

Living

# Faerieworlds festival in Eugene is your chance to make merry as a faerie

Updated Jan 10, 2019; Posted Jul 29, 2010

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By Special to The Oregonian



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**Byron**

**Dazey**

Up to 5,000 people a day are expected to attend Faerieworlds in Eugene.

No matter your age, if your inner faerie has been itching to come out,

Faerieworlds

-- Friday-Sunday in Eugene -- may be the festival for you.

"It's three days of live music, real arts and crafts, amazing costumes and performances out in nature, under the sun and stars, for the whole family," says Robert Gould, one of the producers of the 8-year-old event celebrating pan-Celtic, mythic music and, yes, faeries -- in a playful, family-friendly environment.

"There are older people, there are babies and children," says Amethyst Brown of Battle Ground, Wash. "Everybody's having fun. They're dressed up. Nobody fights. Just

ground, wash. Everybody's having fun. They're dressed up. Nobody fights. Just everybody gets along."

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This weekend Brown and her husband, who celebrated their wedding anniversary at Faerieworlds in 2009, are headed back with their 12-year-old granddaughter, who's looking forward to face painting, dancing and hanging out with other kids her age.

And, of course, the costumes. Whether you spell it fairy or faerie, the festival is open to all stripes, from steampunk to neo-pagan and everything in between.

"All we have is our own imagination," Brown says of her faerie belly dancer costume. "But there you have like 800 to 1,000 people's worth of imagination, magnified."

Gould estimates 80 percent of attendees make their own costumes, but don't expect "Star Trek" or other branded characters you might see at science fiction or fantasy conventions.

"People are creating really wonderful expressions of their personas or avatars or inner selves or magical selves," he says.

Faerieworlds

**When:**

2 p.m.-midnight Friday, 10 a.m.-1 a.m. Saturday, 10 a.m.-9:30 p.m. Sunday

**Where:**

Buford Park, Eugene

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**Cost:**

Weekend passes are \$60 for adults, \$30 for children ages 6-12, free for 5 and younger; daily passes are \$20 Friday (\$10 for children, \$24 Saturday (\$12 for children), \$20 Sunday (free for children)

**For more:**

Go to

[faerieworlds.com](http://faerieworlds.com)

"I'm dressed up in costume and going around telling people about my fate as a wizard who can only spook in speenerisms," says Gresham retiree Rick Wales, known around Faerieworlds as Gwydion the Wizard (for the uninformed, spoonerisms are a deliberate play on words in which vowels/consonants are switched, so Gwydion can only speak in spoonerisms). "You ever try to spast a kell in that condition? It doesn't work!"

Wales first came alone to Faerieworlds in 2006 but then connected with the Circle of Merry Folk on Tribe.net in preparation for the annual festival of faerie. When not strolling the festival grounds, Wales hangs out at the group's Comfy Kitchen inside the campground.

Faerieworlds typically fills area hotels, and Gould says requests for camping space is up 50 percent, even with tepees available to rent.

Organizers expect up to 5,000 costumed festival-goers each day, coming from across the country and Canada to shop vendors with names such as Anvils to Zippers, Mystical Mehndi, Oberon's Three-Penny Tavern, Om Baby World, Brute Force Leather and Ye Old Pickle Farie. And to enjoy local and international musical artists Stellamara, Gypsy Nomads, Faun, Tricky Pixie, Brother and Woodland, to name a few.

Drawing from author Brian Froud's

"Good Faeries Bad Faeries,"

the festival celebrates Good Faeries Day on Friday and Bad Faeries Day on Saturday.

"When people are involved in faerie, it's very traditional that there are light and dark, good and bad," Gould says.

Attendees dress up in "good" and "bad" costumes and even behave differently according to the day's theme.

"Bad doesn't mean evil at all. Bad faeries ... actually provoke and tease and prod you into making better decisions and being a better person, but they do it in an antagonistic way," Gould says. "The good ones are the ones you really have to watch out (for), because they're seldom as good as they think they are."



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**Kyle Wiltshire**

Faerieworlds promotes itself as a family-friendly

event.

In keeping with the event's celebration of nature, Gould says Faerieworlds is a "zero impact event," with sustainable fuel and on-site recycling.

"Last year was our first year at

Buford Park

, and to be able to walk on that field on Monday afternoon and see nothing was really great. Really, really great."

New to the event this year are daily parades, expanded campgrounds, a second performance stage and a games section and maze provided by

performance stage and a games section and maze provided by

[Shrewsbury Renaissance Faire](#)

"Coming to Faerieworlds is either a holiday or a pilgrimage," says Gould, who also organizes

[Faeriecon](#)

and Mythic Fair on the East Coast with fellow Faerieworlds producers Emilio Miller-Lopez and Kelly Miller-Lopez.

Gould hasn't seen a drop in ticket sales during the recession. He says in hard times, people like to be able to just let go and relax.

"Faerieworlds is an opportunity to do something real," he says. "This kind of communal celebration and bonding experience eases the heart and nourishes and inspires the soul in challenging times. You see that there are many -- all around you -- that love and celebrate the same things you do."

"For me it's like Christmas, New Year's and Thanksgiving all rolled up into one. Only better," Wales says. "This is the way to get totally outside the mundane world. You really do enter into another realm when you pass through that gate."

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[Jennifer Willis](#)

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