Events

1.1 Opening/Closing Ceremonies

Opening Ceremonies

Opening Ceremonies is typically on day 1 of the Worldcon. For some, this may be Wednesday; for others, this may be Thursday. In the future it may be another day of the week. It can be in the afternoon or early evening. Sometimes it is combined with special First Night events, such as a parade or a walk to a nearby park where food, beverages and entertainment might be offered. It's an opportunity to welcome attending Worldcon fans, introduce the Guests of Honor, to do something fun or flashy or just fannish. Worldcon 2015 (Sasquan, Spokane, Washington) hired a Native American Storyteller to tell some tales who invited several children up to listen to him on stage. Be creative.

Select a venue (ballroom, meeting room, etc.) that can seat a subset of the fans attending that year. Although a typical North American Worldcon will have about 5000 warm bodies, choosing a room that can seat around 1000 should work. Not everyone arrives by day 1 and not everyone is interested in attending this event. Additionally, most recent Worldcons live stream this event into at least one other location within the convention center (or hotel) where it is held. This allows for overflow seating if more than 1000 want to watch.

Opening Ceremonies is usually placed under the Events Division, but the exact location organizationally is up to the Chair(s).

Closing Ceremonies

Closing Ceremonies is typically held on day 5 of the Worldcon. This may mean Sunday or Monday (or some other day of the week in the future). It is usually held in the mid-afternoon before Move-Out occurs. Here the Chair(s) thank(s) everyone for attending that year, introduce the Guests of Honor one last time, thank all of their committee / staff / volunteers, hand out Hero Awards to those to be recognized, and pass the traditional gavel to the next year's Chair(s). Sometimes the next year does something simple, such as reminding fans of their dates, location, their name, their theme, etc. Sometimes they go more extravagent such as a parade or have their committee on site stand up, pass out unique candies, etc. Again, be creative for this year's portion.

As with Opening Ceremonies, select an appropriately sized venue. Not everyone will stick around for this event and alternate locations might not be streamed as they may be tearing down by the time it starts.

Also, as with Opening Ceremonies, it is usually under the Events Division, but that is the Chair(s)'s decision(s).

1.2 Guest-of-Honor Speeches

GoH speeches or spotlights or interviews can be considered Events or Programming. Sometimes GoHs want to talk about themselves, or the state of the industry, or about some cause. Other times they just like the spotlight to interact with fans and answer questions. Worldcon can also supply a GoH with an interviewer who asks questions which may or may not be screened in advance by the GoH. In any event it is a way to get fans to learn more about that GoH.

1.3 Masquerade

Masquerade (or Masquerade Contest) is an event, usually under the Events Division, where members of the Worldcon can show off their costumes, perform skits, or generally entertain the audience while in costume. Contestants usually have to register in advance, either pre-con or at-con, with the Masquerade Director. The MD will inform registered contestants about the rules. These may restrict what can or cannot be performed, what can or cannot be worn, what can or cannot be played (like music to coincide with the contestant's time on stage). Contestants will be required to show up for practice in the location where the Masquerade will be held so they can get a feel from what they need to do and how to do it in situ. Pre-event contestants will typically meet in the Masquerade Green Room (somewhere nearby) before being called to go on stage. Post-event contestants will typically be asked to visit the designated Photo Area to be photographed along with other contestants, either separately or together (or both). Judges will determine things like workmanship, choreography, period consistency, etc. Some judging will be pre-event and some while up on stage. Post-event judges will move to another room to tally their scores and determine who wins awards. While the judges do this the audience is typically entertained with music, film trailers, or something else to keep them around until the winners are announced. There are different classes of costumers, typically Novice, Journeyman and/or Master. A contestant's entry class is determined from their history at previous Masquerades (not only Worldcons, but also other related events with Masquerade Contests of a similar nature).

Photo Area

Make sure the photo area is adequate to do the costumes. Special electrical hookups may be needed in order to power the lights. Stagehands may be needed to set up the backdrops that participants are photographed against.

