

ConGregate 11

Geek Summer Vacation



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From the Con Chair

Welcome to ConGregarate 11, "Geek Summer Vacation!"

This year, we are thrilled to host a great line-up of distinguished guests, and to introduce several new events and lectures designed to inspire and engage our attendees. Specifically, we are launching a new Professional Development Lecture Series for Writers and have an official World of Darkness LARP brought to us from By Night Studios. We are also re-launching our Costume Contest, along with many of the other fun events you usually see here at the convention. We are confident that these programming sessions will provide a fun, and maybe even insightful weekend!

We encourage you to take full advantage of the opportunities to make friends and participate in the various activities planned. Your presence and participation make ConGregarate what it is today; and ensures a successful convention.

Thanks for joining us! We look forward to a fun and memorable experience together.

-James Fulbright
President/Con Chair

The Schedule of Events can be found
on [Sched.com](https://congregate2025.sched.com)



congregate2025.sched.com



Convention Staff and Harassment Policy

Convention Staff

Convention Chairman	James Fulbright
Vice Chairman	Wendell McCollom
Programming Director	Tera Fulbright
Special Events Coordinator	Hannah Fulbright
Guest Coordinator	John Desmarais
Auction Coordinator	Glen Beattie
Film Festival Coordinator	Christopher Jones
Costume Contest Coordinator	Andy Simmons
Director of Accessibility and Safety	Richard Sarner
ConSuite Director	Aaron Brite
Director of Registration	Cindy Walker
Exhibit Space Director	Bill Mann
Dealer Room Assistant	Janine Martinez
Director of Operations	Jody Byrd
Marketing Director	Carmen Mason
Assistant Marketing Director	Allan Mason

Volunteers

Susan Beattie, Alex Brinegar, Keith Brinegar, Cora Busick, Jen "Chibi" Davis, Tim Dixon, Jen Dineen, Mikie Gillespie, Greg Gunsallus, Lynn Holiman, Todd Holiman, Richard Jordan, Tessa Keller, Marion Malloy, Tamara Massey, Heather Simpson, Izzy Simpson, John Simpson, Daniel Rudolph Smith, Abby Whitworth, Dana Windsor, Zak

ConGRegate Productions

Corporate Officers

James Fulbright, President
Laura Haywood-Cory, Vice President
Tera Fulbright, Secretary
Pam Greeson, Treasurer

Board of Directors

Everette Beach (Chairman of the Board)
Laura Haywood-Cory
Paul Cory
James Fulbright
Tera Fulbright

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 Prefunction areas, or at the Hanes Boardroom in the Marriott (see map on p. 22).

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

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 ConGregarate 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. ConGregarate'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. 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.
4. ConGregarate 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.
5. Mother always said, "Don't run in the house!" The same applies to the con site.
6. Do not tear up the hotels! We like it here and want to come back at some point. If you have a lapse in judgment, and we catch you wrecking one of the hotels... well,.. go back and read rule number 2.
7. You may only hang signs on the walls of the hotels (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 almost certainly apply.
8. No camping out in the convention spaces after the con closes for the night - even if you aren't actually sleeping. This is a liability issue for the con.
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 ConSuite). Blasters and fake weapons are permitted if you swing by the reg desk first and allow us to "peace-bond" it (which usually consists of tying orange ribbon around the barrel).
10. The staff of ConGregarate cannot permit unauthorized*

vendors to sell anything at the convention. The dealers have paid good money to be here and it's simply not fair to them otherwise.

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 conventioners 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. ConGregarate takes ADA very seriously. We will attempt to accommodate all needs to the best of our ability. Please see our specific policies on ADA.
14. As with most locations, our host hotel makes a good chunk of its money from catering. It is one way they can help keep your convention costs low. You may not eat food in the con space unless it was purchased from the hotel. Your options this weekend are: you can eat what you buy from the hotel, go out to eat, or eat in your personal room.
15. The hotel has requested that no "outside" alcohol be brought into the con areas. We encourage you to patronize the hotel bars, visit a nearby pub or brewery, or to drink in your private hotel rooms & suites. Also, do not carry alcohol from one hotel to another.
16. ConGregarate 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.
17. While the convention organizers encourage members to bring their children to ConGregarate, 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 ConGregarate is not a daycare service. Children left unattended may be remanded to the care of Child Protective Services.
18. No smoking (or vaping) inside the hotel. Smoking areas are available outside of the hotel.
19. We believe in the "no costume is no costume" rule. Naked people are not quite appropriate for ConGregarate's common areas.

ConSuite

Room 313 (Marriott)

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.



HOURS

FRI 2:00pm - 9:00pm

SAT 9:00am - 9:00pm

SUN 9:00am - 2:00pm

20. There are specific rules regarding photography. You can find them on this page.

21. 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.

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

23. And, finally, our most important rule during the convention is: HAVE FUN!

Privacy Policy

ConGregarate 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 panelists must agree to be recorded.
2. No recording may posted on the internet or broadcast in any way without written permission of ConGregarate'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.

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 2024 convention. We encourage everyone to wear a Hawaiian shirt on Friday, July 11 in honor of:

- Laurel Amberdine
- John Amos
- George Barr
- Robert Benton
- Bruce Boston
- Damien Broderick
- Ruth Buzzi
- Bill Cobbs
- Kenneth Colley
- Peter David
- Shannon Doherty
- Shelley Duvall
- Ron Ely
- M.J. Engh
- Teri Garr
- Andrew C. Greenberg
- Kerry Greenwood
- Todd Grimson
- Gene Hackman
- Lou Harper
- Greg Hildebrandt
- Robert Irwin
- Fredric Jameson
- James Earl Jones
- Howard Andrew Jones
- Zoe Kaplan
- Val Kilmer
- Nancy Kilpatrick
- T. Jackson King
- Deborah P. Kolodji
- Kris Kristofferson
- Anthony R. Lewis
- Rachael Lillis
- Morgan Lofting
- Barry B. Longyear
- David Lynch
- (Taral) Wayne MacDonald
- John Marsden
- Michael Masden
- Julian McMahan
- Chris Moore
- Peter Morwood
- Martin Mull
- Obi Ndefo
- Bob Newhart
- Clive Revill
- Al Sarrantonio
- Lalo Schifrin
- David Schleinkofer
- Peter-Henry Schroeder
- L.J. Smith
- Maggie Smith
- Mark Snow
- Tim Sullivan
- Tony Todd
- Michelle Trachtenberg
- Robert Trebor
- Rodger Turner
- George Wendt
- John Wycough
- Patti Yasutake
- George Zebrowski
- Trent Zelazny

In memoriam



Aaron Allston 1960 - 2014

Statement on Inclusion

At ConGregarate, 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.

Statement on Community Health

At ConGregarate, 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.

Furthermore, as the new COVID-19 variant, as well as other viruses, are spreading quickly, we recommend masking up, particularly in crowded spaces

We are also doing what we can 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.

ADA Accommodations

ConGregarate has taken steps to make sure adequate we are as accommodating as financially possible.

Space

We try to provide adequate space in the con areas for individuals with mobility needs. We ask that other members of the convention do the same.

Service Animals

ConGregarate is happy to allow service animals into the con spaces, provided they meet Federal requirements, specifically they are fully trained and well behaved.

Service animals should not:

- Jump up on other attendees
- Bark frequently throughout the day. If your animal is trained to bark frequently, please contact us ahead of time so we can try to work around that as much as possible.

