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From the Con Chair

Welcome to ConGregate 8! This makes two years in a row that we’ve had a con... whooo hooo!

I also want to say thank you to everyone for coming. I know things are hard right now, what with the cost of gas, and other inflationary issues. It’s a challenge for all of us.

In addition to inflation, we’ve seen other issues pop up in the speculative fiction community, as well. You know that old expression, “when I was child, we had to walk to school, uphill, in the snow, both ways.” I sort of feel like that is what it’s like to try to navigate running a con these days.

Each year, we attempt to provide growth for the con. Not only physical growth, mind you, but attitudes as well. One thing that I can tell you for sure is that real change takes time. Policies enacted have to be well thought out, implemented in a deliberate way, and then given time to actually permeate the convention. Long lasting change does not happen just because I say so. It has to be accepted at all levels, and that’s where real change happens. Some years those improvements are nothing more than spelling out the policies we’re pretty much already using, and others it’s redefining our own mind-sets and updating things. It’s a journey, and a never ending journey at that.

As such, I want to address how we deal with conduct at our event. Many cons have a “zero tolerance” policy, and that’s fine, for them. We believe a little differently; that conduct issues should be handled in 3 phases... Investigation, Education, and then, Adjudication. People are human, mistakes happen, language changes, and folks sometimes don’t realize they’ve been hurtful. We want to give everyone a chance to learn and grow. It’s how society advances. And yeah, we’ve had to remove a few folks over the years... sadly, some folks are, simply put, just jerks, and no amount of education seems to help.

So, to the end, I ask that you bring any concerns you have to me, or Andrew Greeson, so we can try to find out what exactly happened, and then try to come up with a good way to handle things, for all parties involved.

Meanwhile... relax, and let’s have some fun!

-James Fulbright
President/Con Chair

COVID-19 Safety Rules

1. Proof of COVID-19 vaccination or a negative COVID test, taken no more than 5 days prior to the convention, is respectfully requested when picking up your badge for the convention. ConGregate does not collect, record, or store the individual’s status. We further request that individuals not disclose any medical history if proof of vaccination or COVID-19 test result is provided.

2. Try to maintain a safe distance from other people, whenever possible (please do not block walk spaces)

3. We are not requiring wearing masks, as there are currently no government regulations mandating masking indoors. Even so, with some of the indicators slowly rising in NC, we do highly recommend wearing a mask. We particularly encourage anyone who is at higher risk of severe illness to wear a mask at all times for their own protection.

4. Hand sanitizer will be available on the food and beverage tables in the ConSuite. We ask that you use it prior to picking up anything.

* Under the definition provided by law, ConGregate is considered to be a private event.

NOTE: COVID-19 is a fluid situation, the above rules could get amended after the printing of this book.
Convention Staff and Harassment Policy

Harassment Policy

We are endeavoring to make ConGregate a safe place for fans to gather. Even so, certain types of inappropriate, offensive or harassing behavior can be found at public places across the world. To the best of our ability, we want to prevent inappropriate conduct during the convention.

It is very important that if you are being harassed, or in any way feel endangered, that you report it immediately. For the convention to be able to address issues, it is important that we be made aware of any situation that might occur, with as many details as can be provided (names, badge numbers, descriptive information, etc.).

If you feel you have been harassed, please find the nearest convention volunteer and ask to be directed to the Convention Chairman or Vice Chair. During convention hours, you should be able to locate a staff member at the con registration table, the Info Booth in the Hearn Foyer, the Prefunction area, or at the Hanes Boardroom (see map on p. 20).

Additionally, if you see someone being harassed, we encourage you to speak up and say something. As a community, fandom needs to work together to make sure everyone is treated with respect.

Once a complaint of discriminatory harassment has been filed, an investigation will be conducted. The nature and extent of the investigation will depend upon the complaint. The convention will respect the wishes of the person reporting the harassment when deciding on further steps. A convention participant, who the con organizers believe has committed harassment, or who fails to cooperate with an investigation, may be sanctioned or asked to leave the convention without a refund at the discretion of the con organizers. Participants asked to stop any harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately.

Actions taken by the con staff are separate and distinct from any legal action and do not, in fact, preclude legal consequences from happening.

**Definition of Harassment** - to create an unpleasant or hostile situation, especially by uninvited and unwelcome verbal or physical conduct.

Types of harassment include but are not limited to: physical assault, battery, deliberate intimidation, stalking, following, harassing photography or recording, sustained disruption of talks or other events, inappropriate or unwelcome physical contact, unwelcome sexual attention, negative comments regarding gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, age, race, or religion.
Rules of the Convention

Convention Rules

1. When you are in the convention areas, you must wear your badge. Lost badges will only be replaced once. The basic gist here is: yes, you have to wear your stinking badges.

2. The staff of ConGregate reserves the right to toss anyone (members, guests, dealers, volunteers... anyone) out of the convention, without a refund, if they are behaving like a jerk. ConGregate’s management will be the sole arbiters of what constitutes “behaving like a jerk.” We follow Wheaton’s Law. Also, we believe in the concept of Investigate, Educate, and then Adjudicate.

3. Specific COVID-19 safety rules apply this year. Please see our policies on that topic on p. 1.

4. Please be aware that harassment falls under rule number two (2) above. Keep in mind that the determination of what is harassing behavior is typically defined by the victim. We will only consider intent when determining the fate of anyone we feel is guilty of harassing their fellow con-goers. Please see our full harassment policy on p. 2.

5. ConGregate requires that you provide your real name when you register for the convention. An alias can be used on your badge, but our database must have your real name associated with it. Anyone who provides false information to the convention may be asked to leave the con, without a refund.

6. Mother always said, “Don’t run in the house!” The same applies to the con site.

7. Do not tear up the hotel! We like it here and want to come back at some point. If you have a lapse in judgment, and we catch you wrecking the hotel... well... go back and read rule number 2.

8. You may only hang signs on the walls of the hotel (this includes the elevators) with the hotel’s permission. Special materials, and possibly labor, will need to be provided by the hotel. Fees for those services will apply.

9. Bladed weapons must be sheathed and peace-bonded at all times. All other actual weapons are prohibited in the con space (Ballrooms, Prefunction Space, and Con Suite). Blasters and fake weapons are permitted if you swing by the reg desk first and allow us to “peace-bond” it.

10. The staff of ConGregate cannot permit unauthorized vendors to sell anything at the convention. For our convention, “authorized” equals anyone with a valid contract for the Dealer Room and Hallway Spaces, or anyone with scheduled time at the signings table in the dealer room. The signings table is typically limited to books and autographs.

11. Please switch your cell phones, and other electronic devices, to silent ring while you are in the programming rooms. If you do receive a call, we ask that you leave the room before you answer your phone.

12. Please be aware of, and courteous to, your fellow conventioneers as you navigate the walk spaces in the convention. In particular, try not to block the aisles in the dealer room, the panel rooms, or the pre-function areas. As some of our fellow con-goers need assistance with mobility, it’s important to not block the path of others.

13. The hotel has requested that no “outside” alcohol be brought into the con areas. We encourage you to patronize the hotel bar, visit a nearby pub or brewery, or to drink in your private hotel rooms & suites.

14. ConGregate is not responsible for items lost during the convention. As each of us has lost stuff from time to time, we can sympathize with you. We’ll even try to help you find said items. We cannot, however, afford to replace them. Sorry.

15. While the convention organizers encourage members to bring their children to ConGregate, we ask that parents take an active role in monitoring the events in which their children participate. Some events (and most parties) may not be suitable for all ages. Also, please be aware that ConGregate is not a daycare service. Children left unattended may be remanded to the care of Child Protective Services.

16. ConGregate is offering a “Kids Track,” during specific times during the convention. There will be activities specifically designed for children. Feel free to take your children there if they need a break from the con. Please be aware, however, that this area is not designed as daycare.

17. No smoking (or vaping) inside the hotel. Smoking areas are available outside of the hotel.

18. We believe in the “no costume is no costume” rule. Naked people are not quite appropriate for ConGregate’s common areas.

19. There are specific rules regarding photography. You can find them on p. 4.

20. Since discussions of a political nature have a tendency to become incendiary, we ask that you limit those to your private hotel rooms or outside of the hotel. While members of our staff support many worthy causes, we ask that you not turn our convention into a battleground.

21. No rule listed here supersedes local law, state law, federal law or hotel policy. You still have to obey those strictures.

22. People sometimes ask us if we can pass along a copy of their book, manuscript, etc. to an author or editor. Generally speaking the answer is “no,” because most of our guests are, for professional reasons, not willing to accept unsolicited works.

24. And, finally, our most important rule during the convention is: HAVE FUN!
Statement on Inclusion
At ConGregate, we pride ourselves in trying to provide an inclusive environment, and are proud to support all fans regardless of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, physical appearance, body size, age, race, color, religion or national origin.

Privacy Policy
ConGregate does not sell, or otherwise distribute, any contact information collected in any way, without first seeking the approval of each individual. Congregate will only use collected contact information to contact specific individuals about relevant convention business.

Photography Policy
1. While photography and videography are generally allowed in all convention spaces and the hotel lobby, photography, flash photography, or videography may be prohibited at certain events or in specific areas. These will be identified by announcements, during the event. Violating the photography & videography rules can result in your removal from the area or event.
2. Photographers and videographers may not block walkways or emergency exits with their equipment. Backdrops may not be put up in any convention space without the permission of the convention.
3. You must ask for permission before you take a person’s picture or record them, and take the answer “no” with good grace.

Voice Recording
Some of our panelists may decide to record their panels for later personal use. The following rules apply:
1. All panelist must agree to be recorded
2. No recording may posted on the internet or broadcast in any way without written permission of ConGregate’s senior management.
3. A sign must be placed on the panelist table, in the front of the panel room, prior to beginning any kind of recording.

Statement on Community Health
At ConGregate, we take the health of the members of our community very seriously. While we can’t force you to follow the 6-2-1 rule (get at least 6 hours of sleep, eat 2 meals, and take 1 shower each day), we do recommend it.

We can also offer other ways to help:
1. We have, since our very first year, offered individually packaged drinks and snacks in the ConSuite.
2. We are suggesting that folks find creative ways to greet each other, that maybe doesn’t involve shaking hands with half of the con attendees.
3. Cleaning your hands is never a bad idea.
4. We’d like to remind you that we have specific rules concerning COVID-19 - see p. 1.

ConSuite
Room 411
We will be serving individually packaged snacks and beverages in our ConSuite. Hand sanitizer will be available in the suite, we kindly request that you use it before serving yourself any refreshments.
(We will be closed, briefly, a few times each day to clean the space)
Hawaiian Shirt Memorial

Each year, ConGregate remembers contributors that we have lost from the science fiction and fantasy world. The tradition began in memory of Aaron Allston, who was well known for his love of Hawaiian shirts.

This year we are including those individuals who have passed since our 2021 convention. We encourage everyone to wear a Hawaiian shirt on Friday, July 22 in honor of:

- Paul Alexander, artist
- Stephen Hickman, artist
- William F. Nolan, author/editor
- Joe McKinney, author/editor
- J. W. Rinzler, editor/writer
- Patricia Kennealy-Morrison, author
- Elizabeth Anne Hull, author/editor
- C. Dean Andersson, author
- Norm MacDonald, actor
- Lou Antonelli, author
- Gary Paulsen, author
- Jack Angel, actor
- Dean Stockwell, actor
- Robert Thurston, author
- Ed Asner, actor
- Jeremy G. Byrne, editor/publisher
- Diana G. Gallagher, writer/artist
- Anne Rice, writer
- Chris Achilleos, artist
- John Jos. Miller, author
- Dave Wolverton, author
- Rick Cook, author
- J. Brian Clarke, author
- Ron Goulart, author
- Gaspard Ulliel, actor
- Meat Loaf, singer/actor
- Tom Dupree, author/editor
- Andy Remic, author
- William Hurt, actor
- Jeff Smith, fan/visionary
- Moses J. Moseley, actor
- Estelle Harris, actor
- Shirley Hughes, writer/illustrator
- Bill Johnson, author
- Sergey Dyachenko, author
- Gilbert Gottfried, actor
- Patricia A. McKillip, author
- Robert C. Cornett, author
- Liz Sheridan, actor
- Fred Ward, actor
- Ray Liotta, actor
- Wayne McCalla, fan
- Ken Kelly, artist
- Eddie Paskey, actor
- Betty White, actor

ConGregate dedicates this year’s convention to the memory of Jeff Smith.

Jeff Smith
1965 - 2022

Jeff was a fan, con-runner, and most importantly, a visionary. It was Jeff who had the courage to move StellarCon off of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro’s campus, when no one involved had any experience in running a small, regional con at a hotel. Without this move, it is unlikely that ConGregate would ever have existed. Jeff took the lead, the rest of us just followed... and learned.
Timothy Zahn
Writer Guest of Honor

Timothy Zahn was born in Chicago in 1951 and grew up in the western suburb of Lombard. He attended Michigan State University, earning a B.S. degree in physics in 1973, and moved on to the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana. He earned a M.S. degree there, also in physics, in 1975, and continued work toward a doctorate. Also in 1975, he began a new hobby: writing science fiction. At first a strictly spare-time avocation, over the next three years he gradually gave more time to it until he sold his first story in December 1978 (“Ernie,” Analog, September 1979). In 1980 he left grad school and began writing full time.

Since then, he has published sixty novels, over a hundred short stories and novelettes, and five collections of short fiction. Best known for his fifteen Star Wars novels, he is also the author of the Quadrail series, the Cobra series, the Conquerors trilogy, the Sibyl's War trilogy, and the young-adult Dragonback series. His latest books are Star Wars: Thrawn Ascendancy Book 1: Chaos Rising; Star Wars: Thrawn Ascendancy Book 2: Greater Good; Queen: Sibyl's War Book 3, Star Wars: Thrawn Ascendancy Book 3: Lesser Evil; A Call to Vengeance and A Call to Insurrection in the Manticore Ascendant series with David Weber and Thomas Pope; and The Icarus Plot.

Valentine Wolfe
Music Guests of Honor

Sarah Black: Vocals and Keyboards, Sound Design
Braxton Ballew: 5 String Double Bass, Sound Design

“...an eerie, pitch-black hybrid of gothic rock, heavy metal and classical music” - Vincent Harris, Greenville Journal

A Symphony of Darkness, Valentine Wolfe performs gothic metal inspired by seances, 19th century gothic literature, and classical music. Combining the haunting soprano of Sarah Black and the bleak maelstrom of Braxton Ballew’s solo double bass, they refuse to follow any muse except their own.

In addition to their gothic metal offerings, their insatiable musical curiosity has afforded them multiple opportunities to bring their signature sound to theatre productions; composing and performing the scores for Shakespeare’s The Merchant of Venice, The Tempest (Warehouse Theater), The Winter’s Tale (Furman University), Twelfth Night (The Distracted Globe), and the voice of The Angel in Warehouse Theater’s production of Angels in America. Most recently, they have been creating live scores to silent horror classics, most notably Nosferatu and The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari.

Their most recent release is 2020’s Only Gossamer My Gown, a celebration of the macabre works of Emily Dickinson. Supported by grants from Greenville SC’s Metropolitan Arts Council and South Carolina Humanities, Only Gossamer My Gown continues Valentine Wolfe’s tradition of creating works equally suitable for metal concerts and libraries, joining 2018’s The Haunting of Mary Shelley and 2017’s death positive, grief-inspired The Elegiac Repose.
Guests of the Convention

Jim Beall
Jim Beall (BS-Math, MBA, PE) has been a nuclear engineer for almost 50 years, beginning as a nuclear engineering officer in the US Navy. Civilian experience includes design, construction, inspection, enforcement, and assessment with a nuclear utility, an architect engineering firm, and the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (USNRC). Assignments included on-site health physics support, piping design stress analyses, reactor licensing, reactor startup testing (Canadian Point Lepreau heavy water reactor), research reactor inspections, and an enforcement program assist mission to the State Nuclear Regulatory Inspectorate of Ukraine in Kiev. USNRC positions included reactor site construction senior resident inspector (SRI), reactor operations SRI, inspection team leader, safety analyst, senior enforcement specialist, and reactor policy assistant to three different Presidential-appointed USNRC Commissioners while earning the agency’s Meritorious and Distinguished Service awards.