1.4 Hugo Awards Ceremony

This ceremony is usually under the Events Division. It is usually held on night 4, which might be Saturday or Sunday traditionally. The Master of Ceremonies runs the event from a script written pre-con with the help of the Ceremony Director (CD). People who are finalists (formerly nominees) are contacted about attending. Should they not be attending, then arrangements for someone to accept their award should they win is wise. The CD determines how the seating arrangements will be done. For example, where do the finalists sit before they come up on stage should they win? Where do fans sit who have a disability? What about CART / Sign Language Interpreters? How early do members get let into the facility? Which facility do you use for the ceremony? This is usually worked out between the Chair(s), Events Division Head, and other DH's. Where do you keep the awards? Who orders the awards and how far in advance? These are just some of the questions to consider.

Tech setup and rehearsals

When doing space allocation, you must allow sufficient time in the function rooms for the staff to set up sound and light equipment. This is especially true if the demands by Programming during the day are such that some or all of the setup must be re-done for each event.

In particular, a tech rehearsal must be done on the day of each major event. This tech rehearsal may or may not overlap with the rehearsal of the participants of the event. In the case of the masquerade, the contestants must have a chance to see the facilities and anticipate what problems might occur.

Unions

If you are in a union facility, you must carefully cover in advance which tasks may be performed by fans, and which **must** be performed by union personnel.

If you are using fan tech support consisting of union members from other cities, you must make arrangements well in advance if you want to try to get the out-of-towners to work in an official capacity.

Live Feed

Given the limited size of most main function rooms, not all of the Worldcon attendees can normally fit. It is therefore a wonderful idea to have a live feed of (at a minimum) the Masquerade and Hugo ceremonies throughout the facility, so that fans can see it from their rooms or another function room. This has historically provided a great way to keep crowd problems minimized.

Only a couple of problems:

1. Not all facilities are set up to do this easily.
   You may discover to your dismay that herculean efforts are required to set up such a feed. Even in cities that are "major" convention cities.
2. The costs can be very high, particularly in union towns, and facilities that do not have live feed capability as a normal part of the house a/v system, the costs can eat you alive.
   Tip: Even if the costs are quoted as extremely high, it is possible to get the facility to "bend" rather than lose the business. At Chicon V, when the committee laughed at the facility's costs to do all major events live, they decided to go back and say,"What'll it take to do **just** the Masquerade and Hugos? We really don't want to spend more than a couple of thousand, and if we can't work something out, then we won't have any live feed." The key was that Chicon was not obligated to do the live feed, **and thus the hotel** did not have the committee over a barrel. Rather than get zero money for a live feed, the hotel came back with a counter-offer that was then negotiated into an acceptable rate.
3. Costs and logistics can be even higher if the live feed is to span more than one hotel, or from a convention center to a hotel.
   Any time you cross boundaries like this, you not only have turf wars between different in-house a/v departments and union stewards, but the very real probability that special cabling will have to be run in order to do the link-up.

Videorecording

Videorecording has the following problems:

1. It may have to be done by union personnel.
2. If done with more than one camera (a good idea), someone has to edit it. Fans have been notoriously lax at this.
3. If you have an ASCAP/BMI license for performing music at the masquerade, it may not cover sales of DVDs / Blu-Rays.
4. You may have to get signed releases from all contestants before you can use the recording.

1.5 Dances

There are many types of dances that can be held at a Worldcon.

Modern Dance is typically held in a function room with a dance floor, has special lighting effects, and a disc jockey (DJ) playing LPs, CDs, or MP3 files using a computer.

Regency Dance is usually held in a function room with just carpeting, has a Dance Coordinator, and a way to play music (such as a boombox or DJ setup). Here the DC will teach fans how to perform RD common in the Regency Era of the UK (early-mid 1800s).

Specialty Dances can be anything from English Country Dance, Irish Dance, or something unique to the region where Worldcon is held. It can be held in a function room with a dance floor, just carpeting, or something else depending on the needs of the dance and the options available in the facility (hotel, convention center, etc).

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