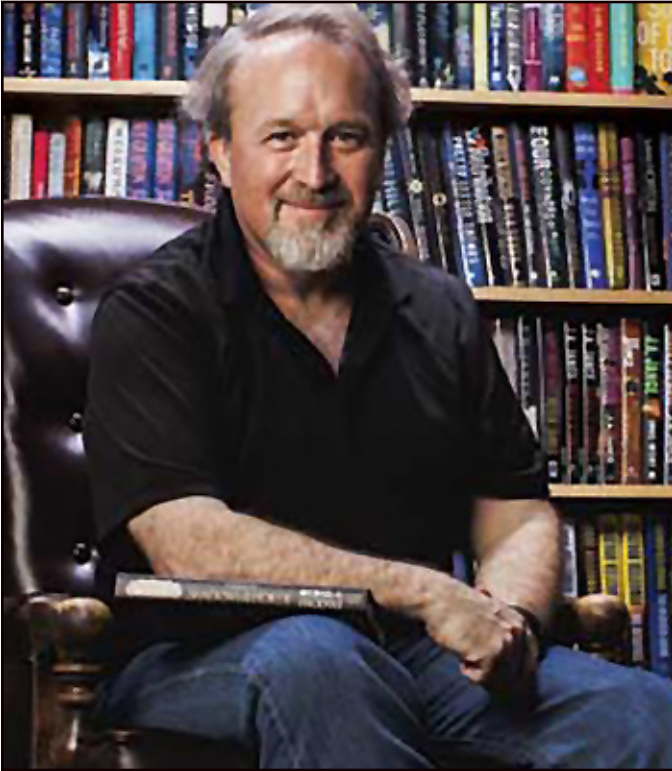


Milton J. Davis

Milton Davis is an award-winning Black Speculative fiction author and owner of MVmedia, LLC, a small publishing company specializing in Science Fiction and fantasy based on African/African Diaspora history, cultures, and traditions. For sixteen years he has been at the forefront of Black Speculative Fiction and Afrofuturism. He's the author of thirty novels and short story collections and editor/coeditor of fourteen anthologies. Milton has been published in various publications, such as *Black Panther: Tales of Wakanda*, *Slay: Stories of the Vampire Noire*, and *The Year's Best African Speculative Fiction 2022*. His publications have been nominated for various awards, including the Pushcart Award and the British Science Fiction Association Award for short fiction. His most current project as a co-editor, *The Year's Best African Speculative Fiction 2022*, was nominated for the 2024 Locus Award for best anthology.

Milton has received the ECBACC Pioneer Lifetime Achievement Award, The 2024 ConCarolinas Polaris Award, and the 2024 DeepSouthCon Phoenix Award.

Guests of Honor



Michael A. Stackpole

Michael A. Stackpole is the multiple New York Times bestselling author of over forty fantasy and science fiction novels, his best known books written in the *Star Wars*® universe, including *I, Jedi* and *Rogue Squadron*, as well as the X-Wing graphic novel series. He has also written in the Conan, Pathfinder, BattleTech and World of Warcraft universes, among others.

In 2017, Stackpole was the Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing at Arizona State University Distinguished Writer-in-Residence. Stackpole's other honors include: the 2023 Grand Master for the International Association of Media Tie-In Writers, Induction into the Academy Gaming Arts and Design Hall of Fame, a Parsec Award for "Best Podcast Short Story," and a Topps's selection as Best *Star Wars*® Comic Book Writer. Stackpole is the first author to sell work in Apple's App Store, and he's been an advocate for authors taking advantage of the digital revolution.

www.stormwolf.com



Timothy Zahn

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. 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-five novels, over a hundred short stories and novelettes, and five collections of short fiction. Best known for his sixteen *Star Wars* novels, he is also the author of the *Quadrail* series, the *Cobra* series, the *Conquerors* trilogy, the *Sibyl's War* trilogy, the young-adult *Dragonback* series, and the current *Icarus Saga*.

You can contact him at [Facebook.com/TimothyZahn](https://www.facebook.com/TimothyZahn).

Guests of the Convention

Jim Beall

Jim Beall (BS-Math, MBA, PE) has been a nuclear engineer for 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, power reactor startup testing, research reactor inspections, and an 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 research into alternative and speculative energy sources, as well as energy forecasts and transmission technologies. Energy sources included coal, oil, hydro, geothermal, tidal, solar, wind, fracking, space-based, heavy water reactors, breeder reactors, fusion, and even anti-matter.

Jo Boone

Jo Boone is the author of the Combined Service series: *The Magnetar*, *Elaninae*, and *The Celestial Sea*, published by Chris Kennedy Publishing/Theogony Press. Jo's science fiction and fantasy stories have appeared in *Remnants of Empire* and (under the byline Jennifer Busick) in the anthologies *Challenge Accepted*, *Thou Shalt Not*, *Beyond the Last Star*, and *Touch the Sky*, and in magazines including *Weird Tales* and *Black Gate*. Her short stories "The Thief" (published in *Thou Shalt Not*) and "La Desterrada" (published in *Black Gate*) received honorable mentions in two Year's Best anthologies.

Jo lives in Winston-Salem, NC but is also well-connected in the well-known and highly influential cultural centers of central Indiana and north Alabama. She is often held up as a shining example of how "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing."

Roger and Janet Carden

Roger and Janet Carden are the husband-and-wife team behind *The Halfling* and *the Spaceman: Journeys In Active Fandom*. (2022-present) *The Halfling and the Spaceman* is a podcast featuring a series of conversations with creators

as they detail their personal journey from becoming inspired by fandom to being creators in their own right.

In addition, the Cardens also published *Crimson Streets*. *Crimson Streets* (2016–2023) is an online magazine and associated anthology series dedicated to fiction in the style of the pulp magazines of yesteryear, focused on fast-paced stories of action, adventure, and intrigue, from hard-boiled detectives and dangerous dames, to bold aviators and unspeakable horrors.

Before starting *Crimson Streets*, Roger and Janet worked with a team which published *The Familiar* (1988–1998), a professional print magazine dedicated to role-playing and adventure games.

Roger is a co-founder of the Game Publishers Association and an early supporter and member of CAR-PGa, the Committee for the Advancement or Role-Playing Games. Both enjoy playing "let's pretend" with their friends via tabletop role-playing games. Janet is a fan of mystery and crime novels, whereas Roger is a fan of classic science-fiction and fantasy. They both really enjoy genre movies; the good ones--and the really, really bad ones.

Sammie Cassell

Sammie Cassell is a NC based actor, producer and comedian. He has been seen in *Halloween Kills*, *Eyes of Tammy Faye*, *Please Don't Destroy*, *Righteous Gemstones* and many local films. He does Improv comedy out of the Idiot Box Comedy Club in Greensboro NC and is a performer with the Channel 53 sketch troupe. Known in some circles as Sammie the Comic Book Man. He's also VP of Wreak Havoc Productions.

Paige L. Christie

Paige L. Christie is author of The Legacies of Arnan fantasy series: *Draigon Weather* (2017), *Wing Wind* (2018), *Long Light* (2019), *Storm Forge* (2022). She has stories in several anthologies including IP work in the Valdemar universe by Mercedes Lackey/ As a believer in the power of words, Paige tells stories that are both entertaining and thoughtful. Especially of interest are tales that speak to women and open a space where adventure and fantasy are not all about happy endings. When she isn't writing, she teaches belly dancing, is director of a non-profit, and teaches at the Speculative Fiction Academy. She is a proud, founding member of the Blazing Lioness Writers, a small group of badass women, writing badass books. Paige is a full member of SFWA since 2020.

Guests of the Convention

Kevin A. Davis

Kevin A. Davis is an award-winning contemporary fantasy author with three published series; the episodic DRC files with Kristen, the Khimmer Chronicles featuring the lively assassin Ahnjii, and the AngelSong series centering around the indomitable Haddie. A multitude of his short stories of have been published in anthologies. Residing in north Florida, he attends conventions throughout the year either as staff, vendor, speaker, or a fan. His newest series, the DRC Files, features the curly and curvy Kristen, a witch with exceptional skill in magic, as the new agent in a secret team that tracks down the worst to seep through the realms.

As panelist at fandom conventions, and an attendee, he travels to many events in the Southeast United States with a wide interest in speculative fiction from epic fantasy to science fiction. Kevin A Davis has published a dozen anthologies through Inkd Pub. He is director of the Authors Workshop Track at JordanCon.

Dave Dobson

A native of Ames, Iowa, Dave loves writing, reading, board games, computer games, improv comedy, pizza, barbarian movies, and the cheaper end of the Taco Bell menu. Also, his wife and kids.

Dave is the author of *Snood*, *Snoodoku*, *Snood Towers*, and other computer games. Dave first published *Snood* in 1996, and it became one of the most popular shareware games of the early Internet. He's recently published some puzzle card games in the Doctor Esker's Notebook series.

Dave taught geology, environmental studies, and computer programming at Guilford College for 24 years. He does improv comedy at the Idiot Box in Greensboro, North Carolina. He's also played the world's largest tuba in concert. Not that that is relevant, but it's still kinda cool.