Duties of those policy-level posts included substantial research into alternative and speculative energy sources, as well as energy forecasts and transmission technologies. Some of those other sources were coal, oil, hydro, geothermal, tidal, solar, wind, fracking, space-based, heavy water reactors, breeder reactors, fusion, and even anti-matter.

Coauthor of Journal of the British Interplanetary Society (JBIS) paper, “Ecological Engineering Considerations for ISU’s Worldship Project.” Baen Books (baen.com) has published several of his non-fiction articles on a variety of subjects, including:

- “Our Worldship Broke!”
- “Case Studies in Handwavium”
- “From Corvus to Keyhole -- Shipyards: Past, Present, and Science Fiction”
- “Radium Girls of Science and Science Fiction”
- “Grid Wars: Innovation, Feuds, Rivalry, and Revenge in the Never-ending Battle to Electrify America and the Planet”
- “Atomic Follies”
- “Warships of Sea and Space – Part 1”
- “Warships of Sea and Space – Part 2”
- “Recycling: From Stars to Starships”

White Plectrum/Keith Brinegar
In all the years I’ve been performing as White Plectrum, one thing has remained constant: the support of all those who have listened, sung along, and helped spread the music. I couldn’t continue to do this without your support. When White Plectrum began, I had no idea it would go this long. Bill and I wrote and performed songs together, then began to perform songs others – James, Erik, Raymond - had helped us write or had written for us. The first WP songbook, *Filks For Our Times*, was done by Bill on his computer. We made cassettes and sold them at the conventions to the few who requested them. It was pizza and gas money, but to us, it was a labor of love. We both loved doing the music and doing the shows. Bill got married and moved to South Carolina. When he moved, I asked if he was ok with me keeping the name we’d come up with together. His one caveat was “don’t embarrass me”. I hope I’ve done you proud, old friend. I’d really love to do one more show with you. Maybe someday ...

I moved to Roanoke. That’s where my solo “career” as White Plectrum began. I started working with new people – Jerry, Michael, Rhaps, Shrewlet, and whoever else showed up - writing and coming up with new ideas. We’d all get together at my place for pizza, or to just to hang out. Sooner or later, someone would toss out an idea, the guitar would come out, and a new filk would be born. Other times, it would be just myself and Jerry; I’d throw and idea I had been struggling with in his direction, only to hear him respond “damn you, go make tea”. When I’d return, the song would be fleshed out and ready to go. (Then there was Iron Filk. I’m still hoping someone will find a copy of that again, just so I can see it one more time.) There were the filk-writing workshops at conventions, better known as “Filking 101”. The Filk Collectives arising from those at YeagerCon, Rising Star, Technicon, Patriot Games, and other cons produced songs that became favorites. There were even late night sessions at Technicon. Filking 401, we’d call them, when we would take over a corner of the hotel bar at the end of the evening, just to relax and unwind. Just like hanging out at my place, though, the ideas would start to flow, and another filk (or two) would be born. I can still recall the filk circle at Marscon, when someone dared Michael O’Brien to come up with something new on the spot. He accepted the challenge, opened a 60s songbook someone had with them, and by the time the circle came back around to us, “Red Pill” had been written and was performed.

Nowadays, Michael Kazalski, formerly of Coyote Run, has joined me on the bass. Michael loves the music just as much as I do. He’s even co-written a new filk to a song that has been haunting me for a filk for the last several years. He even did it on his way home from Marscon in about 30 minutes. (Bill and I had tried to work that one out for a long time, but just couldn’t get it right.) It has been performed live only once, but I guarantee it will be done again. To find out which one, you’ll just have to come to the show. Either way, Michael adds something to the show that has been missing for a long time. We’ve clicked, just like Bill and I did. I’m thankful he’s joined me on stage whenever he can. I’ve still got a great crew, although the names and faces have changed. Andy, Jen, Heather, John and Athena – you guys rock! I couldn’t do it without you. Come out and give a listen. I may even have music to sell, if you want. Either way, I hope you enjoy the show. I promise I’ll do my best. Who knows, I might even get you to sing along!
Guests of the Convention

Fredrick Corry
Fredrick Corry is a modern day jack of all trades, dabbling in various crafting styles, as well as mediums. He first became interested in crafting in high school when crafted his first prop, Geordi’s VISOR from Star Trek. For over 30 years he has been designing clothing, props, and armor, materializing his creations into reality.

Carol Cowles
Carol has long been a fixture of Geek Culture in Charlotte. She has served for several years as the Programming Director for ConCarolinas and worked the Carolina and Arizona Renaissance Festivals for 15 years. She also podcasts – she is The Cinemistress on Geek Radio Daily, Carol the Cat on Guardians of the Geekery and one half of Refried Scenes on The Poprika Network. She is also on Terrible Movies with Wonderful People - a Sunday night Twitch watch party hosted by O_Hai_Mark. When she is not podcasting – she is reading, writing or crafting. If you have trouble locating her, check your local cineplex, as movie theatres are her second home. Her fandoms include all things Tolkien, Marvel, Star Wars, Star Trek, Horror and lots and lots of tea.


Patrick Dugan
Patrick is the author of the award-winning Darkest Storm Series published by Falstaff Books. Other titles include Fate & Flux: A Steampunk Adventure and Watchers of Astaria series from Distracted Dragon Press. Additional publications include Fairy Films: Wee Folk on the Big Screen, a collection of fairy essays from August Night Press.

An avid gadget user, Patrick is also the Director of Technology Services for Author’s Essentials LLC providing solutions and advice for writing professionals. Patrick writings delve into software, hardware, social media, and all things web-related. The primary focus of Author’s Essentials is how and when to employ technology to enhance your writing process.

Patrick resides in Charlotte, NC with his wife and two children. In his spare time, he’s a PC gamer, homebrewer, 3D printer enthusiast, and DIYer. You can usually find him in the Hearthstone Tavern or wandering Azeroth as a Blood Elf Warlock in the evenings.

He is represented by Andy Zack of The Zack Company.

The Nefarious Ferrets
The Nefarious Ferrets are Frank and Donna Parker of NC. Meeting each other in 2006, at ConCarolinas, they realized they had many things in common: science fiction, a love of music and ferrets. A match made in fandom, they married at ConCarolinas 2007.

AtomaCon 2017, they “adopted” bass player D.J. McGuire from VA – “The second-best bass player in my own damn band,” The Dimensional Riffs. He makes a fantastic addition to the group.

Performing as the Nefarious Ferrets since 2009, they have performed at the Geek Gala, ConCarolinas Filk Circles, and the Georgia Filk Convention (GaFilk 2X10s). They were the 2017 Filk Guests at AtomaCon in Charleston, SC and returning performers at RavenCon 2009 and 2019, ConCarolinas 2018, and were excited to have had the opportunity to participate in the 2019 ConGregate cantina. As well as participating in house filks throughout the Carolinas.

Richard Fife
Richard Fife lives in a house by the sea. Well, not by the sea, but near it. Like, a short drive. He hasn’t visited said sea in years, and should probably live in the mountains instead. He enjoys malty Scotch, open world RPGs, and devouring the patriarchy. He always wanted an airship of his own, but knows he can’t afford it. He was offered one on timeshare once, that just sounds like a pyramid scheme. He’d totally go halfsies with someone, though.

He is the author of Conflict Born, a gaslamp fantasy from Falstaff Books. Zero-g sky pirates, daring adventure, a dash of romance, and looming conspiracies, oh my!

Jason Gilbert
Jason is the author of The Clockworks of War series, The Rifle Chronicles, and urban fantasy series The Coldstone Files. His stories are Alternate History with an Urban Fantasy and Horror element set in worlds of the supernatural!

L.R. Gould
L.R. Gould is a transgender science fiction and urban fantasy author published by Falstaff Books.

She spent a childhood escaping from the family dairy farm by traveling the stars and battling the monsters of her imagination. Adventures, however, rarely go as planned and L.R. Gould’s did not lead her to the stars, but to a twenty-year career designing building mechanical systems where she focuses on accessibility for the differently abled, green construction, energy efficiency, and improving the indoor environment.

While L.R. Gould’s career may not be battling monsters or soaring through the stars, she has never stopped imagining the possibilities. Look for the first book in her new sci-fi series, Prodigal Brother coming soon from Falstaff Books.
Jason Graves
Jason is the publisher and chief editor at Prospective Press, a traditional publisher of genre fiction and select non-fiction titles, currently with over forty books and anthologies in print and over one hundred authors represented. He is an illustrator and the author of five novels—including *Gretchen Thyrd: On the Bridge* (Book One of the Chronicles of Thyrd), the Noctivaga Chronicles (currently being revised), and *The Alewife: Curse of Obsession*, forthcoming from Falstaff Books—along with several published short stories. He was once punched—lightly—by Muhammad Ali.

John Grigni
John Grigni earned a degree as an industrial designer in 1988, but has spent a lot of the time since then doing anything else. He has contributed artwork to several independent comics and numerous roleplaying games, both in natural and computer media. He has been running his own design firm for over twenty years doing graphic design, tradeshow design, product and package design, and several other adjectives paired with design. A few years ago he branched out into animation and interactive 3D web pages.

He is currently working at a regular job, getting insurance, benefits, and paid-time-off for the first time in a long long time.

Amy Griswold
Amy Griswold is the co-author (with Jo Graham) of the interactive novels *The Eagle’s Heir*, *Stronghold: A Hero’s Fate*, and *The Play’s the Thing*, published by Choice of Games, and is the solo author of the upcoming interactive novel *Stronghold: Caverns of Sorcery*. She is also the co-author (with Melissa Scott) of the gay fantasy/mystery novels *Death by Silver* and *A Death at the Dionysus Club*. Her short fiction has been published in markets including *F&SF* and *Fireside Magazine*, and her story “Custom Options Available” was featured on the 2020 Otherwise Awards Honors List. She can be found online at @amygris and amygriswold.wordpress.com.

Dr. Robert E. Hampson
Internationally recognized physiologist and neuroscientist, Dr. Robert E. Hampson, leads the multi-university team that was first to demonstrate restoration of human memory using the brain’s own information codes. His forty-year scientific career has ranged from studying the effects of commonly abused drugs on memory, to the effects of space radiation on the brain. He is a popular speaker and advisor on memory and the brain, having been interviewed by BBC, CNN, NPR, BYU Radio, Washington Post, Financial Times and the Wall Street Journal.

Dr. Hampson is lead scientist for Braingrade, Inc. a company working to transform those findings into a medical device to restore human memory function damaged by injury or disease. He is also a professor of physiology/pharmacology and neurology at Wake Forest School of Medicine where he teaches regularly in the neuroscience and biomedical graduate curriculum. He developed and teaches a course on Communicating Science, in which young scientists practice writing for, and speaking to, the general public. His research has been funded by NIH, NSF, DARPA, Office of Naval Research, Air Force Office of Scientific Research, Army Research Office, and private foundations. He has reviewed for more than two dozen scientific journals, NIH, NASA, DARPA and is an associate editor for the Journal of Neuroscience Methods.

Known in nonscience circles as Dr. Rob, he is a Hugo-nominated science writer with more than thirty essays, interviews, and talks on science for general audiences. As a Science Fiction author, he has published more than 25 short stories, co-edited two anthologies that combined hard science and science fiction, co-authored two novels, with two additional co-authored novels due out this year and a solo novel due out next year. With a combination of science and science fiction credentials, he has been a consultant to TV and game producers, defense contractors, and more than dozen science fiction authors.

He is a well-regarded speaker and panelist at multiple science fiction and media conventions, including LibertyCon and DragonCon. He is a member of SIGMA – the Science Fiction Think Tank and the Science and Entertainment Exchange (a service of the National Academy of Sciences). His website is http://REHampson.com.

Dave Harlequin
Described by both press and colleagues as an “independent renaissance man” and “voice of the underground,” Dave Harlequin is a professional screenwriter, journalist, producer, and independent filmmaker from Charlotte, North Carolina. He is the Creative Director of North Carolina based studio A Stranger Concept Films, and is the Festival Director of the annual Stranger Days Independent Film Festival. He has written and produced over a dozen films, and has won over 50 awards at various film festivals and conventions around the world.

In addition to his film work, Harlequin is the Editor in Chief of Nerd Nation Magazine, has over a dozen published short stories, dozens more non-fiction published credits, and has been nominated for two Rondo Hatton Awards for his journalistic contributions. Outside of his career in entertainment, Harlequin is an avid cinema and ice hockey fan, and enjoys cooking, coffee, gaming, and hanging out with his dog.
John G. Hartness
John G. Hartness is a teller of tales, a righter of wrong, defender of ladies’ virtues, and some people call him Maurice, for he speaks of the pompatus of love. He is also the award-winning author of the urban fantasy series The Black Knight Chronicles, the Bubba the Monster Hunter comedic horror series, the Quincy Harker, Demon Hunter dark fantasy series, and many other projects. He is also a cast member of the role-playing podcast Authors & Dragons, where a group of comedy, fantasy, and horror writers play Dungeons & Dragons. Very poorly.

In 2016, John teamed up with several other publishing industry professionals to create Falstaff Books, a small press dedicated to publishing the best of genre fiction’s “misfit toys.” Falstaff Books has since published over 250 titles with authors ranging from first-timers to NY Times bestsellers, with no signs of slowing down any time soon.

In his copious free time John enjoys long walks on the beach, rescuing kittens from trees and playing Magic: the Gathering. John’s pronouns are he/him.

Randall Hayes
Randall Hayes, PhD, “your friendly neighborhood neuroscientist,” has degrees from the University of Kentucky and the University of Rochester in New York. He has published articles in technical journals as well as mainstream and SF magazines, as well as a few short stories. His free online newsletter is called Doctor Eclectic, available at https://randallhayes.substack.com.

Tom Hutchens
Tom is the original Mandalorian armorsmith; a Davie County native, Tom founded the Mando Mercs Costume Club (Mandalorian Mercs) in 2007 as a home for people who wanted to build Mandalorian costumes without looking exactly like Boba or Jango Fett. Over the past 15 years the Mandalorian Mercs has become the third largest international Star Wars costume organization, and helped inspire the creation of The Mandalorian streaming series that have catapulted the Mandalorian characters and culture into becoming household names. Working out of his armory near Mocksville, NC, Tom has been forging sets of steel Mandalorian armor for over 15 years as well as consulted on various Star Wars Legends books.

Stuart Jaffe
Stuart Jaffe is the madman behind the Nathan K thrillers, The Max Porter Paranormal Mysteries, the Parallel Society novels, The Nightingale Mysteries, The Malja Chronicles, The Bluesman, Founders, Real Magic, and much more. He trained in martial arts for over a decade until a knee injury ended that practice. Now, he plays lead guitar in a local blues band, The Bootleggers, and enjoys life on a small farm in rural North Carolina. For those who continue to keep count, the animal list is as follows: one dog, two cats, two aquatic turtles, and numerous chickens. As best as he’s been able to manage, Stuart has made sure that the chickens do not live in the house.

Christopher Jones
Christopher Jones has been involved with the independent film community in North Carolina for many years, and has worked with some noteworthy personalities in the local scene including Jaysen Butler, Josh Mabe, and Sammie Cassell. He has been on both sides of the camera as an actor, director, writer, and producer. Christopher’s credits include Between Hell and a Hard Place, Dark Trepidation 2, Dark Trepidation 3, and Silent Breath. He and his partner, Jason Bigart, are currently developing an original horror-comedy series for television, The Hicksorists.

