

James E. Thomas

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## Pirates invade Pensacon

By James E. Thomas

Whether you're meeting your favorite celebrity or perhaps getting a picture taken with a superhero, for many people it's a surreal, but memorable moment. Pensacon is a local convention where fans of many pop-culture genres gather to meet celebrity guests, cosplay as their favorite characters, and celebrate their fandom together.

"Growing up you know how it is when you have a favorite actor or singer, and you think, 'Oh it'd be so great to meet them,' I just lived my childhood dream! That was (meeting) The Fonz!" said Nicole Gunter after she spoke with famous actor Henry Winkler on Friday.

Many PSC students had similar experiences while attending Pensacon over the past weekend.

"Wow these people are real!" said Sean Minton after seeing several of the celebrities attending Pensacon on Saturday as he strolled through one of the galleries where celebrities were meeting fans and signing autographs.

"I've never seen people on TV in person!" he said. "It's kind of cool to see famous people I know."

This sentiment rings true for most visitors of Pensacon, and it's the reason so many attend the convention every year.

Whether it's your first time attending, or you're a seasoned con-goer, the prospect of meeting an idol from your childhood and the thrill it provides never fails to draw a crowd.

Over one-hundred different celebrities covering a wide variety of genres attended Pensacon over the weekend. With so many actors, artists, writers, wrestlers, musicians, and other celebrities, the convention offered something to appeal to just about everyone.

While Pensacon has dubbed itself the “Pensacola Comic Con,” it has a large amount of diversity for the fans of all walks of life to enjoy.

“It’s about pop-culture. There’s something here for everyone.” said Gunter.

Just like PSC doesn’t have one kind of typical student and caters to all demographics, Pensacon doesn’t have one typical type of fan either.

“I think it just depends on who’s there (attending Pensacon),” said Minton, “If someone likes “Star Wars,” go to a Star Wars panel. If they like “Adventure Time,” go to the Adventure Time panel. If they like the “Adult Swim,” go to that panel.”

The panels offer con-goers a chance to listen to celebrities talk about books they’ve written, movies they’ve acted in, and other things they’ve done, as well as giving them a chance to ask the stars questions.

Sean enjoyed attending the Adult Swim panel over the weekend, which was made up of several artists and voice actors from various Adult Swim series that he watches.

Also a self-proclaimed Star Wars fan, Sean said that if he’d had the time he would have liked to have seen the Star Wars panel which was made up of several actors from the movies who played iconic characters like Boba Fett and Admiral Ackbar.

For Nicole one of the more memorable moments happened when she went to meet 80’s rock star Lita Ford.

She watched as a mother brought her daughter up to Lita's signing table to meet the famous musician and get her autograph. The teary-eyed, star-struck little girl was bouncing up and down with excitement as she approached to get a chance to meet her idol.

“That was so exciting for me to see that this little girl, in a different era, was appreciating someone I grew up liking. And I thought ‘That’s really cool!’ because now there’s that connection across the generations.” said Gunter.

Seeing some of your favorite stars or artists in person, cosplaying as one of your favorite comic book or anime characters, and interacting with others who share your adoration for things that you are passionate about seems to be the uniting factor all fans share, no matter what generation, class, culture, or religion you are a part of.

It’s that connection across generations that binds the fans together along with the hopes of having fun out in the community.

“I think it’s a fun experience if you are a little nerd inside like I am.” said Minton.

So, whether you’re in to wrestling, music, comics, anime, or movies Pensacon has something that will appeal to that little bit of nerd inside us all.