Flames Over Frosthelm was Dave's first novel, released in 2019. He followed it a year later with *Traitors Unseen* and *The Outcast Crown*, then *Daros* in 2021, *The Woeling Lass* in 2022, and *Got Trouble* and *Kenai* in 2023. Dave started 2024 with the mystery *What Grows From the Dead* followed quickly by the humorous epic fantasy, *The Glorious and Epic Tale of Lady Isovar*.

Dave's book *Kenai* was the winner (out of 221 entries) of the 3rd Self-Published Science Fiction Competition (SPSFC) founded by Hugh Howey, author of *Wool* and *Silo*.

Nancy E. Dunne

Nancy E. Dunne is a multi-genre speculative fiction author and nationally certified American Sign Language/English interpreter. She is fascinated with how language and culture can shape and influence storytelling. She has published novels in the epic fantasy genre, in LitRPG/portal fantasy, and a standalone alternative history/gaslamp fantasy novel. She lives in the Upstate of SC with her husband and dogs, and is a member of the Broadleaf Writers Association in Georgia.

Nancy started writing when she was a child, stapling books together to the delight of her former English teacher mother. Though focused on her career as an interpreter, she returned to writing with the publication of several books about her dogs, told from their perspective, starting in 2002 with the Proud Racer series, and then the Clobberpaws series in 2016. But in 2017 she published the first of her fantasy novels, *Wanderer: Origin of the Nature Walker*, and hasn't looked back since.

Though with the retirement of her Irish Wolfhound Bryn, Nancy is on hiatus from renaissance festival performance, she is still the founder and director of the Hounds of East Fairhaven troupe that performs at the Carolina, Georgia, and Upstate (SC) renaissance faires and Tartan Day South (West Columbia, SC). But writing is her passion, and she has several projects underway, including a new vampire series that she is co-authoring with long time friend and author Tony Daniel (*Return to Sender: From the Files of Pyramid Investigations*, 2017). She enjoys connecting with readers and other authors at conventions and shows.

Meri Elena

Meri is a North Carolina speculative fiction writer, mostly of dark fantasy and paranormal, but she doesn't really color inside the lines. She published her first short story when she was fourteen, and her mom insisted she use a pen name. She took some creative license with her actual first and middle names, and Meri Elena was brought forth.

She has published two novels in her young adult urban fantasy series, *Nightfall* and *Blood Magik*, in addition to a smattering of short stories. Two of those are in *Off the Beaten Path* anthologies. She also has a weekly podcast, *Herbarium of the Bizarre*, about strange and interesting plants. She's got to make use of that plant biology degree somehow.

She lives in Kernersville, NC with her three cats, Joon, Wednesday, and Autumn. She works in communications

Guests of the Convention

for the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, but on weekends she can often be found at conventions and bookstores around the southeast.

Angela Giddings

Angela Giddings is a writer, scientist, and independent filmmaker from North Carolina. She has a PhD in Microbiology and authored multiple scientific articles in virology, cell line design, and gene therapy. She is the author of the futuristic dark fantasy series *Dance of Ages*, which begins with *Shadow into Light*. Recently, she has had short stories published in various anthologies and has written and directed a short and horror film with Sick Chick Flicks. She is also the co-director of the Sick Chick Flicks Film Festival.

Jason Gilbert

Jason Gilbert is an author and film critic best known for his action-packed and often irreverent *Coldstone Case Files* series and his dark Urban Fantasy/Alternate History *Clockworks of War* series.

Jason streams on Twitch as Failflix with OhHaiMark and TheGreyCat on Terrible Movies with Wonderful People. His influences include horror cinema, bloody video games, dark beer, and heavy metal music.

Theresa Glover

Theresa Glover is the author of the Caitlin Kelley Monster Hunter series of books, a developmental editor, and the Associate Publisher at Falstaff Books. She also gets up to ridiculous role-playing shenanigans as part of the Authors and Dragons podcast series, an assistant con-runner for the Saga writing conference and Authors and Dragons Con. At conventions, she is often found gleefully tempting readers with awesome books at the Falstaff Books Mothership (aka book table). This nerd enjoys all kinds of gaming - from board games to Magic the Gathering - to geeking out about writing, publishing, genre fiction, and crafting in general. When not planning or attending conventions, wrangling ADHD-powered kittens behind the scenes at Falstaff Books, or wreaking editorial havoc on copulas and other writerly sins, she's probably buried in a book, devouring horror movies alone in the dark or playing Pokemon with her nephew.

Tom Gore

Born and raised in Newport RI. of Irish heritage, he realized from an early age that he enjoyed entertaining people with his off beat sense of humor. His first acting experience came as a high school freshman when he performed in a school play. He immediately fell in love with the entire theater experience. That feeling of exhilaration after the final curtain came down is one that never left him. After graduating he decided to put that on hold to join the Army and serve his country. With his drive and determination he advanced quickly and was trained in a multitude of advanced skills. He eventually entered flight school where he was trained as an attack combat pilot. Throughout his 20 year military career he served with distinction including 3 tours in Afghanistan and 1 in Iraq, and was decorated in battle as an Apache Longbow Helicopter pilot.

It was the difficult things he experienced in battle that influenced him to seek out the lighter side of life through his early love of comedy and entertaining people. With his quick wit and improvisational abilities, he soon became known among his fellow soldiers for his ability to step out of himself and create comedic characters with great humor and vibrancy. These techniques helped him deal with the day to day realities of war.

It was after he no longer had to concentrate on such life and death struggles that he had time to reflect on what he wanted to do with the next chapter of his life after he left the Army. So, while stationed at Fort Bragg NC. he decided to pursue in earnest his passion for acting and theater. His first step was to join a local ensemble group of comedians who had formed the "Horrible Folks Comedy Show", where he performed and helped write comedy skits of all types. He also began acting in local theater where he once again got the chance to take on more dramatic roles.

And, though his love of comedy that brought him into acting, he realized it was performing itself that he enjoyed most. He (especially) likes ensemble productions and working along side other like minded performers in ensemble casts and the connection he felt with his audiences. This realization was pivotal in solidifying his decision to pursue the performing arts full time.

He continues to act and explore different genres of TV and film. He's also presently writing and producing a Fantasy-Adventure with a strong dose of horror. A strong member of his community he loves animals, does volunteer work

Guests of the Convention

and looks forward to playing Santa Claus each year for the children of soldiers stationed at Fort Bragg during the tree lighting ceremony.

Jason Graves

Jason is a writer of words, a doodler of drawings, and fixer of other peoples' words and doodles. Many years ago, he founded Prospective Press. Before that, he slogged through University and earned a Master of Science degree in the Arcana of Genetics. Oh, and he was once punched—lightly—by Muhammad Ali. You should ask him about that last one, because no one ever does.

Robert Hampson

Dr. Robert E. Hampson is a neuroscientist, professor, and science fiction author who spends his days decoding how memories work and his nights trying to remember where he left his keys. With a Ph.D. in Physiology & Pharmacology, he's been on a lifelong quest to figure out what's going on inside our heads—though he's still baffled by how people can willingly watch bad sci-fi with terrible science. When he's not mentoring students or conducting cutting-edge research on brain-computer interfaces, he's crafting hard science fiction that's as accurate as it is fun.

In 2015, Dr. Hampson turned his love for science fiction into a writing career, proving that yes, scientists can do more than just stare at lab equipment. His stories, which often involve futuristic medical tech and military adventures, have earned him praise for being “hard science fiction with a vengeance”—but he swears he's really a nice guy.

As a professor at Wake Forest University School of Medicine, Dr. Hampson teaches science communication, ensuring young scientists know how to explain their research to the public without sounding like they're from another planet. With over 30 short stories, several novels, and countless lost pens, he continues to explore the exciting—and sometimes baffling—worlds of both science and fiction.

Dave Harlequin

Described by both press and colleagues as an “independent renaissance man” and “voice of the underground,” among other things, Dave Harlequin is a professional screenwriter, journalist, author, and independent filmmaker from Charlotte, North Carolina. He is the Creative Director of the indie film studio and production group A Stranger Concept Films, as well as the Festival Director of the annual Stranger Days Independent Film Festival and the Film Track Director of ConCarolinas.

First breaking into the world of filmmaking in 2013, Harlequin has written, directed, and/or worked on over three dozen films, many of which winning numerous awards throughout the film festival and convention circuits, and has been featured on various TV and streaming platforms including Amazon Prime Video, Shorts TV, and AMC Networks.