Darin Kennedy
Darin Kennedy, born and raised in Winston-Salem, NC, is a graduate of Wake Forest University and Bowman Gray School of Medicine. After completing family medicine residency in the mountains of Virginia, he served eight years as a United States Army physician and wrote his first novel in the sands of northern Iraq.

His first published novel, The Mussorgsky Riddle, was born from a fusion of two of his lifelong loves: classical music and world mythology. The Stravinsky Intrigue continues those same themes, and his Fugue & Fable series culminates in The Tchaikovsky Finale. His The Pawn Stratagem contemporary fantasy series, Pawn’s Gambit, Queen’s Peril, and King’s Crisis combines contemporary fantasy, superheroics, and the ancient game of chess. His first YA novel is Carol, a modern-day retelling of A Christmas Carol billed as Scrooge meets Mean Girls. His short stories can be found in numerous anthologies and magazines, and the best, particularly those about a certain Necromancer for Hire, are collected for your reading pleasure under Darin’s imprint, 64Square Publishing.

Doctor-by-day and novelist-by-night, he writes and practices medicine in Charlotte, NC. When not engaged in either of the above activities, he has been known to strum the guitar, enjoy a bite of sushi, and rumor has it he even sleeps on occasion. Find him online at darinkennedy.com.

Nicole Givens Kurtz
Nicole Givens Kurtz is an author and publisher of Mocha Memoirs Press. She’s the recipient of the Ladies of Horror Grant (2021), the Horror Writers Association’s Diversity Grant (2020) and the Atomacon Palmetto Scribe Award-Best Short Story 2021. Nicole has been named as one of Book Riot’s 6 Best Black Indie SFF Writers. She’s also the editor of the groundbreaking anthology, SLAY: Stories of the Vampire Noire. Her novels have been a finalist in the Dream Realm Awards, Fresh Voices, and EPPIE Awards for science fiction. She’s written for White Wolf, Bram Stoker Finalist in Horror Anthology, Sycorax’s Daughters, and The Realm’s The
AtomaCon
May 5-7, 2023
Guest of Honors

Greg Keyes
Author https://www.jgregorykeyes.com/

Amy Ratcliffe
Author, Managing Editor at The Nerdist https://www.amyratcliffe.com/

**Costume Contest**  **Charity Auction**  **Concerts**
**Make and Takes**  **Vendor’s Room**  **Short Film Festival**
100 hours of Literary, Fan, Film & Paranormal Discussion Panels

Short Film Festival
https://filmfreeway.com/AtomaCon
atomacon.org  @atomacon
**Guests of the Convention**

**Cheralyn Lambeth**

Cheralyn Lambeth is a professional costume, prop, and puppet builder whose work includes feature films (*The Muppet Christmas Carol*, *The Patriot*, *Evan Almighty*, *The Hunger Games*), television shows (*Dinosaurs!, Homeland, Outcast*), and live/interactive properties (*Avenue Q*, *Star Trek: The Experience*). She is also a published author, with several books currently on the market (*Haunted Theaters of the Carolinas, Introduction to Puppetry Arts, “Twas Halloween Evening: A Tale of the Zombie Apocalypse*); her current book titled *Art in the Time of Corona* is scheduled for publication in 2022 by Prospective Press.

On the fan side of things, Cher is proud to be a long-time charter member of the 501st, celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, and a founding member of the 501st Carolina Garrison, marking its 20th anniversary. She is also founder/team captain of the Southern Belle Ghostbusters, and a true paranormal investigator as a member of the Charlotte Area Paranormal Society.

Cher’s most recent work includes a co-starring role as Elsa Einstein on *The Vampire Diaries* spinoff show *Legacies*, as well as ongoing work on Charlotte area sports mascots such as Sir Purr of the Carolina Panthers. To learn more about Cher and her work follow her on Facebook (Cheralyn Lambeth), Twitter, and Instagram (@cherlambeth).

**Emily Lavin Leverett**

Emily Lavin Leverett is an author, editor, and scholar. She is the author of the paranormal romance series *The Wolf and the Nun* based on the life and stories of 12th century abbess Marie de France: *The Wolf and the Cloister*, *The Enchanted Rose*, and *The Song of the Black Wolf* are out now; *An Honorable Love* will be out in late 2022. She is the co-author of the contemporary fantasy series *The Eisteddfod Chronicles: Changeling’s Fall, Winter’s Heir, and Traitor’s Spring*, are out now. *Summer’s Regent* and *A Queen for all Seasons* will be out in late 2022 and 2023. She is the co-editor of several volumes of short stories including the kickstarted volumes *Predators in Petticoats*, *Lawless Lands: Tales from the Weird Frontier*, and *The Weird Wild West*; she also co-edited *The Big Bad Volumes I and II*. She has published multiple short stories as well. As a medievalist, she has published articles on medieval romance, medievalism and Terry Pratchett, and Shakespeare in Neil Gaiman’s *Sandman*. She is the co-editor of the scholarly collection *Terry Pratchett’s Ethical Worlds*. She is working on an article about the intersection of her fiction writing in *The Wolf* and the Nun and her studies as a medieval scholar and academic. She has appeared at several SFF conventions in recent years including ConCarolinas, JordanCon, Multiverse Con, MarsCon, RavenCon, and Congregate. She lives in North Carolina with her spouse and three cats where they are all avid Carolina Hurricanes hockey fans.

**Gail Z. Martin**

Gail Z. Martin writes epic fantasy, urban fantasy & more for Solaris Books, Orbit Books, and Falstaff Books. Series include Darkhurst, Assassins of Landria, the Chronicles Of The Necromancer, the Fallen Kings Cycle, the Ascendant Kingdoms, Deadly Curiosities & the Night Vigil. The Spells Salt and Steel, Joe Mack Adventures & Wasteland Marshals series & Iron & Blood are co-authored with Larry N. Martin. She also writes urban fantasy MM paranormal romance as Morgan Brice, including the Witchbane, Badlands, Treasure Trail, Fox Hollow and Kings of the Mountains series.

**Larry N. Martin**

Larry N. Martin writes and co-authors science fiction, steampunk, and urban fantasy for Solaris Books, Falstaff Books and SOL Publishing. His newest book is *The Splintered Crown*, a portal gaming fantasy. He also is the author of *Salvage Rat*, the first in a new space opera series.


You can learn more about Larry at LarryNMartin.com, join Gail and Larry's Facebook street team The Shadow Alliance, or sign up for their newsletter at http://eepurl.com/dd5XLj.

**Misty Massey**

Misty Massey is the author of *Mad Kestrel*, a rollicking adventure of magic on the high seas, and the long-awaited sequel, *Kestrel’s Dance*. She is an acquisitions editor for LoreSeekers Press, and is currently accepting submissions. When she’s not writing, Misty plays Malibu, the cheerful, sun-drenched cleric, on the *Authors&Dragons* podcast sister show, *Calamity James*. She’s a sucker for ginger snaps, African coffee, and the darkest rum she can find. You can keep up with Misty at mistymassey.com, and on Facebook and Twitter.

**Jennifer McCollom**

As a professional make-up artist, Jennifer McCollom has worked on feature films, television shows, plays, and numerous commercials. Her film credits include *The Hunger Games*, *The Black Phone*, *The Conjuring*, *The Box*, *The Righteous Gemstones*, *The Eyes of Tammy Faye*, *Leatherheads*, *Talladega Nights*, *Taking Liberty*, the Oscar nominated *June Bug*, *MAX, The Disappointment Room*, *Masterminds*, *The Reliant* and the upcoming *Spirit*. Her TV work includes *Army Wives*, the Emmy Award-winning HBO miniseries *John Adams, Homeland* for
Showtime, Spike TV’s *Bar Rescue*, CBS’s *Reckless*, as well as Cinemax’s *Banshee*. She has also lent her experience to several independent films including cult favorites *Dead Inn* and *Last Lives*, as well as *A Long Way Off*, *Tarnished Notes*, and *Unbridled*.

When not on set, Jennifer teaches Film and Special Effects at local community colleges, as well as creating unique special effects pieces and costumes for fandom, including *Doctor Who*, *Star Trek* and Steampunk.

Jennifer was born in Wilmington, NC; and lived in Pennsylvania and Florida before settling down in Randleman, NC with her husband and cats. She holds a BA in Theatre and Physics from UNCG, is a licensed cosmetologist and I.A.T.S.E. Local 798 Journeyman.

She believes you should never stop learning!

**D. J. McGuire**

A Jersey bass player who fell for a Virginia author, DJ has been a cost estimator and project manager for various federal government contractors for over 20 years. When he’s not singing or playing bass with his friends in Nefarious Ferrets and Dimensional Riffs, DJ also teaches economics at his local community college. His solo albums are available at djmcguire.bandcamp.com

**Ora McGuire**

Ora McGuire writes under the pseudonym Nickie Jamison. She is a writer of LGBTQ+ erotica and romance blended with sci-fi, fantasy, and horror. Her short stories have been featured in two charity anthologies edited by the late Lynn Townsend. Ora’s hobbies include, fan-girling about all things MCU and Sherlock, talking about Bruno, and obsessively playing Animal Crossing: New Horizons. She lives in Hampton Roads Virginia with her husband and two spoiled furbabies; #thecatwecalljayne and #KAYLEESmallFRYE. You can find her on all the social medias; @oopswrongcookie.

**Violette Meier**

Violette Meier is a happily married mother, writer, folk artist, poet, and native of Atlanta, Georgia, who earned her B.A. in English at Clark Atlanta University and a MDiv at the Interdenominational Theological Center. She is also a certified herbalist, a life coach, and an educator.

The great-granddaughter of a dream interpreter, Violette is a lover of all things supernatural and loves to write paranormal, fantasy, and horror. She is always working on something new.

Her books include: *Out of Night*, *Angel Crush*, *Son of the Rock*, *Archfiend*, *Ruah the Immortal*, *Tales of a Numinous Nature*, *Hags, Haints and Hoodoo*, *Loving and Living Life One Day at a Time*, *Violette Ardor: A Volume of Poetry*, *This Sickness We Call Love: Poems of Love, Lust, and Lamentation*, and two children’s books. To learn more about Violette and her eerie antics, visit her website VioletteMeier.com.

**Gary Mitchel**

Gary Mitchel is a writer, reviewer, geek blogger, voice actor, gamer, sf/fantasy fan, comics reader, podcaster and International Man of Mystery (who’s too dangerous for the entire country of Canada) currently living near Atlanta.

Gary is the Co-Director, with Joe Crowe, of the American Sci-Fi Classics Track at DragonCon. Together, they host a bi-weekly Online Panel on their YouTube page (https://youtube.com/c/AmericanSciFiClassics) with various guests discussing all kinds of geeky topics, from 80s vampires, to cats in space, to the best fictional bands. Gary has also appeared on The ESO Podcast, *Needless Things, Tables of Content, The Shoreleave Podcast, The Batcave Podcast, Prime Direction, The Chronic Rift, Storm of Words, The White Rocket Podcast, and Execute Chapter 66*, among many others. He can be found on the Facebook and followed on the Twitter as @Gary_Mitchel (and yes Star Trek fans, it’s his real name).

At conventions, he has discussed Sci-Fi, Fantasy, zombies, Horror, zombies, cartoons, comics, and zombies. Some attendees have stated that he is “hilarious,” and Gary swears that said people are not related to him.

**Bill Mulligan**

Bill Mulligan is a 25+ year high school science teacher who has seen his lifelong love for horror, science fiction and fantasy films turn into a great way to spend his weekends with like-minded coconspirators, whether in podcasting as part of Gruesomemagazine.com, Decodes of Horror podcasts, paneling at conventions, or actually making indie films, as a writer, actor, director, special effects artist, and guy who does whatever he is told to do. These are indie films, one can’t stand on ceremony. His first published novel, *Raum*, will be released later this year from Falstaff Books, and he hopes to write many more, as it is his fondest dream to create characters that, for all their possible flaws, are the heroes in their own stories. And then do terrible things to them

**James Nettles**

James Nettles has a thirty-year career consulting for dozens of clients from startups to Fortune 100’s, media contributor, speaker on privacy, futurism, coming disruptive technologies and their impact on businesses and individual daily lives, and is a science fiction and fantasy author. He is also a founding partner for Author Essentials, https://www.authoressentials.net and https://www.authoressentialsworkshops.com, with resources and workshops dedicated to the business of being an author.

In addition, having started writing in media and journalism, he has contributed to and written hundreds of articles and now develops content and materials for personal and professional development, technology, privacy issues, and Artificial Intelligence. He also is a science fiction, fantasy, and
contemporary fiction author, using his background in cultural anthropology and sociology. His current series are the Home Summonings and Longbow Initiative urban fantasy series, and soon to be released technothriller series under the name James P. McDonald.

His latest release is the first in a series of books on business for creatives called Business Essentials for Writers from Author Essentials.

**Chris Oakley**

Chris Oakley owned and operated Oakley’s Gently Used Books, a bricks & mortar used bookshop with a specialty in Sci Fi/Fantasy, for more than 20 years (1995-2016) in Charlottesville, VA. She has been a bookseller at Madicon, MarsCon, Mysticon, RavenCon, Libertycon and Omegacon.

She has edited and published “underground” newspapers as well as literary magazines. (Chris Oakley collection of alternative press, Special Collections, University of Delaware). As a GCIU Journeymen, she worked in small commercial print shops before opening her bookshop in 1995. For many years, she was the organizer and moderator for the VA Festival of the Book Sci Fi/Fantasy programs with Katherine Kurtz, Hugh Howey, Stephen Hickman, Steve White, Toni Weisskopf, David Coe, Jack Campbell (John Hemry) and others as guests.

Chris still brings her passion for bookselling and science fiction to the vendor’s rooms of conventions and does volunteer book sorting, research and pricing to raise money for her local Friends of the Library (Jefferson-Madison Regional) book sales. (Our team raised over $105,000 for the library system at our October 2021 sale.)

**Chuck Parker**

A performer for more than 35 years, Chuck Parker has filled many musical roles: heavy metal guitarist, singer/songwriter, jazz sideman, open mic host, filk circle regular, session player, and World’s Okayest Bassist™.

Chuck has been a regular on the con circuit for more than a decade, and he’s played ballrooms, bars, breweries, biergartens and backyards all over the country, both as a solo performer and as the bassist for wizard rock icons The Bibbering Humdingers. He plays slice of life, confessional geek tunes that are often kind of funny, and his lyrics have been called “sensitive”, “literate”, and “hard to sing…”

He is also a published poet, avid cyclist, spouse, father, and a herder of cats, both figuratively and literally.

His music may be found at https://chuckparker.bandcamp.com, and his musings at https://www.chuck-parker.net.

**Michael Pederson**

Way back in 2004, Mike came up with the crazy idea of hosting a convention in Richmond, VA. He’s been chairing RavenCon ever since.

In addition to running RavenCon, Mike published the fanzine Nth Degree for seventeen years, wrote and published the Raven comic book series, and edited and published Scene, a Virginia-based entertainment magazine. In 2001, Mike was part of the “Best in Class – Master Division” winning presentation (Pre-Emptive Strike) at the Millennium Philcon Masquerade. In 2007, he wrote a chapter on “Writing for Magazines” for Dragon Moon Press’ Writing Fantasy: The Author’s Grimoire.

Other than RavenCon, Mike has also run programming for Trinoc®Con, been Fan Guest of Honor for ConCarolinas and Mysticon, co-chaired a successful NASFiC bid, and served as Master of Ceremonies for MarsCon. Between Nth Degree and his many convention appearances, Mike has become the East Coast’s go-to guy for interviews. He’s interviewed guests for Balticon, ConCarolinas, ConGregate, MarsCon, Mysticon, RavenCon, and StellarCon.

In 2017, Mike was honored with the Rebel Award for his contributions to Southern Fandom.

