

Disney Fan Gathering: Something for Everyone

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Guest Contributor

What do you call hundreds of Disney fans all gathered in the same place to enjoy the magic together? MouseFest!

Of course it all started with a mouse, but this particular week long celebration, now an annual event, really grew out of the Internet and the many Disney web sites and message boards, such as <http://www.passporterboards.com>, where people can meet like-minded friends. In fact, it was PassPorter authors Dave and Jennifer Marx, along with AllEarsNet.com founder Deb Wills, who started the whole ball rolling, with the first official MouseFest in 2003.

Since then it's grown in size, as one quick look at the official website <http://www.mousefest.org> will show. Already this year, there are more than 1,600 names registered covering nearly every state in America and countries as diverse as the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Japan, Brazil and the Bahamas. Of those, more than 250 will be on the MouseFest four night cruise aboard the Disney Wonder from December 3 -- 7, while they and the rest will be enjoying the land based events at Walt Disney World from December 7 -- 11. So what can you expect from MouseFest?

We went for the first time last year, wondering exactly the same thing. Our participation was limited to the land based events, as our budget unfortunately couldn't stretch to include the cruise, no matter how hard I tried!

One thing we did learn is that you'll get so much more out of MouseFest if you've "met" some of those taking part online before you get there. The PassPorter message boards are a great place to do that as well as learn details of some of the meets being planned. It's so much easier to talk to people face to face if you already know something about them from the posts they've made on message boards. We found that many of the meets were like coming face to face with old friends, even though it was the first time we'd seen many of these people. It's certainly an odd feeling and not one that you can prepare for, but it's also a wonderful feeling! You instantly feel part of a very special community. So if you haven't done so already, log on to the PassPorter message boards and start getting to know those that you'll be meeting up with!

What is wonderful about MouseFest is that you discover you're not the

only one who loves Disney. There are literally hundreds of people who share your passion and exploring the parks with them gives you a new perspective on the Walt Disney World Resort.

One thing you mustn't miss if you're at MouseFest is the Mega Mouse Meet, which takes place on the Saturday of MouseFest at the Walt Disney World Dolphin Resort. It's the centerpiece event and is packed with Disney guidebook authors (including our own Jennifer and Dave Marx who will be autographing books), web site founders and representatives of various Disney communities. Before I attended this event, I really thought I was a Disney fan and knew about every source of information on the market about the place, but the Mega Mouse Meet proved me wrong. We found many new publications and web sites that we'd never come across before and were able to chat with lots of people and learned a great deal about our favorite happy place.

There really is something for everyone at MouseFest. On the cruise, which is the perfect place for a group get together, you can take a walking tour of Nassau, join the sail away party, enter the pirate costume competition or the sandcastle competition on Castaway Cay or just lounge around with Jennifer and Dave.

During the land portion of the event, each day is allocated a specific park, where most of the events will be taking place. Every year, you can hunt for Hidden Mickey's with Steve Barrett, author of the Hidden Mickey's book, which gives you a fascinating way to look at the parks, or see how many safari vehicles you can fill at Kilimanjaro Safaris with the AllEarsNet.com team.

This year, you can put faces to the names on your favorite podcasts, with live podcasts and recordings taking place. PassPorter authors Jennifer and Dave are hosting a number of meets, including the late parade at Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party on Thursday, December 7 and you can join them for a Noodle Nosh on Sunday, December 10 at noon at the Tomorrowland Terrace Noodle Station in the Magic Kingdom.

Something which may become a regular event in future years is the Ornament Exchange, being tried for the first time at Disney's Days of Christmas at Downtown Disney. You need to sign up in advance and you can find more details here.

As well as all the organized events, because there are so many Disney fans in the parks, it's also possible to arrange your own meets with people you know -- and this is where getting to know people beforehand is invaluable. Some of our fondest memories were the meets that were

.....

literally arranged on the day, with a quick phone call to ask if we wanted to come along with watch SpectroMagic with them that night or spotting friends in a park and seeing if they were free to join up with us for the next couple of hours.

Whatever you choose to do -- or not to -- in the MouseFest schedule, it's a wonderful opportunity to meet up with like-minded people and to put faces to the names that bring us all so much enjoyment all year round with their guidebooks, web sites and online communities. If you're thinking of attending your first MouseFest, my advice? Don't wait any longer -- make a booking and join in. You won't regret it. Perhaps we'll see you there in 2007?

And if you can't make it this year, there's no excuse not to get involved in the future. Dates are already available for 2007 -- 2010 -- and I thought I planned ahead!

December 2 -- 6, 2007 -- four night Wonder Cruise

December 6 -- 10, 2007 -- land events (December 8 -- MegaMouse Meet)

December 7 -- 11, 2008 -- four night Wonder Cruise

December 11 -- 15, 2008 -- land events (December 13 -- Mega Mouse Meet)

December 6 -- 10, 2009 -- four night Wonder Cruise

December 10 -- 14, 2009 -- land events (December 12 -- Mega Mouse Meet)

December 5 -- 9, 2010 -- four night Wonder Cruise

December 9 -- 13, 2010 -- land events (December 11 -- Mega Mouse Meet)

About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to travel, particularly to America. They are in the process of visiting every Disney theme park around the world, having already been to Disneyland Resort Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland and both American Disney resorts. They are now planning for their trip to Japan in the spring to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort. [Click here to view more of Cheryl's articles!](#)

Article last updated: 10/26/2006

.....

View the latest version online at:

<http://www.passporter.com/articles/mousefest-2006-a-disney-feature.html>

Copyright by Cheryl Pendry. All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. No part of this publication may be stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act. Resale of this guide is strictly prohibited without the copyright holder's permission. If you purchased this publication from someone other than PassPorter Travel Press, please call 877-929-3273.

View more PassPorter Articles online at <http://www.passporter.com/articles/>

PassPorter Deluxe: Cut, punch holes, and insert in binder.
PassPorter Spiral: Cut, print at dotted line, and insert in PassPorter.