In addition to his film work, Harlequin is an accomplished journalist and is the former Editor in Chief of both *Nerd Nation Magazine* and *Stiff Horror 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 foodie and beer aficionado, and enjoys cooking, coffee, gaming, and hanging out with his dog. And yes, he has heard the “Harley Quinn” joke about his last name at least 1,000 times.

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.

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 300 titles with authors ranging from first-timers to NY Times bestsellers, with no signs of slowing down any time soon. He is also the founder of the SAGA Genre Fiction Writers' Conference, where students hone their business and craft skills to write better books and make more money.

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.

Wanda Harward

Wanda Harward is a member of The Charlotte Geeks, assisting Joey Starnes and Carol Cowles with The Geekery Market, and other shenanigans as required. Her geeky interests include painting minis, filk music, renaissance faires, and gaming (online and tabletop). She runs a twice monthly D&D 5e campaign (two years and counting) and one shots here and there. She has been attending cons

Guests of the Convention

off and on since the 80's, and consistently since 2006. Presently, she is working on a tarot instruction book and D&D modules for publication.

Professionally, Wanda is a retired social worker, current tarot reader and life coach (<https://findingthekeytarot.com/>). She has been reading Tarot for over 25 years (professionally since 2017). She has been a tarot reader for many events and locations, including Carolina Renaissance Festival, The Geekery Market, SagaCon, ConCarolinas, ConGregate, and professional events.

Randall Hayes

Randall grew up on a working farm in Kentucky before studying biology at UK and then doing a PhD in neuroscience at a medical school in Rochester, NY. He did research there and in Texas before teaching at the high school and college levels. Now he runs the biology department's internship program at UNC Greensboro and writes short stories and nonfiction, published with various magazines. He is an unabashed nerd with interests in speculative fiction (both "hard" sci-fi & fantasy), comics, and tabletop roleplaying games, which led him to found the SpecFic Fandom (SF^2) fellowship for Rotary International (search for it on Facebook). Sometimes he draws things.

Alexandra Higgins

(aka the Platypus Princess)

Alexandra Higgins (aka the Platypus Princess) is a self-taught singer/songwriter whose folk-indie sound evokes the spirit of Joan Baez (direct quote heard randomly and unprompted at every!). Her voice, often described as angelic, carries melodies that mix ethereal beauty with sharp wit and compassionate wisdom. Inspired by video games, movies, comic books, and disability advocacy, she blends cosplay, wordplay, and colorful guitar play — with a pinch of sass.

H.P. Holo

H.P. Holo grew up in a family where it was dangerous to say, "I'm bored." She's also an incorrigible smart aleck. So when her parents told her to fix her boredom by reading a dictionary, she did. And then, just to be extra sassy, she began writing novels that required them to keep that dictionary handy.

Her first ode to smart aleckery was *The Wizard's Way* (with Jacob Holo), a tale of awkward steampunk wizards and dapper swordfighting pugs, and as much a love letter to steampunk as sassery. She followed it with another sassy love letter in the redonkulous *Monster Punk Horizon*

series, this time to all things monster hunting, collecting, and befriending.

Her most significant ode to smart aleckery, though, is the entirety of her second, spicy pen name, Edie Skye. H.P./Edie wrote the mecha harem fantasy *Titan Mage* as a joke, so naturally it became an Amazon bestseller. In the process, she discovered that while she likes writing smart stuff, she also likes writing smut. Pretty spicy smut, too, 'cause if you're gonna do it, you might as well do it hard.

On both pen names, she likes to spin fun (and funny) fantasies about rollicking adventures, absurd monsters, the bonds of friendship, and general nonsense.

When not writing, she enjoys procrastinating, fangirling over terrible movies, arguing that *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs* is the most perfect movie ever made, and having Too Many Fountain Pens.

She lives in South Carolina with her husband, the judgmental ghost of her former cat/boss, and a new kitten whose hobbies include furniture parkour at 3AM, climbing up door frames, screaming for no apparent reason, chewing on books, and trying to lick the occasional light bulb. (Yes, he is orange.)

Jacob Holo

Jacob Holo has been a recreational geek since childhood, when he discovered Star Wars and Star Trek, and a professional geek since college, when he graduated from Youngstown State University with a degree in Electrical and Controls Engineering. He started writing when his parents bought that "new" IBM 286 desktop, and over the years, those powers combined to push him to the next level of nerddom: a sci-fi author who designs intricate worlds and tech systems...and promptly blows them up in a string of nonstop action.

He is the author of over fifteen books, including the bestselling Gordian Division series (with David Weber), YA urban fantasy *Time Reavers* (a Kirkus Reviews Best Indie Book), and fantasy adventure *Monster Punk Horizon: Excess* (with H.P. Holo).

Between novels, Jacob enjoys gaming of all sorts, whether video gaming, card gaming, miniature wargaming, or watching speed runs on YouTube. He is a former-Ohioan, former-Michigander who now lives in South Carolina with his wife/boss H.P., the ghost of his cat/boss Nova, and his new kitten/boss Dazzle, who is a very good boy even if he does try to lick light bulbs.

Guests of the Convention

Tom Hutchens

For the founder of the Mando Mercs Costume Club, being a Mandalorian fan goes all the way back to 1983, a five year old sitting in the theater watching Boba Fett fall into the Sarlacc Pit in *Star Wars Return of the Jedi*.

In 2007, Tom Hutchens founded the Mando Mercs Costume Club (MMCC), becoming one of the largest and the oldest clubs for Mandalorian costumes and fans. Tom has also directly contributed to Mandalorian fandom through his work on the Official *Star Wars* Blog from 2013 - 2015. His most well-known articles being: "Mandalorian Mysteries" and "The Art of Mandalorian Armor". Tom also assisted as a collaborator on *Bounty Hunter Code: From the Files of Boba Fett*, where his Mandalorian character "Mandalore the Uniter" would make their second appearance in Legends material.

Today, Tom has been mostly around the world meeting and sharing adventures with Mando Mercs members and Mandalorian fans. A disabled USN veteran and stroke survivor, Tom and his wife live in Mocksville, North Carolina.

Stuart Jaffe

Stuart Jaffe is the madman behind The Max Porter Paranormal Mysteries, the Nathan K thrillers, The Ridnight Mysteries, the Parallel Society novels, The Malja Chronicles, The Pathway Ring series, *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 have kept count in the past, I'm no longer listing the animals. As we've gotten older, we don't keep the zoo we once did, and it seems silly to list a more normal grouping of pets. So, yeah, we got dogs and cats and chickens (and a couple other things). Still, the chickens will not be permitted in the house.

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 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 trilogy culminates in *The Tchaikovsky Finale*. The Pawn Stratagem trilogy, including *Pawn's Gambit*, *Queen's Peril*, and *King's Crisis*, combines contemporary fantasy, superheroics, and the ancient game of chess. His YA novel, *Carol*, is a modern-day retelling of A Christmas Carol billed as Scrooge meets Mean Girls. His new ongoing series, Songs of the Ascendant, is an 80s-pop-music-themed contemporary fantasy including *Shadows of the Night*, *All Fired Up*, and *You Better Run*. His short stories, particularly those about a certain Necromancer for Hire, can be found in numerous anthologies and magazines and are collected for your reading your pleasure.

Doctor-by-day and novelist-by-night, he writes and practices medicine in Charlotte, NC.

Nicole Givens Kurtz

Nicole Givens Kurtz has been called "a genre polymath who does crime, horror, and Science Fiction and Fantasy (Book Riot)." They've named her as one of the 6 Black SFF Indie Writers You Should be Reading, 30 Must-Read SFF Books by Black Authors, and The Best of the West: 8 Alternative History Westerns (Sisters of the Wild Sage). She's a two-time Atomaccon Palmetto Scribe Award winner. With over 20 years in publishing, She's written for Pseudopod, Apex, Fiyah, White Wolf, The Realm, Baen, Subsume, and MV Media. Nicole has over 50 published short stories, including her story, "The Way Home," in Marvel's *Captain America: The Shield of Sam Wilson* anthology from Titan Books. Nicole is the author of the Cybil Lewis and Death Violations cybernoir series as well as the Kingdom of Aves fantasy mystery series.