**Matthew Penick**

Matthew Penick has been a cosplayer for over a decade and took his passion for costuming to the professional level in 2009 with the creation of the theatrical design company Ribbons and Rivets. The self-taught designer began primarily working with leather, and still considers leatherwork to be his specialty, but over the years he has added a plethora of materials and processes to the Ribbons and Rivets toolkit to bring all manner of characters to life. His work has been used in promotions, book covers, films, and by many a fellow cosplayer and can be found at www.Ribbonsandrivets.com. While he spends most of his time working on commissions or inventory pieces for Renaissance Festivals and Comiccons he does manage to feed his old cosplay itch every now and then. His personal costumes can be seen at www.facebook.com/Zealouscosplay

**Maya Preisler**

Maya Preisler has been creating art and telling stories since they were old enough to hold a pen, writing and illustrating their first science fiction novel at age eight. Maya is the proud author of a genre-bending spec fic novel and a short story in Corvid-19. Their artwork graces the covers of multiple novels across a variety of genres. Maya currently works in publishing as a Marketing Director at Mocha Memoirs Press and with various independent authors performing a variety of duties including editing, interior layout, cover design, and formatting. They can be found on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and YouTube as @MayaPreisler or online at www.mayarenee.com
Guests of the Convention

**Angela Pritchett**

Angela Pritchett is an actress, author, musician, costumer, podcaster, and makeup artist. She has been seen in films such as Plan 9, the Porkchop film trilogy, and TV shows like *Bill Nye the Science Guy*.

Angela is an avid cosplayer and has been making her own costumes for the last twenty years. Her costumes have been featured in the Washington Post, as well as various Japanese magazines and coffee table books.

Angela plays geeky and spooky music with her Ukulele. She posts videos of her music on your Youtube channel "Angela Plays Ukulele" (http://www.YouTube.com/c/AngelaPlaysUkulele). Her videos have been featured on *Ukulele Magazine*, *Horror Society* and many other news outlets.

Angela is the author of *Shut Up and Eat! The Unofficial Doctor Who Cookbook* series, she has also been featured in numerous short story anthologies and books with essays on different topics in fandoms.

Angela went to UNC Greensboro and has a BS in Music Education and a Masters in Liberal Studies and Ethnomusicology. She does the podcasting segment “A Geek Girls Take“ that can be heard weekly on the Earth Station One Network, and when she has free time, she spends it sewing or playing with her Pugs.

**Daphne Reeder**

Daphne Reeder has been a model, actress and, and cosplayer for a number of years now, belonging to several cosuming groups such as the 501st, the Mandalorian Mercs, and the Southern Belle Ghostbusters. Some of her specials include full body painted cosplays, and creating armor/ weapons using EVA foam and Worbla. Her image has graced many promotional posters, flyers and magazine articles. As an actress, Ms Reeder has performed both onstage and in front of a camera. Recently she’s worked with several studios like Sick Chick Flicks and Ron Rossman studios in the genres of Horror and Fantasy. She herself owns Drache Media Films, an upcoming studio filming Horror and SciFi.

Currently, Daphne is working on several projects: a horror film she created, a fantasy and horror project with another independent film group, and 2 new cosplay concepts.
Guests of the Convention

Gray Rinehart
Gray Rinehart writes science fiction and fantasy stories, nonfiction, songs ... and other things. He is the only person to have commanded an Air Force satellite tracking station, written speeches for Presidential appointees, devised a poetic form, and had music on The Dr. Demento Show. He is currently a contributing editor (the “Slushmaster General”) for Baen Books.

Gray is the author of the lunar colonization novel Walking on the Sea of Clouds, and his short fiction has appeared in Analog Science Fiction & Fact, Asimov’s Science Fiction, Orson Scott Card’s Intergalactic Medicine Show, and multiple anthologies. As a singer/songwriter, he has two albums of mostly science-fiction-and-fantasy-inspired music.

During his unusual USAF career, Gray fought rocket propellant fires, refurbished space launch facilities, “flew” Milstar satellites, drove trucks, encrypted nuclear command and control orders, commanded the largest remote tracking station in the Air Force Satellite Control Network, and did other interesting things. His alter ego is the Gray Man, one of several famed ghosts of South Carolina’s Grand Strand, and his web site is graymanwrites.com.

Melissa Scott
Melissa Scott was born and raised in Little Rock, Arkansas, and studied history at Harvard College. She earned her PhD from Brandeis University in the comparative history program with a dissertation titled “The Victory of the Ancients: Tactics, Technology, and the Use of Classical Precedent.” She also sold her first novel, The Game Beyond, and quickly became a part-time graduate student and an — almost — full-time writer.

Over the next thirty years, she published more than thirty original novels and a handful of short stories, most with queer themes and characters, as well as authorized tie-in work for Star Trek: DS9, Star Trek: Voyager, Stargate SG-1, Stargate Atlantis, Star Wars Rebels, and Rooster Teeth’s anime series gen:LOCK.

She won the John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer in 1986, and won Lambda Literary Awards for Trouble and Her Friends, Shadow Man, Point of Dreams, (with long-time partner and collaborator, the late Lisa A. Barnett), and Death By Silver, written with Amy Griswold. She has also been shortlisted for the Tiptree Award. She won Spectrum Awards for Death By Silver, Fairs’ Point, Shadow Man and for the short story “The Rocky Side of the Sky.”

Lately, she has collaborated with Jo Graham on the Order of the Air, a series of occult adventure novels set in the 1930s (Lost Things, Steel Blues, Silver Bullet, Wind Raker, and Oath Bound) and with Amy Griswold on a pair of gay Victorian fantasies with murder, Death By Silver and A Death at the Dionysus Club. She has also continued the acclaimed Points series, fantasy mysteries set in the imaginary city of Astreiant, most recently with Points of Sighs. Her latest short story, “Sirens,” appeared in the collection Retellings of the Inland Seas, and her text-based game for Choice of Games, A Player’s Heart, came out in 2020. Her most recent solo novel, Water Horse, was published in June 2021.

Fraser Sherman
Born in England, Fraser wound up living most of his life in Florida. He’d be there still if he hadn’t met the perfect woman and relocated to Durham, NC to marry her. He’s been a reporter and political columnist, written two dozen published short stories and also five film reference books. His sixth, The Aliens Are Here, will be out this year. He’s also the author of Undead Sexist Cliches, a book demolishing bullshit misogynist arguments. You can find him online at frasersherman.com and on Twitter as @ bogatyrs. Fraser enjoys bicycling, vegetarian cooking, reading and snuggling with the two dogs and one cat who share the house.

Chris Shrewsbury
Chris has volunteered, paneled, guested, staffed, and been committee at literally dozens of cons along the east coast for 30+ years.

He’s a nationally certified sign language interpreter. A Navy veteran, he has worked as a pre-K through university teacher, and operated his own business logistics services company.

As a lower-leg amputee and end-stage kidney disease patient, Chris actively promotes disability rights and accessibility, within the convention community and elsewhere.

In addition to disability awareness and empowerment, public speaking, writing, and performance of “sit down comedy,” he’s also served as Programming Co-Director, Fandom & Geek Life Programming Director, Accessibility Director, Panelist, and creator of Accessibility Services. In Chris’ honor, ConCarolinas has created The Shrewsbury Award, given in recognition of his positive outlook and devotion to ConCarolinas.

Chris’ sense of humor and love of all things geek make him a welcome addition to any convention.

Joey Starnes
Joey Starnes (aka the Giddy Geeker) does not claim to be an expert on all geekeries — she’s just happy to organize it. She runs the Charlotte Geeks, home of the Guardians of the Geekery podcast, the Geek Gala, and the Muggles Market. Her main geekdoms include Doctor Who, Harry Potter, Marvel, DC TV shows, Star Wars, board games, Rift, and most anything British. She also has a slight obsession with HGTV, Food Network, and reality dance competitions. She’s mostly prepared for a Zombie Apocalypse but is always willing to upgrade her bug-out bag contents. You can find her in all the places by starting at www.charlottegeeks.com.
**Mike Jack Stoumbos**

Mike Jack Stoumbos is a 1st-place winner of the Writers of the Future contest and the author of the space opera series *This Fine Crew*. His work has appeared in a number of anthologies and collections, including *Street Magic*, *Galactic Stew*, and *Dragon Writers* alongside Brandon Sanderson. Mike Jack teaches high school composition and fiction writing, as well as goal-setting workshops for adults. He also writes articles and essays for TheBookBreak.com and other groups. You can find him at MikeJackStoumbos.com or @MJStoumbos on Twitter.

**Michael G. Williams**

Michael G. Williams writes queer-themed science fiction, urban fantasy, and horror celebrating monsters, macabre humor, and subverted expectations. He’s the author of three series for Falstaff Books: the award-winning vampire/urban fantasy series *The Withrow Chronicles*; a new urban fantasy series featuring real estate, time travel, and San Francisco’s most beloved historical figures, *SERVANT/SOVEREIGN*; and the science fiction noir *A Fall in Autumn*, winner of the 2020 Manly Wade Wellman Award. Michael also co-hosts Arcane Carolinas and contributes to tabletop RPG development. He strives to present the humor and humanity at the heart of horror and mystery with stories of outcasts and loners finding their people.

Michael is an avid podcaster, activist, and gaymer, and is a brother in St. Anthony Hall and Mu Beta Psi. He lives in Durham, NC, with his husband, a variety of animals, and more and better friends than he probably deserves.

**Darcy Wold**

Darcy Wold is a part-time artist, an inveterate editor, and something of a cross between a software developer and a business analyst for CDISC, a standards development organization specializing in clinical data interchange. In her free time, she plays with fractals and digital graphics, and occasionally writes snippets of fiction. When she really has time, she paints.

Darcy was raised by a statistician and a science fiction writer in an ex-blue-collar-tobacco town, except for three years spent in west London, England. For two of those three years, she attended a theatre arts vocational school, but was unable to continue her training on the other side of the pond, and eventually majored in Asian and religious studies at a small liberal arts college in southern California. She has two cats, identifies roughly as pratyeka-buddhist, is sometimes quite sarcastic, and could probably stand to have a bit more patience. One of her favorite books is the *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*.

Pet peeves include extraneous apostrophes and copy-paste laziness.

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**Allen Wold**

In 2021, Allen officially retired from the convention game. We, at ConGregate, would not let that slide without honoring him in some way... so, he's now our Guest Emeritus. To that end, Allen may, or may not, appear at the con; may, or may not, sit in on panels; and may, or may not, say hello to you in hall. Okay, who are we kidding, that last part it is probably a “will say hello.” Anyway... thanks for many great years, Allen! We look forward to you seeing you whenever possible.

Allen L. Wold was born a long time ago in south-western Michigan, where he began writing when he was about eight years old. He still has some of those early “stories” somewhere.

He finished high school in Tucson, Arizona, and graduated from Pomona College, in Claremont, California, where he later met his wife, Diane. They married in 1972, and moved to North Carolina, where he began his career as a full time writer. In 1986, he became a full time father, and gave up writing for about three years, then continued as a part time writer until 2003 when Darcy went off to college, also at Pomona.

Of his previously published novels, six of have been re-issued by ReAnimus Press. He wrote five non-fiction books on computers, and a number of articles, columns, and reviews about using computers. He also wrote stories for the Blood of Ten Chiefs anthologies.

Under his own imprint, Ogden House, he has published *Cat Tales*, *Reminiscences*, a series of essays; *A Closet for a Dragon* and *Other Early Tales*, the earliest of which was written in 1961; *Stroad’s Cross*, about an abandoned village which shouldn’t have been found; *Dead Hand*, about a neighborhood haunted by the consequences of an old man’s death; *Freefoot*, his collected stories for Blood of Ten Chiefs; *Sturgis*, a mystery concerning a supernatural serial killer; *Slaves of War*, a space-opera in six parts; and *A Thing Forgotten*, a pseudo-neo-steampunk faerie story.

Currently, Allen is working on *The Empty House*, a fusion of Lovecraftian cosmic horror and Shirley Jackson’s understated storytelling; *Star Kings*, a cycle of twelve stories set in a far future beyond George Lucas’s imagination; and *Soul Stone* (working title), a man’s quest through entangled worlds to free his father’s stolen soul. The six volumes of his epic-heroic fantasy, *The Black Ring*, have been published by Double Dragon Press.

Allen has been running his version of a writers’ workshop at various conventions for more than thirty years, and has had some success, since several people have not only finished their stories, and sold them, but a couple of those stories have won awards. He also runs a plotting workshop, which is an interactive lecture, and is a lot of fun, and which people have found helpful.

Allen is a member of SFWA.
Because the world had enough supermodels.
Dealers & Exhibitors

Dealer Room
Hearn A-B

Hours
FRI 2:00pm - 7:00pm
SAT 10:00am - 6:00pm
SUN 10:00am - 2:00pm

Dealers
• Signings Table *
• Timothy Zahn
• Black and Nerdy Designz
• Darin Kennedy
• Diaspar Books
• ENDtense J.E.T Studios
• Fashions by Figment
• Pair-A-Dice Games
• Patrick Dugan / Distracted Dragon
• Rainbow Pixzells
• Ribbons & Rivets
• Savage Sand Box
• Sterling Inspirations Pop Up Shop
• Stichin’ Puppies
• Three Minds Software LLC
• Walts Cards
• Witchy Wish
• ZenJumps Chainmeille

Hallway Tables
Hearn Foyer

Exhibitors
• Con Information Table
• Valentine Wolfe
• 501st Legion
• ConCarolinas
• DeepSouthCon 60
• Ebon Legion
• Falstaff Books
• Mandalorian Mercs
• Mocha Memoirs Press
• NC Writers (and Friends)
• Prospective Press
• RavenCon
• Rebel Legion
• SCARAB
• USS Charon (STARFLEET)
Check Your Calendar

Friday Schedule
FRIDAY

1:00pm – 11:00pm  G  Open Gaming/Board Game Demos

SCARAB gaming convention and Clarion Games will be on hand during various times to run demos and games on request.

Boardgame Demos from SCARAB: Fast, fun pick-up games with assorted boardgames including: Codenames, Dixit, Echidna Shuffle, Forbidden Island, Jenga, Jungle Speed, Monster Factory, Yikers, Popcorn Dice, Dinosaur Island, Scooby Doo: Betrayal at Mystery Mansion, Wacky Races, and Miskatonic University

From Clarion Games:

Hull Breach
Clarion's flagship product, Hull Breach is a sci-fi cards-and-dice game featuring epic space combat between ships, firefights between Marine boarding parties, and plenty of clever tactics and galaxy-shaking events. You assume command of a space station belonging to one of our several in-game factions and fight it out with one or more other Commanders to achieve galactic domination! The object of the game is to protect your Station - your home in space - from other Commanders while trying to capture or destroy theirs. Be warned - they're trying to do the same thing to you. It's a tough galaxy and at the end of the day only one Commander gets to remain standing.

Henchman
Henchman: The Card Game is a light, fast-playing card game for 2-6 players featuring cooperative backstabbing and a healthy dose of humor.
Players take on the role of a lowly Minion at Evil Overlord, Inc... but here at EOI, the Evil Overlord's right hand man, the Henchman, has moved on to (or is that under?) greener pastures. All the Minions want to be the next Henchman - after all, the Henchman gets not only Dental, but reserved parking at the office, AND the privilege of assisting His Evilness directly!
Players take turns being the Minion in Charge (MIC). The MIC is responsible for doling out tasks to the other Minions, who then play cards to either help or hinder their abilities to complete the tasks. Completing a task rewards both the minion who undertook it, as well as the MIC—after all, one of the core responsibilities of any leader is delegation. However, failing to complete a task results in facing the wrath of the Evil Overlord and that wrath falls on the MIC as well as the failing Minion.

Four Horsemen: The Omega Wars
Based in the universe of the popular SF novel series from Chris Kennedy Publishing, it's your turn to "Kill Aliens - Get Paid!" In The Four Horsemen: Omega War, you assume command of an base belonging to one of our several in-game factions and fight it out with one or more other Commanders to achieve victory on the battlefield. The object of the game is to protect your base - your home away from home - from other Commanders while trying to capture or destroy theirs. Be warned - they're trying to do the same thing to you. It's a tough galaxy and at the end of the day only one Commander will remain standing. Only through careful planning can the most daring gain command of the galaxy. Four Horsemen uses many of the same core mechanics that Hull Breach! perfected, but adds an entire new theater of ground combat to the mix!

