we run into prices that generate reactions like “well, if it hardly costs anything, it can't be any good”, so will likely keep them at this level.