She has conducted workshops for Writer's Digest Online, Clarion West online, SAGA, and is the owner of Mocha Memoirs Press. She's the editor for the groundbreaking *SLAY: Stories of the Vampire Noire* and co-editor of *Blackened Roots: An Anthology of the Undead* anthology. Nicole is professional level member of SFWA and HWA.

Cheralyn Lambeth

Cheralyn (Cher) 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*, *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret*), television shows (*Dinosaurs!*, *Homeland*, *Outcast*, *The Hunting Wives*), 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*, *Creating the Character Costume*, and *'Twas Halloween*

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Evening: A Tale of the Zombie Apocalypse), with two current projects--*Art in the Time of Corona* and *Cryptids of the Carolinas*--to be released in late 2025.

On the fan side of things, Cher is proud to be a long-time member of the 501st, and a founding member of the 501st Carolina Garrison. She is also founder/team captain of the Southern Belle Ghostbusters, and a true paranormal investigator with the Charlotte Area Paranormal Society.

Cher also works on various projects in front of the camera, including a co-starring role as Elsa Einstein on The Vampire Diaries spinoff show *Legacies*. Her favorite accomplishment has been breaking and earning a Guinness World Record in 2022 for Largest Collection of Finger Puppets, with an updated attempt underway for 2025.

Gail Z. Martin

Gail Z. Martin writes urban fantasy, epic fantasy, steampunk and more for Orbit Books, Falstaff Books, SOL Publishing and Darkwind Press. Urban fantasy series include *Deadly Curiosities* and the *Night Vigil*. Epic fantasy series include *Darkhurst*, the *Chronicles Of The Necromancer*, the *Fallen Kings Cycle*, the *Ascendant Kingdoms Saga*, and the *Assassins of Landria*.

Together with Larry N. Martin, she is the co-author of *Iron & Blood*, *Storm & Fury*, the *Spells Salt and Steel* series, the *Joe Mack Shadow Council* series, and the *Wasteland Marshals* series. As Morgan Brice, she writes urban fantasy MM paranormal romance. Series include *Badlands*, *Witchbane*, *Treasure Trail*, *Fox Hollow Zodiac*, *Sharps & Springfield* and *Kings of the Mountain*. She is also part of several multi-author shared-world series including *Carnival of Mysteries*, *Subpar Heroes*, *Beyond the Realm: Remember*.

Her short stories and novellas have appeared in more than 50 US and UK anthologies, most recently *The Four ????* *Of the Apocalypse*, *Solar Flare*, *Nevermore*, and *Three Time Travelers Walk Into...*

Larry N. Martin

Larry N. Martin writes and co-authors science fiction, steampunk, and urban fantasy for 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 his space opera series.

Together with Gail Z. Martin, Larry co-authors the snarky monster hunter series *Spells, Salt, & Steel* set in the New Templar Knights universe, the post-apocalyptic series

Wasteland Marshals, the *Joe Mack Shadow Council Files* series, and the steampunk series *Iron and Blood: The Jake Desmet Adventures* and a series of related short stories: *The Storm & Fury Adventures*.

Misty Massey

Misty Massey is the author of the *Mad Kestrel* series of rollicking fantasy adventures on the high seas, including *Kestrel's Dance*, winner of the 2023 Palmetto Scribe Award For Best Novel, and the upcoming *Dead Man* series. She freelances as a copy and developmental editor for Falstaff Books, Mocha Memoirs Press, and Gold Dust Publishing, and serves as the programming director for the SAGA Writing Conference.

Misty is a cast member on the *Authors & Dragons* actual play *Dungeons & Dragons* podcast and a member of the *Shenanigans* writing cooperative. She's a sucker for ginger snaps, African coffee, and anything sparkly.

Jennifer McCollom

Makeup artist, Jennifer McCollom, double majored in Theatre and Physics at the University of NC Greensboro and then went to the Westmore Academy of Cosmetic Arts. From there she followed her path into Film starting with *Taking Liberty* in 1990.

She has worked on *John Adams*, which won an Emmy for makeup, and *The Eyes of Tammy Faye*, which won an Academy award for makeup. From independent films to union projects, she has worked on all 4 seasons of the *Righteous Gemstones*, as well as on the *Outer Banks*, *The Conjuring*, *Halloween Kills*, *The Hunger Games*, *The Box*, *June Bug*, and *Last Lives*, just to name a few of the over 50 films or TV in which she has been involved.

In addition, Jennifer has taught to film students for 15 years including traveling to Vietnam last year to teach and work on a film. During the same trip, she traveled to New Zealand to visit Hobbiton and take a few classes at Weta Workshop!

Some of her favorite things include Alton Brown, food, fantasy, science and science fiction, singing, theme parks and rides, sewing and making costumes, world travel, film making, robots, and building things.

She is currently learning 3D printing, Z brush, and looking for a new class to take. She believes we should never stop learning.



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Hollis Jo McCollum

Hollis is the proud author of two different fantasy series: The Raashan Series and The Lost Beacon Chronicles. She has a happy life with her husband and two cats. When she's not writing fantastical adventures with inspired romantic subplots, she enjoys expressing herself through other creative mediums—including cosplay, drawing, cooking, and dancing. She loves animals and helping others, so when she isn't working on her next creative project, she is swooning over animals, volunteering, or dancing her worries away. Stricken with a terrible case of wanderlust, traveling is her happy place, and she will not stop until she's seen everything...twice. Having been raised a Navy brat and spent seven years as an immigration specialist in the world of higher education, much of the world has already been seen, but it's never enough!

Molly Ann McDonough

Molly Ann McDonough is an author, poet, and multidisciplinary engineer with short stories featured in science fiction and fantasy anthologies. Jumpmaster Press has scheduled her debut fantasy novel, *A World Apart*, for release in 2026. When Molly isn't reading, writing, or coding, she enjoys being an enthusiastic amateur in her ever-changing neurodivergent hobbies. These include learning and forgetting Spanish, petting cats, and volunteering. In her life and writing, Molly is on a quest to spread magic, mirth, and meaning.

D.J. McGuire

D.J. McGuire began his geek journey watching Star Trek Original Series on syndication. These days, he works in Defense IT and teaches economics at his local community college. He has been a musical performer (bass and vocals) for over eight years, starting with Dimensional Riffs in 2017. He has also played with the Nefarious Ferrets (as "Bass Ferret"). He has been a solo performer since 2020. Among his geek-friendly albums are *You're Not Cleared For This*, *Goldsmiths' Gambit*, and *Starfleet Program Manager*.

Gary Mitchel

Gary Mitchel is a writer, reviewer, gamer, podcaster, and general geek living near Atlanta.

Gary is the Co-Director, with Joe Crowe, of the American Sci-Fi Classics Track at Dragon Con. Together, they plot panels on various geeky topics, from 80s vampires, to cats in space, to the best fictional bands.

Gary is director of Good to Be A Geek Media, where he

is the Producer & Co-Host of *A Podcast of Amontillado* a horror podcast that is a terrifyingly good time. He has also been a frequent guest on other podcasts, such as *The ESO Podcast*, *Execute Chapter 66*, and more.

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.

Dennis M Myers

Born and raised in central Minnesota, Dennis M. Myers developed a serious reading habit early in life due to the influence of his grandmother. In late high school he read one particularly "awful" book and, with all that teenage hubris, decided that he could do better.

After spending a decade in the United States Navy as a submarine sailor, teaching younger sailors, and writing adventures for *Challenge Magazine*, he settled in Virginia. The next two decades found him writing down story ideas, compiling his thoughts on the universe, and dealing with all the disasters of life. He eventually compiled the ideas he had been saving into a timeline spanning several thousand years. In 2017 the opportunity came to write full time for several months. With the full support of his wonderful wife, May, he began the book that is now known as *Final Assembly*, the first of four novels in his series, Rise of the Automated Empire. All four are available on Amazon.

He has recently started a T-Shirt store at Shop.AutomatedEmpire.com.

Doug Newcomb

Doug Newcomb has a BS in Geography from the University of Illinois (CU) and an MA in Geography from the University of North Carolina (CH). Doug is recently retired after a 34 year career with the Department of the Interior serving in various IT and GIS capacities related to Remote Sensing, Cartography, and Open Source Software. When Doug is not playing with point clouds and making maps, he enjoys hiking with a camera.