Unreleased Playtest: Brewster Rockit!
Based upon the wacky world of the award winning comic strip, come join Brewster Rockit and his crew on the R. U. Sirius! Solve crises to amass points, but watch out - Failure can have hilarious consequences!

2:00pm – 2:50pm  V  The Doctor's What Number Regeneration? (AP)

Guests: Maya Preisler, Angela Pritchett, Fraser Sherman, Joey Starnes

Doctor Who saw a resurgence in 2005 and since then has seen the casting of the first female Doctor and now the first black actor to headline the series.
While the series has had it's ups and downs, it maintains a loyal following from around the world. What is it about the Doctor's story that draws fans to it?

Moderator: Joey Starnes
2:00pm – 2:50pm  L  Teen Panel: Popular Choices in Books (AP)  Salem

Guests: Chris Oakley

What books are teens reading now? Is it still Hunger Games and Harry Potter? Or are you reading "Twisted Tales" or "The Mortal Instruments"?

Come and share with other teens what you are reading.

2:00pm – 2:50pm  L  This Wasn’t the Dystopia I Ordered: Post Pandemic Storytelling (ET)  Moravian

Guests: Jason Graves, Gail Z. Martin, Jim Nettles, Michael G. Williams

Now that we have lived through a pandemic, how does the aftermath fit the fictional expectations? How is it different? From Zombie Plagues to Hunger Games to now...how is our vision of a dystopia changing?

Moderator: Michael Williams

2:00pm – 3:00pm  N  Signing: Stuart Jaffe  Signing Table (Hearn A-B)

Guests: Stuart Jaffe

2:00pm – 3:15pm  T  Cosplay Toolbox (ET)  Winston

Guests: Frederick Corry, Tom Hutchens, Matthew Penick, Daphne Reeder

Come join costuming veterans as we discuss the different tools we use to get the job done. Which are essential, which are our favorites, and which are our best kept secrets?

Moderator: Tom Hutchens

2:00pm – 3:30pm  R  Sound Check  Hearn C-D (Main Programming)

Musicians can use this time to set up and test the sound in the main room.

2:00pm – 6:00pm  C  ConSuite Open  Suite 411 (ConSuite)

We will close the Suite periodically for cleaning.

3:00pm – 3:50pm  A  So You Want to Hire an Artist (ET)  Moravian

Guests: John Grigni, Stuart Jaffe, Jim Nettles, Maya Preisler

Hiring an artist can be a tricky thing. Our artists discuss what they need in terms of descriptions, mediums, time frames, and anything else that they need to make your vision come true.

Moderator: Jim Nettles
## FRIDAY

### 3:00pm – 3:50pm

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>L</th>
<th>Speculative Mysteries (ET)</th>
<th>Salem</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guests: Jason Gilbert, Amy Griswold, Darin Kennedy, Melissa Scott</td>
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<tr>
<td>What makes a successful SF/fantasy mystery novel? How do you play fair with readers when your mystery is set in a world where magic or futuristic science changes the rules?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Moderator:</strong> Amy Griswold</td>
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### 3:00pm – 3:50pm

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<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>Telling the Future through Science Fiction (ET)</th>
<th>Bethabara</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guests: Jim Beall, Michael G. Williams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science fiction has always been a place to explore new technologies and changing attitudes towards science. Science fiction is also a space where future technologies are imagined before they exist in the real world. Let’s discuss how the most significant technologies of our time -- such as AI, genetics, and related fields -- have been both predicted by and explored in popular science fiction.</td>
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### 3:00pm – 4:00pm

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<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Signing: Richard Fife</th>
<th>Signing Table (Hearn A-B)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Guests: Richard Fife</td>
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### 3:00pm – 5:00pm

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<tr>
<th>W</th>
<th>Workshop: The Road to Wrimo: Setting yourself up for NaNoWrimo Success</th>
<th>Piedmont</th>
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<tr>
<td>Guests: Mike Jack Stoumbos</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Novel Writing Month (or NaNoWriMo) occurs online every year in the month of November. You can find out more at their website <a href="https://nanowrimo.org/">https://nanowrimo.org/</a> NaNo participants are challenged to write 50,000 words of a fiction novel in 30 days. This workshop with Mike Stoumbos will take you through several aspects to consider when it comes to participating in NaNoWrimo: Defining your NaNoWriMo Goals, To Plot or Not, Time-Management and Schedule, Tips to Increase Writing Output and Cultivating Long-Term Discipline and Positive Mindset. Pre-registration Recomended.</td>
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<td><strong>Equipment:</strong> projector, screen</td>
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### 3:00pm – 6:00pm

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<tr>
<th>K</th>
<th>Kids Coloring/Crafts</th>
<th>Reynolda</th>
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<tr>
<td>Our Kids Track room opens for coloring and crafting.</td>
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### 3:30pm – 4:20pm

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<tr>
<th>V</th>
<th>Stranger Things (are happening!) (SPOILERS) (AP)</th>
<th>Winston</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guests: Tom Hutchens, Misty Massey, D. J. McGuire, Michael D. Pederson</td>
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<tr>
<td>The last 2 episodes of Stranger Things, Season 4 just released and shut down Netflix. Come and discuss what happened this season with other fans of the show.</td>
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<td><strong>Moderator:</strong> Michael A. Pederson</td>
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### 4:00pm – 4:50pm

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<tr>
<th>L</th>
<th>Another Place, Another Time (ET)</th>
<th>Salem</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guests: Amy Griswold, Darin Kennedy, Larry N. Martin, Melissa Scott</td>
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<tr>
<td>Where does your story take place: In a world similar to our own? In a different time? In a far-flung place that only vaguely resembles what we know? Sometimes the setting is the first thing that comes to mind for a story to then be populated, other times it has to be crafted after characters have sprung to life. Join us for a discussion about how to build your world, how to consider its rules, and how much your reader needs to know in the process.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Moderator:</strong> Larry N Martin</td>
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</table>
When Gray is not acting as the "Slushmaster General" for Baen Books, he is also a singer/songwriter with two albums of mostly science-fiction-and-fantasy-inspired music.

Many DM's have to create plots and characters for their players to interact with. Authors do the same thing but for their readers. How is the work of writing similar when writing for players and how is it different when writing for readers? In what ways can you use the skills of one to improve your skills in the other?

Based on the popular improv TV show, you'll love watching as a group of ConGregate guests and audience volunteers (and even a few surprises) entertain in this hilariously unrehearsed improv “game show.”

Panelists cover what artists need to know to make their project happen outside that talent they already have. The focus is on time management, resource management, and communication.

Writers discuss specific places from the real world they've used in their stories, why those places are important to them, whether the place or the story came first, and how to dig in and really work to make that place real for our readers.

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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>5:30pm – 6:00pm</td>
<td>L</td>
<td><strong>Reading: Timothy Zahn</strong>&lt;br&gt;Join Timothy Zahn as he reads from The Icarus Plot - his newest novel (and semi-sequel to The Icarus Hunt).</td>
<td>Winston</td>
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<td>5:30pm – 6:20pm</td>
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<td><strong>New Fairy Tales (ET)</strong>&lt;br&gt;Guests: Gail Z. Martin, Violette Meier, Jim Nettles&lt;br&gt;Fantasy retellings of Fairy Tales are an ongoing trend by authors. What is it about these iconic stories that encourage author to look for new ways to tell the &quot;same old&quot; story?&lt;br&gt;<strong>Moderator: Gail Z Martin</strong></td>
<td>Moravian</td>
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<td>5:30pm – 6:30pm</td>
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<td><strong>Performance: White Plectrum (tentative)</strong>&lt;br&gt;Guests: White Plectrum/Keith Brinegar&lt;br&gt;Join Keith Brinegar for some Southern favorite filking...who knows, he might even get you to sing along!</td>
<td>Hearn C-D (Main Programming)</td>
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<td>5:30pm – 6:45pm</td>
<td>W</td>
<td><strong>Workshop: Writing Helpline for Action Scenes</strong>&lt;br&gt;Guests: Richard Fife, Stuart Jaffe&lt;br&gt;When writing an action scene, there are times authors find themselves stuck. The writer has one idea and the scene has another, or perhaps a writer realizes they've written themselves into a corner. Bring your challenge to this panel of authors and they will attempt to offer advice around getting stuck.</td>
<td>Piedmont</td>
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<td>6:00pm – 6:50pm</td>
<td>T</td>
<td><strong>Costuming: Form, Function, and Fantasy (ET)</strong>&lt;br&gt;Guests: Frederick Corry, Cheralyn Lambeth, Angela Pritchett, Daphne Reeder&lt;br&gt;Come join costuming veterans as we discuss the merits of the different costume design choices involved in the creation of popular characters. Which choices are rooted in functionality and which just plain look cool?&lt;br&gt;<strong>Moderator: Angela Pritchett</strong></td>
<td>Salem</td>
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<td>6:00pm – 6:50pm</td>
<td>S</td>
<td><strong>Cyborgs and Disabilities (ET)</strong>&lt;br&gt;Guests: LR Gould, Robert Hampson, Chris Shrewsbury&lt;br&gt;Sci-fi stories are full of cyborgs and our communities are full of people using assistive technologies. What's fiction, what's reality, and when do we wish one was more like the other?&lt;br&gt;<strong>Moderator: Chris Shrewsbury</strong></td>
<td>Bethabara</td>
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<td>6:00pm – 7:00pm</td>
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<td><strong>Signing: Misty Massey</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Guests: Misty Massey</strong></td>
<td>Signing Table (Hearn A-B)</td>
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<td>6:30pm – 10:00pm</td>
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<td><strong>ConSuite Open</strong>&lt;br&gt;We will close the Suite periodically for cleaning.</td>
<td>Suite 411 (ConSuite)</td>
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<td>Moravian</td>
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<td>7:00pm – 8:00pm</td>
<td>E Como Mai (Opening Ceremonies) &amp; Manly Wade Wellman Award</td>
<td>Hearn C-D (Main Programming)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Guests: Michael D. Pederson, Valentine Wolfe, Timothy Zahn</td>
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<td>Program Participants: James Fulbright</td>
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<td>“eh koh-moh my-ee” (means Welcome! in Hawaiian)</td>
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This is our version of opening ceremonies.

This is the time and place to decompress from the rigors of travel, meet friends old and new, and make the transition to being at the Con!

Each year, ConGregate remembers contributors that we have lost from the science fiction and fantasy world. The tradition began in memory of Aaron Allston, who was well known for his love of Hawaiian shirts. We encourage everyone to wear a Hawaiian shirt on Friday, July 22.

The Manly Wade Wellman Award for Science Fiction and Fantasy was founded in December 2013 to recognize outstanding achievement in science fiction and fantasy novels written by North Carolina authors. Previous winners include Guests: John G. Hartness, Gail Z. Martin, and Michael G. Williams.

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<td>7:00pm – 8:30pm</td>
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<td>Bethabara</td>
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<td>8:00pm – 8:30pm</td>
<td>Reading: Misty Massey</td>
<td>Reynolda</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Guests: Misty Massey</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:00pm – 8:50pm</td>
<td>Tales from the Table (ET)</td>
<td>Winston</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Guests: Carol Cowles, Chris Oakley, Joey Starnes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Join dealers and guests as they talk about the stories and people (anonymously of course), that they encounter.</td>
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<td>Moderator: Chris Oakley</td>
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<td>Set Up: panel</td>
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**FRIDAY**

8:00pm – 9:15pm **V** *"I've Crossed Oceans of Time" - 30 Years of Francis Ford Coppolla's Dracula (ET)*  
*Guests: Jason Gilbert, Ora McGuire, Gary Mitchel*  
Listen in as our creatures of the night make music discussing the highs, lows, its claim of being faithful to the novel, and everything this lush and extravagant retelling of the classic vampire tale inspired.  

**Moderator: Gary Mitchel**

8:00pm – 9:15pm **L** *Stories of Joy & Resistance: Marginalized Communities in Speculative Fiction (ET)*  
*Guests: Violette Meier, Maya Preisler, Michael G. Williams*  
Join a panel of writers and storytellers as we discuss what it means to tell stories of the joyful lives of characters who are marginalized but whose stories are more than that marginalization.  

**Moderator: Michael G. Williams**

8:00pm – 10:00pm **W** *Workshop: Basic Leather Working 101 (fee)*  
*Guests: Matthew Penick*  
Basic Leather Working 101 - In this introduction to the craft lead by the designers at Ribbons and Rivets participants will be guided through the steps to make their own personalized wrist cuff. Many of these same steps can be applied to much larger and more complicated projects later on. All tools and materials will be provided for this workshop, just bring a pair of hands.  

**Participation fee is $20**

8:30pm – 9:00pm **L** *Reading: Jason Graves*  
*Guests: Jason Graves*

8:30pm – 10:15pm **P** *Falstaff Roadshow*  
*Guests: John G. Hartness*  
Come hear what will soon be released, and/or what has recently been released, from Falstaff Books

8:30pm – 10:15pm **E** *Friday Night Frights: Nosferatu with Valentine Wolfe*  
*Guests: Valentine Wolfe*  
Join Valentine Wolfe as they provide a live musical score to the silent film, *Nosferatu on it's 100th Anniversary.*

9:00pm – 9:30pm **L** *Reading: LR Gould*  
*Guests: LR Gould*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Panel Name</th>
<th>Synopsis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00pm – 9:50pm</td>
<td>L</td>
<td><strong>Killer Queens (AP)</strong></td>
<td>Snow White's The Evil Queen is one of the most famous. But there's the Queen of Hearts and Queen Mab as well. Join our panelists as we discuss the Killer Queens &quot;guaranteed to blow your minds.&quot;</td>
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<td><strong>Moderator: Fraser Sherman</strong></td>
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<td>9:30pm – 10:00pm</td>
<td>L</td>
<td><strong>Reading: Melissa Scott</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Guests: Melissa Scott</strong></td>
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<td>9:30pm – 10:20pm</td>
<td>T</td>
<td><strong>Teen: Closet/Easy Cosplay (ET)</strong></td>
<td>Especially for Teens - our costumers discuss how younger cosplayers just starting out who may be low on funds or don't even own a sewing machine can get into the costuming world. Using existing clothing, thrifting, upcycling, and other tricks to costume on a budget. Affordable makeup, creating accessories, and using what you have to get more for less. Also touching on topics such as &quot;how to tell my mom what I'm doing&quot; and &quot;explaining it to my friends.&quot;</td>
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<td><strong>Moderator: Tom Hutchens</strong></td>
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<td>9:30pm – 10:20pm</td>
<td>V</td>
<td><strong>Our Guilty Pleasures (ET)</strong></td>
<td>Panelists make the case for a film or TV series that needs more love. What are those shows that should have been great...</td>
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<td><strong>Guests: Gail Z. Martin, D. J. McGuire, Bill Mulligan, Chuck Parker</strong></td>
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<td>10:00pm – 10:30pm</td>
<td>L</td>
<td><strong>Reading: Maya Priesler</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Guests: Maya Priesler</strong></td>
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<td>10:00pm – 10:50pm</td>
<td>F</td>
<td><strong>It's Okay not to Like a Thing And It's Okay to Love a Thing (ET)</strong></td>
<td>Fandom is like the menu at your favorite restaurant. You don't always order the same thing; the people you go with don't necessarily order what you ordered. But why is so hard for some people to let others enjoy their thing? How do we respond when we are faced with the negative aspects of something we love.</td>
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<td><strong>Moderator: Joey Starnes</strong></td>
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<td>10:30pm – 11:00pm</td>
<td>L</td>
<td><strong>Reading: Robert Hampson</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Guests: Robert Hampson</strong></td>
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</table>
FRIDAY

10:30pm – 11:20pm F Salem
Haunted by Ghosts (AP)
Guests: Cheralyn Lambeth, Violette Meier
Panelists discuss the scary stories they heard as kids that still stick with them as adults. What is it about these stories that gets under our skin and stays there? How do childhood ghost stories and urban legends travel?

