



Moms of Furrries and guests of honor at Furlandia 2019 Joelle, left, and Carrie, right, ran their own family friendly crafts and board game panel at Furlandia.



Two fursuit heads created by attendee and fursuit designer, Flare.



Shortcake, right, and another attendee and fursuiter pose for a photo.

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Animal ears, tails and fursuits adorn the hallways of the Sheraton hotel where every memorial weekend furrries, fans of anthropomorphic animals, come together to celebrate and take part in their growing subculture. "Furrries have been described as 'fans of each other,' as opposed to other media driven properties where they're organized around a particular media property," said Rex, the chairman of Furlandia 2019. "You think of Bronies - they're all organized around My Little Pony; Trekkies - they're all organized around Star Wars - these are different media properties. But furrries, there are a lot of what we consider furry works of art, whether that's movies or comics or costumes - or anything else like that." Rex, who has been part of the organizing furry conventions since 2007, also described the experience of having a fursona as spiritual and even one person can have multiple fursonas depending on their current standing or mood; fursonas are not limited to just creatures with fur, but also fins, scales and feathers.

Furlandia was established in 2013 and since then has been growing in attendees and activities.

The Sheraton is able to make accommodations for all of the happenings at Furlandia including panelists and dance competitions. One of the most excitingly overwhelming parts of the convention is the Dealer's Den, where vendors huddle behind their stalls selling art, tails, ears, fursuit spray, even more risque items such as collars, leashes or lewd art.

While the furry subculture has received bad press in the past due to television shows like CSI, A Thousand Ways to Die, or even the occasional bad apple - the fandom is very accommodating to those who are underage, as some adult furrries within the fandom do participate in more mature themes. However, Furlandia is known for being a child-friendly convention offering a safe space this year for a craft-making family friendly panel hosted by this year's guests of honor, the Moms of Furrries, Carrie and Joelle, who run a YouTube channel as well as website offering advice to both young furrries and the parents of those furrries. "We got into the fandom because our kids are furrries, so

we don't have fursonas because we are furrries in a different way," said Carrie.

Carrie and Joelle ran their panel with their children's assistance making tie-dye scarves, con-badges and playing board games with the other attendees. Joelle explained that their kids weren't always social, but until meeting their first famous furry, that all changed, "They transformed, they smiled, they became talkative, they became socially engaging - and it still happens, they're still quite introverted in their everyday life but when we come to a con they talk, they make conversation, they smile, they take pictures." Furlandia offers more than fandom, but relation and the opportunity to meet other people who share the same interests.

Navigating this convention would be a puzzle without having an experienced furry like Whorff, Bess, or helpful staff and panelists. The furrries have a diverse sub-culture that cater to different interests whether that is through creating furry art, media, organizing a meet-up or education. If you're curious and adventurous enough, access to this community is virtually anywhere, so don't be afraid to get yourself into a fuzzy situation.