O. Hai Mark

O. Hai Mark is an online host and creator as well as an independent film producer. He is a Twitch streamer and web-show host who has who is releasing his third film (as a producer). In addition to producing online content and independent shorts, O. Hai Mark hosts online game nights and other events (poker, karaoke, etc). You can find O. Hai on most social media platforms, and at his weekly

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flagship show, *Terrible Movies with Wonderful People*, which combines his two great loves: talking and movies.

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 DSC50, DSC60 and Omegacon and a panelist at ConGregarate, World Fantasy 2024 and BaltiCon

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 Journeyman, 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 \$166,000 for the library system at our October 2024 sale.)

Old Dominion Daleks

Rick and family took their love of theater and science fiction and formed Luna-C Productions in 1997. Rick is the director, one of the scriptwriters, and plays several roles in the Luna-C Productions comedy troupe in addition to producing, directing and acting in a number of their amateur movie and staged productions. He is also the driving force behind Old Dominion Daleks and Loki Gators Con-Quest.

In competition Rick and Family has won costuming and presentation awards or been part of numerous Best in Shows, Best Presentations, Most Humorous and workmanship awards over the past 40 years.

Luna-C had the honor of receiving the 2023 Volker/McChesney Award winners for service to Fandom from Farpoint 2023

Most recently Rick and Cynthia were presenters at Virginia Theater Association Fall 2023 conference. "Prop"ing Up Your Performance a presentation of prop use and

construction for live and recorded performances.

In addition to Luna-C's vaudeville style sketch comedy shows they are also known for "Potter Live in 45: a warp speed look at all seven books in 45 minutes" performed live.

Costumes: The Sixth Doctor (Doctor Who), Londo Mollari: 3 versions (Babylon 5), Hagrid (Harry Potter), Death (Terry Pratchett's Discworld), Captain Taggart (Galaxy Quest) Worf (Star Trek TNG), John Hammond (Jurassic park), Santa Claus, Daleks (Doctor Who), Ewoks (Star Wars)

Prop recreation: Liberator Gun (Blakes 7), Farnsworth both standard and Claudia's (Warehouse 13) Proton Packs (Ghostbusters & Ghostbusters Answer The Call)

Daleks (three different Versions, working on a fourth)

We have been performers/presenters at Science fiction and Fantasy conventions for over 40 years

We have been featured in: *The Fandom Fifty : Fifty fascinating people of the Maryland science fiction conventions* by Diane Lee Baron and *Creating the Character Costume: Tools, Tips, and Talks with Top Costumers* by Cheralyn Lambeth

Christine Parker

Christine Parker began her film career in Sanford, North Carolina in 2004. She wrote and produced a short film "Second Death" that led to her forming Adrenalin Productions which has since produced dozens of short films as well as five feature films, all which have received world-wide distribution.

Her most notable films include film festival winners "Getting a Head in the Movie Biz," "Dead of the Night," "The Ghastly Ghostly Gas," "Cache Me If You Can" and "Mother." "Mother" was shot with an all-female crew under her new company Sick Chick Flicks. Their second short, a Poe film, "Tell-Tale Heart - Sisters", was heavily influenced by one of Christine's favorite films "Whatever Happened to Baby Jane." It has won awards for best film, best writing, best corpse and best adaptation at various film festivals.

In 2013 she received the audience award and Best Director at Greensboro's 48 Hour Film Project for Sick Chick Flick's entry "Fruits of Her Labor". Again in 2016 her film "Exercising Demons" won The 48 Horror Project Best Film along with 5 other awards.

Sick Chicks most recent award winning feature length film

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entitled “Blood of the Mummy” is now available on various streaming platforms including Amazon, Vudu, and Tubi.

Christine along with Sick Chick Angela Giddings also run the Sick Chick Flicks Film Festival supporting female filmmakers making films in the horror, scifi, and fantasy genres. It takes place in Chapel Hill, NC.

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, folk 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, Biergartens and backyards all over the country, both as a solo performer and as the bassist for wizard rock icons The Blibbering 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.

Michael D. Pederson

Way back in 2004, Mike (along with Tee Morris and Tony Ruggiero) 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 Pederson was the publisher/editor/graphic designer responsible for the fanzine *Nth Degree* (2002-2019). Mike began his career as a writer/publisher in 1988 when his SF short story, “Dust Storm,” won first place in a local writing contest. In the 1990s, he wrote and published the Raven comic book series (with artist Robert Quill) 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. Three months later he started *Nth Degree*. In 2007, he wrote a chapter on “Writing for Magazines” for Dragon Moon Press’ *Writing Fantasy: The Author’s Grimoire*. During the pandemic, he edited and published *CORVID-19: A RavenCon Anthology* and is working on *CORVID-19: The Second Wave*.

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 (with Warren Buff), headed the Brainstorming team for DisCon 3, 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, ConGregarate, ConVivial, MarsCon, Mysticon, RavenCon, and StellarCon.

In 2017, Mike was honored with the Rebel Award for his contributions to Southern Fandom. For 2026, he has partnered with *Amazing Stories* to host the official 100th Anniversary of Science Fiction at RavenCon.

J. E. Pittman

J.E. Pittman dabbles in many speculative worlds. He blurs the borders between genre and crafts salient lies to tell a measure of truth. His work has been described as: capriciously chimeric, dreamlike, and a vivid enigma with indelible images stamped on your brain. He independently publishes his darkly cozy urban fantasy series: Felix Chance and his sci-fi action series Pandora Squad in addition to several web serials and anthologies.

Gray Rinehart

Gray Rinehart is a writer, an editor, a singer/songwriter, and a retired Air Force officer. He is the only person to have commanded a USAF 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 writes science fiction and fantasy stories, among which is the lunar colonization novel *Walking on the Sea of Clouds* (WordFire Press). His short fiction has appeared in *Analog Science Fiction & Fact*, *Asimov’s Science Fiction*, *Orson Scott Card’s Intergalactic Medicine Show*, and multiple anthologies. He has also written an eclectic mix of nonfiction books: *A Church More Like Christ*, *Elements of War*, and *Quality Education*. In addition, he has written and released three albums which feature science-fiction-and-fantasy-inspired music; the most recent is entitled *Taking You Out to See the Stars*.

During his unusual Air Force career, Gray fought rocket propellant fires, refurbished space launch facilities, “flew” Milstar communications 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 space-related things.

Gray’s alter ego is the Gray Man, one of several famed ghosts of South Carolina’s Grand Strand.

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Jason Roach

Jason Roach is an American Writing Awards award-winning finalist in LGBT+ Fiction & Thriller Fiction for his book *The House on Dead Man's Curve* – inspired by his personal paranormal experiences. His new M/M Vampiric romance series, *The Vampire Crusades*, launched in August of 2024. He is also the owner and editor-in-chief of Gold Dust Publishing, a new indie publishing company for LGBTQIA+ and Ally authors. A paranormal enthusiast, he previously spent three years as a core member of the Association of Paranormal Study. He has previously been a paranormal/Sci-fi/writing guest panelist or presenter at GalaxyCon, Jordancon, ConCarolinas, Congregate 9 & 10, and Multiverse. Originally from Statesville, NC, he now resides in Winston-Salem, NC.

When he is not working on the next big project or investigating the paranormal, he enjoys spending time with his family, their four cats – Lyma, Gandalf, Crooky, and Batman – and doggy Laylah. Concert-going, traveling, and a good paranormal investigation are the places he finds inspiration.

Gold Dust Publishing is a new indie publishing company for LGBTQIA+ authors & allied stories. Its mission is to provide an avenue and safe place for LGBTQIA+ authors to share their artistic talents through fiction or non-fiction writings with the world. Our non-fiction side works to help preserve our LGBTQIA+ history in a world where books are constantly being banned. Our fiction side of the company provides entertaining tales for all ages featuring LGBTQIA+ characters or written by LGBTQIA+ authors.

Since opening in January of 2023, Gold Dust has brought you the audiobook for *The House on Dead Man's Curve & The Vampire Crusades* series by owner and paranormal enthusiast Jason Roach, *Until Death: An Eric Kent Investigation* by Rey Nichols, *The Purple Menace and the Tobacco Prince* by Wade Beauchamp, *The Sword's Secret – Ancient Wonders – Book 1*, and a charity book titled *Reflections* featuring over forty different authors from around the world writing letters to their past selves. There are currently 6 titles in the works for next year with more to come.