10:30pm – 11:30pm F Hearn C-D (Main Programming)
Con Stories on the Rocks (AP)
Guests: Jason Gilbert, Dave Harlequin
Program Participants: James Fulbright
A lot of crazy things have happened at cons... and sometimes you just need a strong drink to help tell (or hear) the story.

*Strong Drinks not provided.

Moderator: James Fulbright

10:30pm – 11:30pm V Bethabara
100 Years of the Vampire (ET) (shortly following Nosferatu)
Guests: Gary Mitchel, Bill Mulligan, Valentine Wolfe
Join Valentine Wolfe and our other panelists as they talk about the enduring fascination for the bloodsucking monsters from Nosferatu (1922) to Buffy the Vampire Slayer (1992) to Dracula: The Original Living Vampire (2022) and every vampire movie in between.

*There will be slight break between the movie and the set up for the panel.

Moderator: Gary Mitchel (unless Braxton wants to)
Saturday Schedule

Check Your Calendar
Career in Film (ET)

Guests: Dave Harlequin, Christopher Jones, Angela Pritchett

While many individuals beginning a career in film and television look toward the high-profile careers directing, writing, and acting, there are plenty of career possibilities in the industry. The advent of streaming and new film and television outlets has seen an expansion of career opportunities in film not even imagined a decade ago. Join our panel for a discussion about the new career opportunities appearing and how these options can provide career satisfaction and sustainability in a rapidly evolving industry.

Moderator: Angela Pritchett

Wait Isn't This Steampunk? (ET)

Guests: Richard Fife, Jason Gilbert, Amy Griswold, Larry N. Martin

Gaslamps are just part of steampunk, right? Panelists discuss the differences and similarities between Steampunk fantasy and Gaslamp fantasy and why these two genres are often conflated.

Moderator: Larry Martin

Mocha Memoirs Press Road Show

Guests: Nicole Givens Kurtz, Maya Preisler

Come hear what will soon be released, and/or what has recently been released, from Mocha Memoirs Press

Workshop: Writing the First Lines

Guests: Gail Z. Martin

“In the hole in the ground, there lived a hobbit.” Or “It was a pleasure to burn.” Both of these iconic first lines introduce the reader to the story. In this workshop, Gail Martin will guide participants in the fine art of writing those few words that capture a reader's attention.

Kids Coloring/Crafts

Our Kids Track room opens for coloring and crafting.

ConSuite Open

We will close the Suite periodically for cleaning.
SATURDAY

10:00am – 10:45am  M  Performance: The Nefarious Ferrets
Guests: The Nefarious Ferrets, D. J. McGuire
Join The Nefarious Ferrets as they spread the genre Filk (like the seeds of a dandelion).

10:00am – 10:50am  F  Pop-up Panel (AP)
Guests: Jim Beall, Emily Lavin Leverett, Chris Shrewsbury
Got a question? Got a topic you just want to chew on for a bit? Swing by this panel and our experts will attempt to answer them. No subject, no theme, just questions.

Moderator: Jim Beall

10:00am – 10:50am  V  Independent Films and Networking (or how do I find people to work on my film) (ET)
Guests: Dave Harlequin, Christopher Jones, Angela Pritchett
Independent Films require more than just an idea and a camera. You need everything from actors to makeup artists to location scouts to sound techs. Where do you start looking for staff when you first start out? What questions should you be asking? And what should you be aware of when it comes to hiring?

Moderator: Dave Harlequin

10:00am – 11:00am  N  Signing: Michael G. Williams and Misty Massey
Guests: Misty Massey, Michael G. Williams

10:00am – 11:15am  V  When Saturday Morning Was Great (AP)
Guests: Tom Hutchens, Bill Mulligan, Chuck Parker, Joey Starnes
Thundercats, Ho! Meet George Jetson! Duck Season! Wabbit Season!

Saturday morning used to be spent in front of the TV with our favorite bowl of sugary cereal. Even through the years have gone by, we still remember our favorite series and episodes. Come discuss your favorite reason to avoid chores on Saturday morning!

Moderator: Bill Mulligan

10:00am – 12:00pm  G  Open Gaming/Board Game Demos
SCARAB gaming convention and Clarion Games will be on hand during various times to run demos and games on request.

Boardgame Demos: Fast, fun pick-up games with assorted boardgames including: Codenames, Dixit, Echidna Shuffle, Forbidden Island, Jenga, Jungle Speed, Monster Factory, Yikers, Popcorn Dice, Dinosaur Island, Scooby Doo: Betrayal at Mystery Mansion, Wacky Races, and Miskatonic University

10:30am – 11:45am  E  Ask Timothy Zahn Anything
Guests: Michael D. Pederson, Timothy Zahn
Everything you've always wanted to know but were too shy to ask Timothy Zahn,

Come write your question and anonymously ask the questions you've always wanted to know. Whether about Star Wars, writing or his own likes and interests, this is your chance to ask Timothy Zahn anything!

*Question cards will be available at the information desk prior to 9pm on Friday, July 22.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Event Title</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Guest(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>11:00am – 11:45am</td>
<td>M</td>
<td><strong>Performance; Angela Pritchett</strong></td>
<td>Hearn C-D (Main</td>
<td>Angela Pritchett</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00am – 11:50am</td>
<td>A</td>
<td><strong>Art in the Time of Corona (ET)</strong></td>
<td>Moravian</td>
<td>Cheralyn Lambeth</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00am – 11:50am</td>
<td>V</td>
<td><strong>Teen Panel: The Owl House (Spoilers) (AP)</strong></td>
<td>Winston</td>
<td>Richard Fife</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00am – 12:30pm</td>
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<td><strong>Workshop: The 5-Question Character</strong></td>
<td>Piedmont</td>
<td>Mike Jack Stoumbos</td>
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<td>11:30am – 12:20pm</td>
<td>F</td>
<td><strong>Geek: The Next Generation (AP)</strong></td>
<td>Salem</td>
<td>Randall Hayes, Chuck Parker</td>
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<td>12:00pm – 12:45pm</td>
<td>M</td>
<td><strong>Performance: DJ McGuire</strong></td>
<td>Hearn C-D (Main</td>
<td>D. J. McGuire</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00pm – 12:50pm</td>
<td>L</td>
<td><strong>Cultural Appropriation is Bad, Cultural Appreciation is Good (ET)</strong></td>
<td>Moravian</td>
<td>Richard Fife, Misty Massey, Violette Meier,</td>
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<td>Chris Oakley</td>
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SATURDAY

12:00pm – 1:00pm
N Signing: Timothy Zahn (at his table)

Guests: Timothy Zahn

Timothy Zahn will also be available at his table in the dealers room throughout the weekend.

12:00pm – 1:15pm
F You Are Not Alone (AP)

Guests: Jason Gilbert, Maya Preisler, Chris Shrewsbury, Joey Starnes

In a safe environment, we’ll share about the difficulties of feeling or being different. While our fandoms are wildly divergent, it’s our love and identification with them that bring us together.

Moderator: Chris Shrewsbury

12:00pm – 1:15pm
E Live Podcast - Arcane Carolinas

Guests: Michael G. Williams

Program Participants: Charlie Mewshaw

Arcane Carolinas Gets Weird! Charlie and Michael take a firmly nonjudgmental stance as they talk about their most esoteric topics yet, their relations to the Carolinas, and what they believe in their heart of hearts. Is magic real? Is Sasquatch? What are UFOs? Is everything connected? Is the weird itself a mechanism of the universe or of the human mind? This live recording will include time set aside for audience volunteers to share their own most controversial beliefs in a safe and welcoming space!

** Note: This session will be recorded for future broadcast. **

12:00pm – 2:00pm
G RPG: Star Wars: A Favor for the Rebels - System: PDQ#/Open Gaming

Star Wars: A Favor for the Rebels - System: PDQ# - Long ago, in a galaxy far, far away, the Empire rules with an iron fist, and the Rebellion is just beginning. When a group of smugglers save a young woman from Stormtroopers, they learn she is a Jedi working for the Rebels. And she needs their help to rescue two droids who have been captured by the Empire, before the Empire can learn their secrets.

(Open Gaming Tables will also be available)

12:30pm – 1:45pm
T But Armor is Hot! (ET)

Guests: Frederick Corry, Tom Hutchens, Cheralyn Lambeth, Matthew Penick

Costuming in the summer can be challenging but doing it in Armor, whatever medium, can be particularly difficult. Our panelists discuss options to stay cool in the heat with traditional armor materials as well as offering some choices of alternate materials that may be "cooler."

Moderator: Cheralyn Lambeth

1:00pm – 1:45pm
M Performance: Chuck Parker

Guests: Chuck Parker

Join Chuck as plays slice of life, confessional geek tunes that are often kind of funny.
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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>1:00pm – 1:50pm</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Teen Panel: Comics in School (ET)</td>
<td>Guests: Randall Hayes, Nicole Givens Kurtz, Fraser Sherman. Comic books and graphics novels have always been considered recreational reading material. Emerging research shows that comics and graphic novels are motivational, support struggling readers, enrich the skills of accomplished readers, and are highly effective at teaching all subject areas. Join us as we explore just how crucial comics and graphic novels to younger readers! Moderator: Fraser Sherman</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00pm – 2:00pm</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Signing: LR Gould and Richard Fife</td>
<td>Signing Table (Hearn A-B)</td>
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<td>1:00pm – 3:00pm</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Workshop: How to say “Buy my ‘stuff’” without saying “Buy my stuff”</td>
<td>Guests: Patrick Dugan, Jim Nettles. Patrick Dugan and Jim Nettles will work with participants to write, critique and practice three key pitches (tag line, elevator speech, and long sales.) Max Students: 12, pre-registration recommended.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00pm – 4:00pm</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>Kids Track: Avatar!</td>
<td>Guests: Richard Fife. To go along with recent news of a live action Avatar: The Last Airbender series, the theme of the Kids Track this is just that. The kids have will have the opportunity to find out what Avatar nation they would be from, learn about airships, do some fun “bending” experiments, and make bracelets with their nations colors! All kids are encouraged to come and join the fun.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30pm – 2:20pm</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Research Rabbit Holes (ET)</td>
<td>Guests: Jason Gilbert, Amy Griswold, Gail Z. Martin, Melissa Scott. Most writers have at some point found themselves getting lost in the background research for a story instead of actually writing. Can you ever do too much research? How do you strike the balance between what you need to know and what a reader needs to see? How do you make yourself stop and move on - or do you? Bonus - what’s a favorite thing you’ve stumbled across that you haven’t been able to use in a story? Moderator: Melissa Scott</td>
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<td>1:30pm – 2:30pm</td>
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<td>Communicating Science Part 1 (ET)</td>
<td>Guests: Jim Beall, Robert Hampson, Gray Rinehart. Our panelists talk about how and why communicating science is important, and the transition between writing for Academia and from industry and Gray Rinehart will comment on how that affects their creative writing. Followed by Biomedical Graduate Students from Dr. Robert E. Hampson's Communicating Science course who will give seven-minute &quot;Ted Talk&quot; style presentations about their science. Come hear about some exciting new fields of biomedical research. Heckling is discouraged, but the students could certainly use some real-world feedback on their talks! Moderator: Dr. Robert E. Hampson</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30pm – 5:00pm</td>
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<td>ConSuite Open</td>
<td>Suite 411 (ConSuite). We will close the Suite periodically for cleaning.</td>
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2:00pm – 2:50pm T  A Minute to Win It (ET)  
*Guests: Tom Hutchens, Matthew Penick*

A minute can seem so short when trying to put together a masquerade presentation, but it can feel like an eternity on stage. How do you use the time allowed to both entertain the audience and wow the judges? Can it be done in less than 30 seconds?

2:00pm – 2:50pm F  And All I Ask is a Tall Ship and a Star to Steer Her by (ET)  
*Guests: Misty Massey, Gary Mitchel*

And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by. - John Mansfield

From the first captain to sail the waters to the first who sailed the sky to the first who ventured into space, we have always searched out the unknown. What compels us to seek out “new life and new civilizations” and what can history tell us about these expeditions?

2:00pm – 3:00pm N  Signing: Maya Priesler & Daphne Reeder  
*Guests: Maya Preisler, Daphne Reeder*

2:00pm – 6:00pm G  Open Gaming/Board Game Demos  

SCARAB gaming convention and Clarion Games will be on hand during various times to run demos and games on request.

Boardgame Demos: Fast, fun pick-up games with assorted boardgames including: Codenames, Dixit, Echidna Shuffle, Forbidden Island, Jenga, Jungle Speed, Monster Factory, Yikers, Popcorn Dice, Dinosaur Island, Scooby Doo: Betrayal at Mystery Mansion, Wacky Races, and Miskatonic University

2:30pm – 3:20pm L  It's Quitting Time... (ET)  
*Guests: Jason Gilbert, Dave Harlequin, John G. Hartness, Fraser Sherman*

Calling quits on a story doesn't have to be a sad situation. Panelists will bring to the table times when a project petered out, a novel got shelved, or the pursuit of writing had to be paused for a time. The question to explore: why did you stop writing and how did you move on from that decision?

*Moderator: Jason Gilbert*

2:30pm – 3:30pm M  Performance: Valentine Wolfe  
*Guests: Valentine Wolfe*

3:00pm – 3:50pm L  Creating Characters in Interactive Fiction (ET)  
*Guests: Amy Griswold, Melissa Scott*

What are the challenges in writing characters who may change significantly based on player decisions? And how do you write for a player character whose characteristics are largely determined by player choices?
Communicating Science Part 2 (ET)

**Guests:** Robert Hampson

Part I: Our panelists talk about how and why communicating science is important, and the transition between writing for Academia and from industry and Gray Rinehart will comment on how that affects their creative writing.

Part 2: Followed by Biomedical Graduate Students from Dr. Robert E. Hampson's Communicating Science course who will give seven-minute “Ted Talk” style presentations about their science. Come hear about some exciting new fields of biomedical research. Heckling is discouraged, but the students could certainly use some real-world feedback on their talks!

**Moderator:** Dr. Robert E. Hampson

**Signing: Stuart Jaffe & Mike Jack Stoumbos**

**Guests:** Stuart Jaffe, Mike Jack Stoumbos

**Star Wars: The Neverending Story? (AP)**

**Guests:** Tom Hutchens, Cheralyn Lambeth, Maya Preisler, Timothy Zahn

What does the new era of Star Wars look like? From tv shows The Mandalorian, Obi-Wan Kenobi and The Bad Batch to novels such as the new Thrawn series, how has the Star Wars universe continued to expand and draw in new watchers (and readers) each year?

**Moderator:** Tom Hutchens

**Write What I Know??? (ET)**

**Guests:** Patrick Dugan, Darin Kennedy, Emily Lavin Leverett, Violette Meier

Aspiring authors are often told to “write what they know” but how do you write science fiction or fantasy when what you know is accounting or human resources? Our authors who have transitioned from day jobs to full time writers discuss both how they used "what they know" in their stories and how they ignore that maxim in order to tell a story.

**Moderator:** Emily Lavin Leverett

**Workshop: Basic Armor Patterning**

**Guests:** Matthew Penick

This primer for armor patterning lead by the designers at Ribbons and Rivets, will have participants making their own bracer pattern that can later be applied to other rigid mediums such as leather, thermoplastic, or EVA foam. Participants will leave with their own personalized pattern as well as knowledge about measurements, seam allowances, fasteners, and the pros and cons associated with different armor making mediums.

