

# SAKURA-CON!

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by [Doug Margeson](#)

Journal Reporter

Some 7,500 enthusiasts will gather at the Washington State Convention and Trade Center this weekend for the ninth annual Sakura-Con, a celebration of a forms of popular culture the rest of us probably never heard of -- the rest of us, that is, except for the entire nation of Japan and untold millions of other people devoted to anime, manga, cosplay and J-pop.

Don't know what those things are? Neither did Bill Murray in "Lost in Translation" and they can be as disorienting as the world he experienced -- again, that is, if you are not familiar with them. A growing number of people in these parts are familiar with them, enough that Sakura-Con had to move to the Convention Center because it has outgrown its previous venues, said Elmira Utz, publicity director for the conference.

Sakura-Con will feature the latest in anime (Japanese animated movies), more than 200 in all, running 24 hours a day for three straight days.

"And there's no break between them. When one ends, the next one starts," Utz said.

The conference also features karaoke, a masquerade ball, panel discussions and guest appearances for such anime notables as film directors Tony Oliver and Hideyuki Kurata and Goro Taniguchi.

It also will feature displays of manga (aka Japanese comics). And it will have J-pop in the form of a concert by the Tokyo rock 'n' roll band Camino.

Finally, it will have cosplay contests. Cosplay is a form of costuming popular among teenagers in Japan these days. Most fans of this hobby dress as characters from anime, manga, films and TV shows. One subgenre gaining in popularity is EGL, which stands for Elegant Gothic Lolita. In EGL, girls and young women dress up in stylized Victorian-era girls clothing, combined with modern and outrageous adult touches. The subtle and the timid need not apply.

## SAKURA-CON

\* Today through Sunday

\* Event times vary; check schedule on Web site

\* Washington State Convention and Trade Center, Seventh Avenue and Pine Street, Seattle

\* \$60

\* <http://www.sakuracon.org>

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