Fraser Sherman

Fraser graduated from college with a degree in biology, no interest in graduate school and no interest in a STEM career. What to do? He decided to try writing and wow, he liked it — even if he did endure a few grungy day jobs over the years to support himself.

Although born in England, Fraser spent most of his life in Northwest Florida. He'd be there still if he hadn't met an amazing woman in 2008 and fallen in love. As she lived in Durham NC they did the long-distance thing for a couple of years, then he moved up there in 2010. They married in 2011 and they're still together.

Fraser has published around fifty short stories, put in a decade covering city government as a reporter, and has written six film reference books, most recently *The Aliens Are Here* on extraterrestrial visitors in film and television. In 2022 he published his first novel, the steampunk fantasy *Questionable Minds*, and the nonfiction book *Undead Sexist Cliches*, dissecting the stupidity of misogynist arguments. In 2023 he published *19-Infinity*, a collection of historical fantasy. He also founded his own publishing imprint, Behold the Book

Away from his computer he likes bicycling, comic books, fantasy novels, history books, vegetarian cooking, baking bread and triumphing over insomnia. He's had multiple roles in community and college theater, his favorite being Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*. Most recently he appeared in a Medscape educational video as the man with intracranial bleeding who doesn't want to go to the hospital.

Sarah J. Sover

Sarah J. Sover is the author of fantasy crossover novels, short stories, and nonfiction articles. Sarah writes the Fractured Fae Series (*Fairy Godmurder*, *Faed to Black*, and *Pixie Dusted*), Contemporary Fantasy she calls Jessica Jones with sparkle, for Falstaff Books. Her comedic fantasy *Double-Crossing the Bridge*, about a group of drunk trolls pulling a perilous heist, originally released in 2019 and was re-released by Falstaff in 2022 with a sequel, *Trolled*, slated for 2025/2026. Sarah's short fiction has appeared in anthologies, and she's written articles for *Writer's Digest Magazine*, *WritersDigest.com*, and for Dan Koboldt's *Putting the Fact in Fantasy*.

Sarah has a degree in Biology and a background in animal care, which she uses to thoroughly gross out readers. She spends her time raising two little forces of nature with her husband Alex in John's Creek, Ga. In addition to writing, Sarah enjoys binging SFF media, blues dancing, painting, and pretending to play guitar. She can frequently be found pinned beneath her rescue pup Gandalf the Grey while pillaging Hades or Hyrule and sipping on a good IPA.

Jett Stallard

Jett has been attending & assisting at conventions for over

It Came from Outer Space!



AtomaCon 2026

May 16-17, 2026
Trident Technical College
920 Building
North Charleston, SC

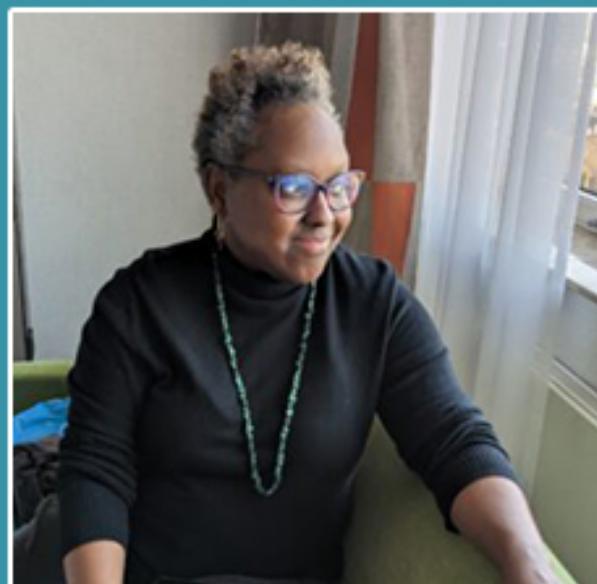


<http://atomacon.org>
[@atomacon](#)

ShadowCast
Filmmaking Workshops
Cosplay Contest
Performance Groups
Charity Auction
Literary, Fanish,
& Paranormal Panels
Gaming
Vendor's Room
Author's Alley
Fan Groups
Podcast Stage
and more!

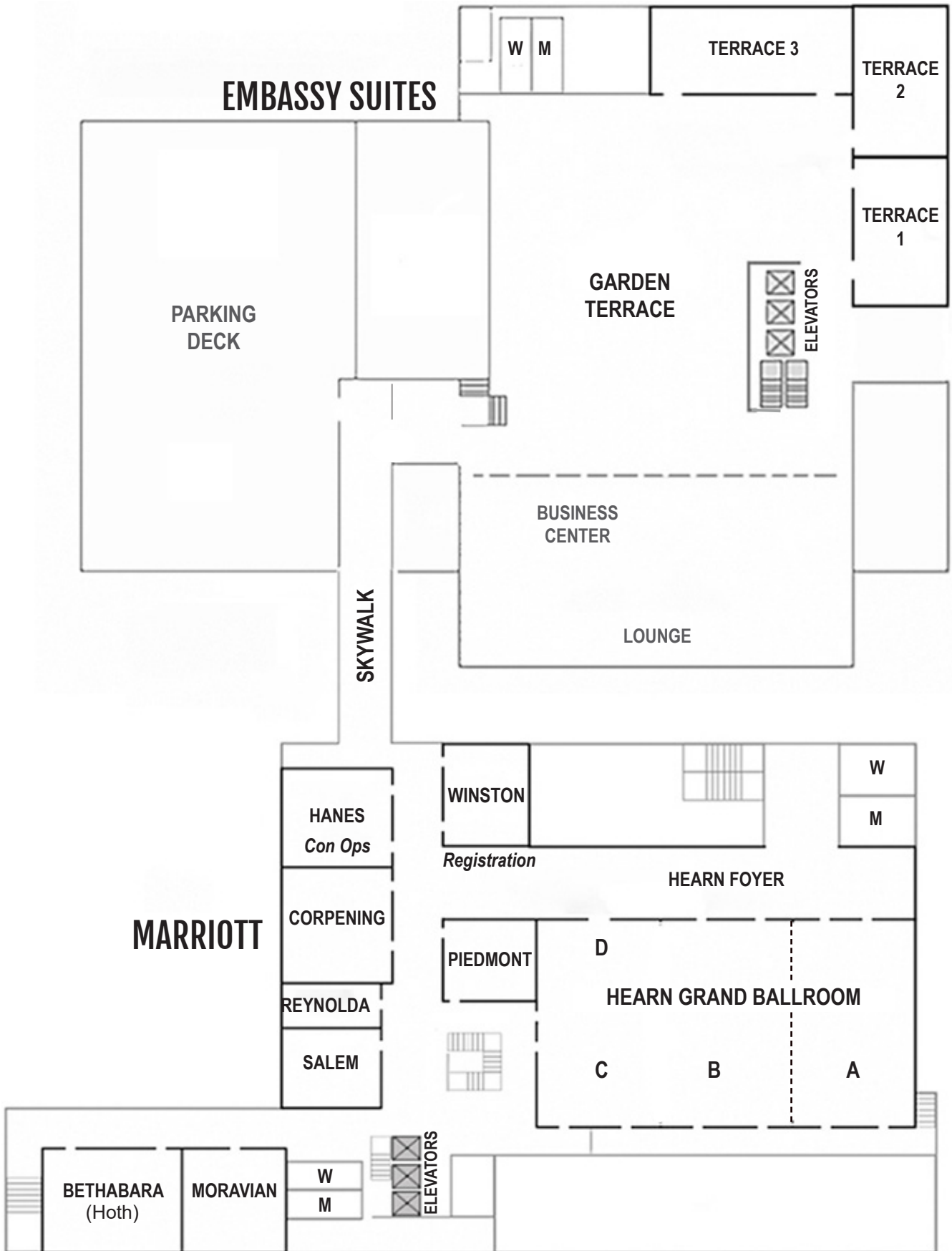
Weekend: \$30
Single Day: \$20
Under 12 Free

Author Guest of Honor
Nicole Givens Kurtz



Independent Film Fest
Screenplays, Features,
& Shorts

Map of the Convention Site



World of Darkness LARP

Presented by: By Night Studios

Dark Arts and Blood Money

Synopsis

Winston-Salem is a hot bed for talent. Many artists, athletes and great minds have come from its borders. This means a great deal of opportunity for increased influence and status. For some reason the kindred population has remained barred from these great opportunities. Throughout the years the local princes of the surrounding cities have made it common courtesy to keep their subjects from interfering with the resources available in Winston-Salem but times are changing. Many of the local powers; Princes, Barons and Dons have fallen to the Beckoning and petty squabbles of local politics. With little to halt their efforts many of the kindred of North Carolina have decided that Winston-Salem is ripe for the taking. Many younger kindred of the various territories have decided that it is time to bring this forgotten gold mine of influence and power into the Eternal struggle. Within the boundaries of Winston-Salem courts beyond any understanding of the kindred rein. Changelings, mystical fae creatures have taken hold and their influence can be felt through the talent of those residents. A truce has been held for decades. The vampires have agreed to keep their distance, but now their kings and queens have fallen and the ignorant masses of their young are storming the gates. Can a new agreement be met or is this the beginning of a war of Blood and Magic?