**Signing: Melissa Scott & Amy Griswold**

**Guests:** Amy Griswold, Melissa Scott

**Crypto Cinema (ET)**

**Guests:** Bill Mulligan

Bill Mulligan takes you through some of the most famous examples of Big Foot and Sea Monster Movies. What makes them great? And what makes them just bad?
### Saturday

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<th>Time</th>
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| 4:00pm – 5:30pm | **Well... Actually. (AP)** Kittens: LR Gould, Misty Massey, Gray Rinehart **We're going to be running a version of the YouTube game "Um, Actually" at the convention - ours will be called "Well, Actually".**  
**If you're not familiar with the game, it involves panelists being presented with "very" detailed statements about geeky topics in which "one thing" is incorrect. The panelists have to correct the statement to score a point. Statements can be about anything science fiction and fantasy fans like: movies, books, TV shows, games, anime, science - practically anything! Panelists will also be drawn from the audience to participate.** | Hearn C-D (Main Programming) |                                                                              |
| 4:30pm – 5:20pm | **Fear - But, You Know, For Kids! (ET)** Guests: Nicole Givens Kurtz, Ora McGuire, Gary Mitchel  
**From the TV shows Monsters, Scooby-Doo, and Aaahh!!! Real Monsters to the Goosebumps books, to movies like Monster Squad, there has always been spooky entertainment aimed at kids. Join us as we discuss why we love terrifying our tots, and the best examples of horror with training wheels for the youngsters.** | Winston         | **Moderator: Gary Mitchel**                                                   |
| 4:30pm – 5:45pm | **Saving the Day While Getting Stepped On: The Antihero's Anti-Journey (ET)**  
**Join authors of antihero stories--washed up private eyes, fallen angels, failed fairy godmothers, and other unsavory characters--as they discuss what draws them to stories of outsiders looking in, how they differ from the traditional hero's journey, and whether the point of an anti-hero is redemption or validation.** | Salem           | **Moderator: Michael G. Williams**                                              |
| 4:30pm – 5:45pm | **Prospective Press and Sol/Darkwing Road Show**  
**Come hear what will soon be released, and/or what has recently been released, from Prospective Press and Sol/Darkwing Press** | Bethabara       |                                                                              |
| 5:30pm – 6:20pm | **Ancient Engineering (ET)** Guests: Jim Beall, Patrick Dugan, LR Gould  
**Empires and other large civilizations require engineering to endure. How did they do it? The panel will offer examples, including JPGs and videos.** | Moravian        | **Moderator: Jim Beall**                                                      |
**SATURDAY**

5:30pm – 6:45pm  
**V Still Boldly Going (AP)**  
*Guests: The Nefarious Ferrets, Chris Shrewsbury*  
*Program Participants: Aaron Brite*  
Let’s examine the enduring legacy of Star Trek, from its humble network beginnings through its unprecedented resurgence on streaming.  

**Moderator: Chris Shrewsbury**

5:30pm – 10:00pm  
**C ConSuite Open**  
We will close the Suite periodically for cleaning.

6:00pm – 7:00pm  
**R Room Closed**  
Hearn C-D (Main Programming)

6:00pm – 7:00pm  
**E Pre-Judging Costume Contest/Hold for Judges Room**  
*Guests: Carol Cowles, Tom Hutchens, Cheralyn Lambeth, Daphne Reeder*  
Pre-judging for Costume Contest

Costumers: PLEASE stop by the Information Desk to receive your pre-judging time slot!

**RULES**

The ConGregate Costume Contest is open to any costumed individual or group, but all participants must have valid ConGregate membership badges.

Prejudging is Saturday in the Piedmont room at 6pm, the contest will be held in Hearn C-D (time to be determined. Information Booth with advise you when the entry form is turned in).

**Please note:** New for this year, you will be assigned a time to come to the Pre-judging/ Green Room. Please speak with an Information Booth Representative to receive your time. When you arrive at your assigned time at the Green Room, you will be required to be in full costume and have everyone involved in your skit/ presentation with you. This will allow the costume contest staff to best assist you and your group. This will be the time when the Craftsmanship portion of the contest will be done as well as any Photography. Please be on time.

Costume Contest Registrations:

- Sign-Ups are available online until Thursday before the Convention.
- Sign-Ups will be available at the information booth until 5pm on Saturday.

If you have any audio or sound to be played while you are on stage, please let us know so that you can speak to the sound crew. It must be turned in when you turn in your entry form. Please have it recorded on an otherwise blank CD which is labeled with your name, your badge number, and the name of your costume (or group), Thumb Drive, or MP3 player (or other similar device). Any device other than a CD cannot be dropped off and you must speak with the sound crew to check if it can be played. There will be a sound technician in the room during prejudging to assist with anything last minute (within reason). There should be no more than ten (10) seconds of blank time before your audio begins to play. ConGregate cannot guarantee your audio will be played during your presentation. We reserve the right to review music before allowing it to be used. CDs can be reclaimed after the Costume Contest awards are presented.

There will be no live microphone for contestants to use on stage.

There will be no spotlights or other light effects available on stage.

**If you plan to draw or otherwise “use” a weapon during your presentation, note that on your Costume Contest sign-up sheet. Judges will make any necessary determination of suitability and safety.**

If you are taking part in a group entry, only one Costume Contest sign-up sheet is necessary for the entire group, but the name and badge number of all group members must be listed on that sheet.

The contest is open to all ages. An adult **must** accompany children under 12. Parents can accompany their

*Continues on next page*
children onstage. Entrants under 12 will not be judged, but will receive certificates for participating.

Category Definitions (Any entrant may choose to compete in a higher category):

- **Youth** - those under the age of 14 years (see above).
- **Novice** - those who have won three (3) or fewer major (Best-, Top-, 1st Place-in category) awards in costume competitions.
- **Journeyman** - those who have won more than three major awards in costume competitions, but have won fewer than three (3) Best in Show or Best Overall awards.
- **Master** - those who have won more than three (3) Best in Show or Best Overall awards.

Awards categories may include: Best in Show, Best Craftsmanship, Best Presentation, Top Novice, Top Journeyman, Top Master, and Judge's Choice. Depending on the number of entrants, other awards may be added.

No individual may present more than one entry in the contest. You cannot wear a costume onstage, then change into another costume and present it for competition as well or be apart of more than one group. Individuals are limited to one (1) minute on stage. Group’s entries are limited to one (1) minute plus thirty (30) seconds for each additional member up to a maximum of three (3) minutes on stage. There will be no extended songs, skits, monologues, or conversations (any exceptions to this rule must be approved by the ConGregate Costume Contest Coordinator).

Any of the following on stage will result in disqualification and ejection from the Costume Contest: smoke effects, open flames, squirting liquids, firing projectiles, throwing objects into the audience or at the MC, use of obscene language, pornographic representations, full or partial nudity. Please help us keep ConGregate a safe and family-friendly convention (keep in mind PG13 or better).

We ask that anyone with a costume which has won three (3) or more major (Best, Top, or 1st Place) costume competition awards elsewhere not enter that particular costume into ConGregates’ competition unless it has been significantly changed or improved.

Participants will be judged on costume construction, originality, and presentation.

No entry will be allowed to win in more than two categories.

Participants need to be in the Green Room (please see the program for its location) at least one (1) hour before Costume Contest time to be pre-judged and assigned a place in line. If you have a re-creation costume, bring any supporting photos, illustrations text passages, models, or other reference materials with you for judges to examine. Please remember to EAT before pre-judging!!

*It is possible that latecomers may not be allowed to participate, even if they have registered by turning in a sign-up sheet.*

The Green Room will be as secured as possible while the Costume Contest is taking place. Only identified contestants or their parents will have access to the Green Room in that time period. Participants must stay within the contest area (the Costume Contest room, Green Room, or designated meeting area) until judging is completed and awards are presented.

*Decisions of the judges are final.*

ConGregate reserves the right to remove anyone from the contest, at any time, for any reason, including but not limited to: indecent costume, unprofessional conduct, tardiness, and disruption of the contest.

Judges: Daphne Reeder, Tom Hutchens, Cheralyn Lambeth
Host: Carol Cowles
SATURDAY

6:00pm – 7:15pm  V  1982 - Best Movie Year Ever (ET)  
Guests: Stuart Jaffe, Gary Mitchel, Bill Mulligan, Michael D. Pederson  
Join our panel as we discuss the movies that made this year hard to top.  
Moderator: Gary Mitchel

6:00pm – 7:15pm  P  Baen Traveling Road Show  
Guests: Robert Hampson, Gray Rinehart, Timothy Zahn  
Come hear what will soon be released, and/or what has recently been released, from Baen Books

6:00pm – 8:00pm  G  RPG: Sammy’s Arcade - System: Meddling Kids/Board Game Demos  
RPG: Sammy's Arcade - System: Meddling Kids - “The most fun place in town is Sammy's Arcade. It's got video games, go carts, mini-golf, and a snack bar. But when ghosts start scaring all the customers away, Sammy may have to close down his arcade for good. Can you get to the bottom of the mystery, get rid of the ghosts, and save your favorite hang-out?  
Boardgame Demos: Fast, fun pick-up games with assorted boardgames including: Codenames, Dixit, Echidna Shuffle, Forbidden Island, Jenga, Jungle Speed, Monster Factory, Yikers, Popcorn Dice, Dinosaur Island, Scooby Doo: Betrayal at Mystery Mansion, Wacky Races, and Miskatonic University

6:30pm – 7:45pm  S  Alien Ecologies: Tying SF and Science Together (ET)  
Guests: Randall Hayes  
Dr. Randall Hayes just finished two week-long worldbuilding classes with students at the NC School of Science & Math.  Come see some of their work, and apply our bottom-up systems-thinking process to your own creations.

7:00pm – 8:00pm  T  ConGregate Costume Contest  
Guests: Carol Cowles, Tom Hutchens, Cheralyn Lambeth, Daphne Reeder  
In grand convention tradition, ConGregate will host our annual costume contest. Bring your best costume and show of your skills or just enjoy the show!  
Note: Prejudging begins at 5pm in Piedmont  
Contestants: Please stop by the info desk for an exact time slot for prejudging.  
RULES  
The ConGregate Costume Contest is open to any costumed individual or group, but all participants must have valid ConGregate membership badges.  
Prejudging is Saturday in the Piedmont room at 6pm, the contest will be held in Hearn C-D (time to be determined. Information Booth with advise you when the entry form is turned in).  
Please note: New for this year, you will be assigned a time to come to the Pre-judging/ Green Room. Please speak with an Information Booth Representative to receive your time. When you arrive at your assigned time at the Green Room, you will be required to be in full costume and have everyone involved in your skit/ presentation with you. This will allow the costume contest staff to best assist you and your group. This will be the time when the Craftsmanship portion of the contest will be done as well as any Photography. Please be on time.  
Costume Contest Registrations:

Continues on next page
• Sign-Ups are available online until Thursday before the Convention.
• Sign-Ups will be available at the information booth until 5pm on Saturday.

If you have any audio or sound to be played while you are on stage, please let us know so that you can speak to the sound crew. It must be turned in when you turn in your entry form. Please have it recorded on an otherwise blank CD which is labeled with your name, your badge number, and the name of your costume (or group), Thumb Drive, or MP3 player (or other similar device). Any device other than a CD cannot be dropped off and you must speak with the sound crew to check if it can be played. There will be a sound technician in the room during prejudging to assist with anything last minute (within reason).
There should be no more than ten (10) seconds of blank time before your audio begins to play. ConGregate cannot guarantee your audio will be played during your presentation. We reserve the right to review music before allowing it to be used. CDs can be reclaimed after the Costume Contest awards are presented.

There will be no live microphone for contestants to use on stage.

There will be no spotlights or other light effects available on stage.

If you plan to draw or otherwise “use” a weapon during your presentation, note that on your Costume Contest sign-up sheet. Judges will make any necessary determination of suitability and safety.

If you are taking part in a group entry, only one Costume Contest sign-up sheet is necessary for the entire group, but the name and badge number of all group members must be listed on that sheet.
The contest is open to all ages. An adult must accompany children under 12. Parents can accompany their children onstage. Entrants under 12 will not be judged, but will receive certificates for participating.

Category Definitions (Any entrant may choose to compete in a higher category):

• **Youth** - those under the age of 14 years (see above).
• **Novice** - those who have won three (3) or fewer major (Best-, Top-, 1st Place-in category) awards in costume competitions.
• **Journeyman** - those who have won more than three major awards in costume competitions, but have won fewer than three (3) Best in Show or Best Overall awards.
• **Master** - those who have won more than three (3) Best in Show or Best Overall awards.

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*Continues on next page*
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Host: Carol Cowles
Judges: Daphne Reeder, Tom Hutchens, Cheralyn Lambeth

7:00pm – 8:15pm L  Queer Fiction on the Rise (ET)
Guests: Richard Fife, LR Gould, Michael G. Williams
Queer fiction authors and stories are more common today than ever before. Authors discuss how prevalent the LGBT+ representation has become in fiction, and how to be inclusive when writing queer characters.

Moderator: Michael G. Williams

7:00pm – 8:30pm R  Room Closed

7:30pm – 8:20pm S  Borders: From the First Sumerians to the Last Starfighter (ET)
Guests: Jim Beall
An exploration of borders in history and science fiction, including many JPGs and MP4s featuring those that breach them.

7:30pm – 8:45pm L  The Power of Humor (ET)
Guests: Larry N. Martin, Chuck Parker, Fraser Sherman, Mike Jack Stoumbos
Whether it's puns like Piers Anthony's Xanth or the irreverence of Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy, humor in SF is often hard to find. Join our panelists as they discuss the most humorous novels they've read (or written) and why humor is integral to the story.

Moderator: Fraser Sherman

8:00pm – 8:50pm F  Fighting "Fires" During Your Convention (ET)
Guests: Carol Cowles, D. J. McGuire, Michael D. Pederson, Joey Starnes
A Guest of Honor goes to the wrong airport. Your hotel contract doesn't actually say quite what you thought it did. What crises have our panelists experienced while working as conrunners, and how did they handle it? We're not just sharing horror stories, we'll also talk about the ways you can prepare for the unexpected so that you can handle the crisis that comes up when you least expect it.

Moderator: Michael D. Pederson
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00pm – 9:00pm</td>
<td><strong>Closed for Auction Set Up</strong></td>
<td>Hearn C-D (Main Programming)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30pm – 9:00pm</td>
<td><strong>Reading: Violette Meier</strong></td>
<td>Reynolda</td>
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<td><strong>Guests: Violette Meier</strong></td>
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<td>8:30pm – 9:20pm</td>
<td><strong>A Dark and Stormy Night (ET)</strong></td>
<td>Winston</td>
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<td><strong>Guests: Nicole Givens Kurtz, Misty Massey</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Program Participants: Matthew Saunders</strong></td>
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<td>Raven-haired heiresses running over the moors, brooding lords hiding terrible secrets and the full moon seeing it all...the gothic novel has attracted readers since the 18th century and now, with the success of books like Mexican Gothic and The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter, gothic is making a comeback. What draws readers to this shadowy style of visual and narrative storytelling? And where do we see it going in the future?</td>
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<td>8:30pm – 9:30pm</td>
<td><strong>Metal &amp; a Pint (AP)</strong></td>
<td>Bethabara</td>
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<td><strong>Guests: Jason Gilbert, Dave Harlequin, Valentine Wolfe</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Program Participants: James Fulbright</strong></td>
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<td>Our guests will discuss their favorite metal music and wash the conversation down with a beer.</td>
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<td><em>(Pick up something from the bar if you wish to drink along with the guests.)</em></td>
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<td><strong>Moderator: James Fulbright</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30pm – 10:00pm</td>
<td><strong>Workshop/Demo: Body Paint 101</strong></td>
<td>Piedmont</td>
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<td><strong>Guests: Daphne Reeder</strong></td>
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<td>Body Painting can add to your costume/cosplay but what does it take? Accomplished Body Paint artist Daphne Reeder talks you through some of the most important things to know: what type of paint to use? How do safely paint around your face? Other tips and tricks.</td>
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<td>9:00pm – 9:30pm</td>
<td><strong>Reading: Michael G. Williams</strong></td>
<td>Reynolda</td>
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<td><strong>Guests: Michael G. Williams</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00pm – 9:30pm</td>
<td><strong>Merchandise Viewing - Charity Auction</strong></td>
<td>Hearn C-D (Main Programming)</td>
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<td>With COVID-19 safety rules in place, this is your time to view the merchandise that will be for sale.</td>
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<td>9:00pm – 9:50pm</td>
<td><strong>Independent Comics and Why You Should Be Reading Them (ET)</strong></td>
<td>Salem</td>
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<td><strong>Dealers: Savage Sand Box, ENDtense J.E.T Studios</strong></td>
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<td>Indie comics tend to push the envelope in creativity and storytelling. Join our panelists as they share how they got started in Independent Comics and what makes Independent comics different from the Mainstream.</td>
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<td>9:00pm – 9:50pm</td>
<td><strong>Terror in the Deep (AP)</strong></td>
<td>Moravian</td>
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<td><strong>Guests: Ora McGuire, Gary Mitchel</strong></td>
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<td>From Underwater, to The Shallows, to the biggest fish in the pond, Jaws, we love horror movies set on, or under, the seven seas. Let's talk about why we keep going back into the water.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30pm – 10:00pm</td>
<td><strong>Reading: Fraser Sherman</strong></td>
<td>Reynolda</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Guests: Fraser Sherman</strong></td>
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</table>
Representation in Fan Fiction (ET)
Guests: Gail Z. Martin, Maya Preisler
Queer, Genderbent, Characters with Disabilities. When we don't see ourselves in the things we watch or read, fans often reimagine the story by adding characters or finding places for representation. Our panelists discuss the power of representation by re-writing our favorite characters or creating our own head-canons.

