

Hawaii Marine Lifestyles

ANIME FANS PREPARE TO ASSEMBLE!!!



Anime fans arrive at the Hawaii Convention Center for 2011 Kawaii-Kon.

Yoji Eguchi courtesy photos

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Kawaii-Kon is the first and only anime convention of its kind in Hawaii and has been going strong annually for the past seven years. Its foundation and purpose is to rally those passionate about anime in one place for an exchange of interests and ideas. The next convention will be held March 16-18 at the Hawaii Convention Center and will be the only time this year where anime fans of all ages can meet at this type of event in Hawaii.

"Kawaii-Kon is a three-day celebration of Japanese anime here in Hawaii," said Roy "Buma" Bann, Senior Administrator of Kawaii-Kon. "Every year we invite lots of guests from both the mainland and Japan. Not only just voice actors, we have people who are in the industry, bands as well as a large contingence of local artists."

The purpose of the convention is not just to showcase anime and vendors, it serves as a haven for local "otaku" or fans.

"Kawaii-Kon is like a safe venue for people who are considered 'outsiders' to the rest of society," Bann said.

"It's a place where geeks can gather and not be considered different. It's a gathering place for like-minded individuals. Nobody is judged dressing funny in costumes, liking dolls, liking a particular anime, if they like to do performance type of things, or even if they like to sow. It's a safe place for people to express themselves in a group of people like them. We're very open."

Due to the constant relocation of service members, rooting into the community is difficult. That being said, Bann believes that Kawaii-Kon's family-like environment will welcome those willing to attend.

"Because of our nature, we have a whole family type of atmosphere where everyone is part of your extended family," said Bann. "We try to promote that. We're all one big family regardless of what you like, who you are, and where you came from."

This year's convention will showcase a number of well-known personalities and contributors to the anime

community. For fans of "Vampire Hunter D" and "Final Fantasy," character designer and world renowned artist, Yoshitaka Amano, will be attending. Celebrated voice actor and former Power Ranger, Johnny Yong Bosch will also be attending along with his band Eyeshine.

"I think the great part of Kawaii-Kon and a lot of our sister conventions is its push that these are conventions put on by fans, for fans," Bann added. "It's really true, there's no one in this organization that gets paid a dime for anything that we do here. This is all put on by the love of anime and putting on a show for the fans. We're putting on things that we'd like to see and making sure all the details are worked out. We're here to put on the best show that we can. It's like being a car guy and rebuilding an engine, because it's for you. You take the time and do it correctly. That's how we approach Kawaii-Kon as well."

For the schedule of events and registration go to <http://www.kawaii-kon.org>.



Anime fans of all ages meet at the Hawaii Convention Center for 2011 Kawaii-Kon.