In Dark Arts and Blood Money, players are encouraged to choose a side, Changeling or Kindred. Set in the city of Winston-Salem, this Live Action Roleplay experience mystifies the fact that many amazing, talented people have come from the area. In the World of Darkness creatures of the night would be fighting over such influence and gifts. This game creates a magical but brutal story of fairies and vampires struggling to hold control of the riches that come from such an area.

Player Information

- No experience necessary: our Story Telling team is happy to help!
- Sign ups will be at the By Night Studios table in the Garden Terrace of the Embassy Suites.
- By Night Studios will be charging a \$20.00 fee, and each player will receive World of Darkness swag.
- There will be sheets at the table for character creation, and some pre-generated sheets should also be available.
- There will be cap on the number of players based on space constraints.



Guests of the Convention

a decade, finally delving into the roles of Programming Staff (RavenCon, ConCarolinas, Conapalooza) and Panelist.

Apple of Your Eye Cosplay is Jett's Facebook page for all things cosplay, showing off her thrift- and scrounge-style of work. She does modifications to pieces she's found in stores, her favorite styles of cosplay are from Star Trek, Marvel, cartoons, and musicals.

A self-proclaimed "Podcast Enabler," she has lent her voice to audio novels (*Murder at Avedon Hill*) and geeky podcasts (Girls Rules, Geek Radio Daily), encouraging her friends to continue their podcasting dreams.

She has family ties to NASA and the Goddard Space Flight Center. A solid gamer girl, she's spent hours in World of Warcraft, Final Fantasy XIV, Pokémon Go, and multiple Animal Crossing games.

Raised on a steady diet of 80s + 90s Sci-fi, Jett adores all things Star Trek, enjoys Star Wars, X-Files, and Firefly, and watches way too much anime.

SYRINX

SYRINX is active across multiple entertainment platforms, blending creativity with music production, acting, and media. As an independent music producer and remixer, he previously worked with a record label from 2017 until its disbanding in 2023. Alongside his music career, he has played a significant role in radio, contributing to both online and terrestrial stations.

He produces media and on-air content for Wheeler Broadcasting, with his work heard across seven stations serving the Roanoke and Lynchburg areas.

Since 2009, SYRINX has hosted The Time Warp, a weekly mixshow blending different musical styles and decades. The show joined OutWorld Fleet Radio in 2021, where he continues to host it. In 2023, his role expanded when

he became Head of Station Partnership Content and Development, further enhancing the station's global reach.

In addition to his radio work, SYRINX is active in live entertainment. While no longer performing in stage and film productions, his past experiences continue to influence his creative endeavors. Since 2020, he has performed as a scary actor at the haunted attraction Terror Manor in Roanoke, VA. He also hosts themed trivia nights at local venues in Roanoke and Salem, offering a fun mix of knowledge and competition.

You can also find SYRINX on Twitch, where he participates in music festivals, parties, raids, and charity events. His diverse talents in radio, music production, and live performance make him a dynamic presence in the entertainment world.

William C. Tracy

William C. Tracy (he/him) writes and publishes queer science fiction and fantasy through his indie press Space Wizard Science Fantasy. His largest work is the *Dissolutionverse*: a space opera with music-based magic including nine books and a TTRPG. He's also published *Fruits of the Gods*, an epic fantasy with seasonal fruit magic; *How to Operate Your Body*, a nonfiction book about body mechanics and correct posture; and *The Biomass Conflux*, a sci-fi trilogy with colony ships and a planet covered by a sentient fungus. He's currently working on a progression fantasy series about martial arts and moving islands. William is an NC native, has a master's in mechanical engineering, has trained in Wado-Ryu karate since 2003, and keeps bees.

Brandon Whitworth

Brandon Whitworth is a dad-musician-pretend race car driver-rocket scientist from Huntsville, AL with over 20 years of engineering experience and too many hobbies and too many interests. His professional career has spanned



Guests of the Convention

many projects, including the Space Shuttle program (where he was awarded a Silver Snoopy), work for the missile defense agency, modeling blast effects from explosions, and most recently studying the potential problem of exploding propellants. Hobbies and interests include: performing with fellow rocket scientists (and their IT guy) in his band Foot Pound Force in nerdy places, driving pretend race cars on computers, trying not to work too much, drinking beer, getting in some outdoor activities, all geeky and nerdy things, Dungeons and Dragons when he can, and most importantly, spending time with his family.

Jennifer Whitworth

Jennifer Whitworth is an engineer and writer from Huntsville AL. Currently working at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, she supports Artemis and Gateway Payload Integration working directly with the science teams to help them through the various processes to design, build, test, verify, and launch their experiments destined to either orbit the moon in the Gateway Station, or be performed on the Lunar surface. Prior to that, she spent over twenty years supporting ISS science operations at the Payload Operations and Integration Center as a flight controller and technical subject matter expert. Outside of work, she writes urban and epic fantasy, hangs with her family, and watches her dog chase squirrels in the backyard.

Michael G. Williams

Michael G. Williams writes queer-themed horror and science fiction celebrating the monstrous and the macabre. His books include the award-winning vampire series *The Withrow Chronicles* (Laine Cunningham Award); the thrilling urban fantasy time travel series *Servant Sovereign*; the sci-fi noir *A Fall in Autumn* (Manly Wade Wellman Award); and a mess of short stories. Michael strives to present the humor and humanity at the heart of horror and sci fi with stories of outcasts and loners finding their people and power. *Children of Solitude* is his thirteenth book.

Michael co-hosts *Arcane Carolinas* and *Data@Rest*, studied Performance Studies at UNC Chapel Hill and Appalachian Studies at Appalachian State University, and is a brother in St. Anthony Hall and Mu Beta Psi. He is an active member of SFWA, HWA, and is a Trustee of the NC Writers Network. He lives in North Carolina with his husband and a variety of animals.

Allen L. Wold

Guest Emeritus

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.

Dealers & Exhibitors

Fan Tables

(Garden Terrace - Embassy Suites)

- By Night Studios
- ConCarolinas
- Ebon Legion
- Mandalorian Mercs
- MystiCon
- Old Dominion Daleks
- RavenCon
- Ret-Con
- Southern Bell Ghostbusters
- The Spaceman & The Halfling



Dealer Room

(Hearn B/C/D - Marriott)

- Milton Davis (GOH)
- Michael Stackpole (GOH)
- Timothy Zahn (GOH)
- Constellation Creatures
- Dragon Wolf Designs
- Fabled Embers
- Frank's Cool Stuff
- Fraser Sherman
- Gamma Rae Geek
- Kal Spriggs
- Karou's Resurrections
- Mirabelli Studios
- Moments in Tea
- Orielis Books
- Pink clouds art
- South Carolina Chic
- Spoonwood
- The Scribbling Lion
- The Stich Dimension
- Fraser Sherman
- Kal Spriggs

Author Tables

(Hearn Foyer - Marriott)

- Jo Boone
- Paige Christie
- Kevin Davis
- Nancy Dunne
- Falsatff Books
- Jason Gilbert
- Gold Dust Publishing
- Darin Kennedy
- Gail & Larry Martin
- Hollis Jo McCollum
- Mocha Memoirs Press
- Dennis Myers
- Sarah Sover
- Space Wizard Science Fantasy

*Ya'll come back now,
ya hear?"*