ConGegate Charity Auction
ConGegate will once again be raising money to support the food pantry of the Winston-Salem Rescue Mission. Availability of food in July is often overlooked because of the food drives which take place during the winter holiday season. Join us in helping feed our neighbors.

Reading: Randall Hayes
Guests: Randall Hayes

How Did it Hold Up? (ET)
Guests: Misty Massey, Gary Mitchel, Fraser Sherman, Michael G. Williams
Many significant books of fantasy and horror contain brutal racism, sexism, and other harmful views. But they are still important to their genres. How should we approach these works as readers, writers, and scholars? How do we decide what should remain in our genre conversations?

Moderator: Gary Mitchel

Writing: Nature vs Nurture (ET)
Guests: Patrick Dugan, LR Gould, Emily Lavin Leverett, Jim Nettles
Where does the creative spark come from? Both from nurturing (such as our imagination and intuition), and from nature (the world, the muses, the collisions). This panel explores the sources of creativity and how to use them in your creative endeavors.

Moderator: Jim Nettles

Open Pitch Session (AP)
Guests: Jason Graves, John G. Hartness, Nicole Givens Kurtz
Hallway Exhibitors: Mocha Memoirs Press, Prospective Press, Falstaff Publishing
You’ve just finished wordsmithing your pitch...now try it out in front of three publishers!

Short Film Sampler
Guests: Dave Harlequin, Christopher Jones
Curious to see what the ConGegate 2023 Film Festival might include? Stop by to see short films by local film producers: Dave Harlequin, Jason Bigart, Josh Mabe, and Jaysen Buterin.
Sunday Schedule

Check Your Calendar
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>9:00am – 9:50am</td>
<td>F</td>
<td><strong>Non-Denominational Prayer Service</strong> &lt;br&gt;<strong>Guests:</strong> Gray Rinehart</td>
<td>Bethabara</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00am – 10:45am</td>
<td>W</td>
<td><strong>Workshop: How to Ask a Publisher to “Buy my book” without Saying “Buy my book?” (fee)</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Guests:</strong> Patrick Dugan, Jim Nettles</td>
<td>Piedmont</td>
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<td>Patrick Dugan and Jim Nettles will work with participants to fine tune a query. Participants are asked to bring a query draft which the workshop will critique. Participants will then rewrite their query for presentation. Max Students: 12, pre-registration recommended.</td>
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<td><strong>Fee for Participants:</strong> $10</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00am – 11:15am</td>
<td>C</td>
<td><strong>ConSuite Open</strong></td>
<td>Suite 411 (ConSuite)</td>
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<td>We will close the Suite periodically for cleaning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00am – 10:30am</td>
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<td><strong>Reading: Darin Kennedy</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Dealers:</strong> Darin Kennedy</td>
<td>Reynolda</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00am – 10:50am</td>
<td>L</td>
<td><strong>Writing as the Day Job (ET)</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Guests:</strong> Stuart Jaffe, Larry N. Martin, Fraser Sherman, Timothy Zahn&lt;br&gt;Interruptions? Deadlines? Painful edits? The dreaded rejection? It's all up for discussion. Our panelists discuss the pros and cons of writing as a livelihood.</td>
<td>Salem</td>
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<td><strong>Moderator:</strong> Stuart Jaffe</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00am – 11:00am</td>
<td>N</td>
<td><strong>Signing: Melissa Scott &amp; Amy Griswold</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Guests:</strong> Amy Griswold, Melissa Scott</td>
<td>Signing Table (Hearn A-B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00am – 11:15am</td>
<td>V</td>
<td><strong>Science Fiction: Broken Todays or Better Tomorrows? (ET)</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Guests:</strong> Robert Hampson, Randall Hayes, D. J. McGuire, Michael G. Williams&lt;br&gt;The past year has seen a ton of science fiction built specifically around alternate timelines, futures that need saving, pasts that need fixing, and waking up in a now that doesn't feel right. As we work through the collective traumas of our overlapping real-world crises, are we neglecting the better future we hope awaits us or are we clearing the path to building it? Or is there even a difference? This panel will discuss Star Trek: Picard, Everything Everywhere All at Once, Matrix Resurrections, Wandavision, Star Trek: Discovery, and other shows with similar elements and themes, including spoilers!</td>
<td>Winston</td>
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<td><strong>Moderator:</strong> Michael G. Williams</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
10:00am – 11:30am F Recruiting Drive (ET)

Guests: Tom Hutchens, Cheralyn Lambeth, Matthew Penick
Hallway Exhibitors: USS Charon, Rebel Legion
Join members of the 501st, Rebel Legion, Mandalorian Mercs, Starfleet and the Ebon Legion as they talk about what their group does and why you should join the madness!

10:00am – 12:00pm V Crossroads - Project Gemini Screening and Q&A

Guests: The Nefarious Ferrets
From the Creator of Dreadnought Dominion
FilkFerret Productions in association with No Budget Productions
A new Star Trek Fan Film Production
Frank Parker Jr reprises his role as Commodore Samuel T. Grissom, with and new cast and crew filmed in Gastonia, NC. The series starts after a 6-year hiatus of now Admiral Sam Grissom who left the U.S.S. Dominion, a Federation Dreadnought Class starship, after accepting a ground assignment and promotion to Admiral and instructor at Starfleet Academy, leaving the crew of the Dominion questioning why he left so suddenly. After these long years of being desk bound, he is called back to take the reins of the U.S.S. Harrison, a Gemini Class experimental four nacelle vessel with some unique characteristics, and to reconcile with his past.

Hang around after the viewing to ask questions of the cast/crew about the episode.

10:00am – 12:00pm G RPG: Star Wars: The Child - System: Fate Accelerated/ Board Game Demos

Star Wars: The Child - System: Fate Accelerated - A Force-sensitive teacher has asked a group of galactic adventurers to find a guardian for a child who was left in his care many years ago. He is tiny, green, adorable - and a whole lot of trouble. Can you keep this child safe from bounty hunters and other dangers? Can you keep him from crashing your ship because he likes to play with the controls when you aren't looking?
May the Force be with you!

Boardgame Demos: Fast, fun pick-up games with assorted boardgames including: Codenames, Dixit, Echidna Shuffle, Forbidden Island, Jenga, Jungle Speed, Monster Factory, Yikers, Popcorn Dice, Dinosaur Island, Scooby Doo: Betrayal at Mystery Mansion, Wacky Races, and Miskatonic University

10:30am – 11:00am L Reading; Mike Jack Stoumbos

Guests: Mike Jack Stoumbos

10:30am – 11:30am M Performance: Valentine Wolfe

Guests: Valentine Wolfe

11:00am – 11:50am F When the Panel Goes Rogue (ET)

Guests: Jim Beall, Chris Oakley, Michael D. Pederson, Joey Starnes
An off topic panelist. An audience member who seems to think they're on the panel. An ineffective moderator. How do you address these situations when they arise? What is the role of the moderator, other panelists, and the audience itself?

Moderator: Michael D. Pederson
The 25th Element - 25 Years of LeeloDallasMiltipass! (ET)

Guests: Ora McGuire, Gary Mitchel, Chuck Parker, Maya Preisler

And y'know they got a convention to run here, and it must pop, pop, POP! So it's time to look back at *The Fifth Element*, one of the wildest sci-fi movies to show us alien divas, strange monks, belligerent taxi drivers, odd hair choices, meat popsicles, and the power of love!

**Moderator:** Gary Mitchel

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### Signing

**11:00am – 12:00pm**

**N** Signing: LR Gould

**Guests:** LR Gould

**11:00am – 12:00pm**

**N** Signing: Timothy Zahn (at his table)

**Guests:** Timothy Zahn

Timothy Zahn will also be available throughout the weekend at his table in the dealers room.

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### Neurodiversity in SF (ET)

**11:30am – 12:20pm**

**S** Neurodiversity in SF (ET)

**Guests:** Carol Cowles, Jason Graves, Randall Hayes, Mike Jack Stoumbos

From the existence of neurodiversity and neuroscience in genre and fandom to neurodivergent-coded characters, we'll discuss what they get right and what they get wrong as well as what neurodiversity is to better understand what the representation means for the community.

**Moderator:** Carol Cowles

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### ConSuite Open

**11:30am – 2:30pm**

**C** ConSuite Open

We will close the Suite periodically for cleaning.

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### Art: From Pen and Paper to Digital (ET)

**12:00pm – 12:50pm**

**A** Art: From Pen and Paper to Digital (ET)

**Guests:** John Grigni, Maya Preisler, Darcy Wold

Panelists discuss the evolution of art from using pen and paper to creating art with digital pens and tablets. How has the creation of art work changes with the advances in technology? What remains the same?

**Moderator:** Maya Preisler

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### Live Streaming for Dummies (ET)

**12:00pm – 12:50pm**

**F** Live Streaming for Dummies (ET)

**Guests:** Tom Hutchens, Jim Nettles, Angela Pritchett

What is it? How do you do it? How is it different from podcasting? And can it be for things other than games?

**Moderator:** Jim Nettles

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### Stories from the 501st (AP)

**12:00pm – 12:50pm**

**F** Stories from the 501st (AP)

**Hallway Exhibitors:** 501st Legion

25 years ago, a costuming group of Star Wars fans was born. 20 years ago, the Carolina Garrison was formed. As their first honorary members, the Carolina Garrison inducted authors, Timothy Zahn, Michael A. Stackpole and Aaron Alston. Join Cheralyn Lambeth and other members of the 501st as they share some of the highs and lows that make up the history of this organization.

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### Signing

**12:00pm – 1:00pm**

**N** Signing: Daphne Reeder

**Guests:** Daphne Reeder
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Panel</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12:00pm – 1:30pm</td>
<td><strong>“Geeky Rants” (AP)</strong></td>
<td>Bethabara</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Guests: Darin Kennedy, Chris Shrewsbury, Joey Starnes</em></td>
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<td>A ConGregate tradition, come be a part of our good-natured meltdown as we complain about the things we hate about the things we love.</td>
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<td><strong>Moderator: Chris Shrewsbury</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00pm – 2:00pm</td>
<td><strong>Open Gaming/Board Game Demos</strong></td>
<td>Corpening</td>
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<td>SCARAB gaming convention and Clarion Games will be on hand during various times to run demos and games on request.</td>
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<td>Boardgame Demos: Fast, fun pick-up games with assorted boardgames including: Codenames, Dixit, Echidna Shuffle, Forbidden Island, Jenga, Jungle Speed, Monster Factory, Yikers, Popcorn Dice, Dinosaur Island, Scooby Doo: Betrayal at Mystery Mansion, Wacky Races, and Miskatonic University</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30pm – 1:20pm</td>
<td><strong>Mars Wants What? (ET)</strong></td>
<td>Winston</td>
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<td><em>Guests: Randall Hayes, Misty Massey</em></td>
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<td>Despite what so many books and movies have insisted, aliens are probably not interested in our water or our women. What are some legitimate reasons for alien contact or invasion? Are there any writers or filmmakers who got the aliens' motivations right? And what was that green flash in the sky last night?</td>
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<td>12:30pm – 1:20pm</td>
<td><strong>Is Horror Back? Did It Ever Leave? (AP)</strong></td>
<td>Moravian</td>
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<td><em>Guests: Christopher Jones, Gary Mitchel, Michael D. Pederson, Michael G. Williams</em></td>
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<td>From <em>Stranger Things</em> to <em>The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina</em>, it seems like there is a resurgence in horror on film and tv. Let's discuss our favorites and why horror is so popular at that moment?</td>
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<td><strong>Moderator: Michael D. Pederson</strong></td>
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<td>1:00pm – 1:50pm</td>
<td><strong>Alternative Medium in Costuming (ET)</strong></td>
<td>Piedmont</td>
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<td><em>Guests: Frederick Corry, Tom Hutchens, Cheralyn Lambeth, Matthew Penick</em></td>
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<td>From toothpicks to craft foam, our panelists discuss alternative medium that they have used to create props or costumes.</td>
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<td><strong>Moderator: Cheralyn Lambeth</strong></td>
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<td>1:00pm – 1:50pm</td>
<td><strong>The Power of Rejection (ET)</strong></td>
<td>Salem</td>
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<td><em>Guests: Richard Fife, Nicole Givens Kurtz, Jim Nettles, Fraser Sherman</em></td>
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<td>Rejection sucks. But sometimes it can be the impetus to push you on to greater things. Our panelists discuss receiving their first rejection, how they reacted and how it made them a better writer.</td>
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<td><strong>Moderator: Jim Nettles</strong></td>
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SUNDAY

1:00pm – 2:00pm  N  Signing: Maya Preisler
                 Guests: Maya Preisler

1:00pm – 2:30pm  M  Filk Collective
                 Guests: White Plectrum/Keith Brinegar, The Nefarious Ferrets, D. J. McGuire, Chuck Parker, Angela Pritchett, Gray Rinehart
                 Join our filkers as they share some tunes. Bring yourself, your guitar and enjoy a last round of music before the con ends.

1:30pm – 2:20pm  L  Method Writing (ET)
                 Guests: Jason Gilbert, Emily Lavin Leverett, Larry N. Martin, Melissa Scott
                 Most writers have ways of getting to grips with an imaginary world, whether it's drawing extensive maps, inventing complex languages, practicing the martial arts, or collecting artifacts that seem as though they should belong in that universe. What are your favorites, what hasn't worked for you, and what are your favorite starting points for building setting, characters, and plots?

                 Moderator: Melissa Scott

2:00pm – 3:00pm  E  To 2023 and Beyond!
                 Program Participants: James Fulbright
                 Join James and other staff members as we share some upcoming plans for 2023 and listen to your feedback and suggestions.
Keep the spread down... be safe around your fellow attendees!
ConGregate 9
July 14-16, 2023
Downtown Marriott & Embassy Suites
Winston-Salem, NC

Michael A. Stackpole

Multiple New York Times bestselling author of over forty fantasy and science fiction novels, including works in the Star Wars® Conan, Pathfinder, BattleTech and World of Warcraft universes

Also announcing our inaugural ConGregate Short Film Festival!

ConGregate is produced by ConGregate Productions, Inc.