

GALACTIC EMPIRES & EPIC INTERSTELLAR LEGENDS

JANUARY 17 - 19, 2025
HOLIDAY INN, VIRGINIA BEACH - NORFOLK



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ConSuite

When we switched hotels a major part of the new contract drastically impacted the food service component of MarsCon. This included the ConSuite and Tea Party. The simple explanation is no outside food is allowed to be served in any event space. This includes the hotel suite set aside for the ConSuite. After some negotiation the hotel is willing to allow the ConSuite to have outside food if it is not cooked. The

food service staff has worked over the past year trying to ensure the dietary needs of the attendees were met while staying within the bounds of the hotel contract. Hours: Friday, 3pm to 7pm; Saturday 9 am to 7 pm; Sunday 9 am to 1 pm
The ConSuite will have a variation of the following menu, with some items being subject to change due to the ever-changing cost of food.

Beverages:	All Day During hours of operation:	Breakfast Sat. & Sun. (9 to 11am):	Snacks Sat. & Sun. (11am to 7pm):	Dinner Fri. & Sat. (5 to 7pm):
Coffee, Tea, Creamers, Sweeteners, Sodas, Bottled Water	Protein Bars, Nuts, Hard Boiled Eggs,- Fruit, Cheese, Meat Sticks	Juice, Pastries, Muffins Cereal Bars	Chips, Cookies	Sliced Deli Meats, Sliced Cheese, Sandwich Bread, Condiments

Charity Auction

Saturday 4pm - 7pm Salon F/G (Main Programming)

The Virginia Beach Animal Care and Adoption Center serves as a compassionate haven for stray or unwanted companion animals, educates the public about humane care and treatment, advocates animal welfare, and promotes adoption to measurably reduce overpopulation and pet homelessness.

This year, the Charity Auction will be combined with the MarsCon Masquerade. It will alternate between costume group displays and charity auction rounds.

Dealers Room

**Salon A, B, C
Friday: 2pm-8:00pm
Saturday: 10am-6pm
Sunday: 10am-3pm**

MarsCon has a large and diverse dealers' room and we're committed to filling it with the most exciting vendors we can find. We looked for those who have unusual, unique, and interesting wares, along with familiar and fun things for our collectors, and youngest attendees.

Writer GOH Christopher Ruocchio



Christopher Ruocchio is the internationally award-winning author of the *Sun Eater*, a series blending elements of both science fiction and fantasy, as well as more than twenty works of short fiction. Born and raised in Raleigh, North Carolina, Christopher received a degree in English Rhetoric from North Carolina State University in 2015, with a minor in the Classics. Also in 2015, he began a career in publishing, serving as the Junior Editor at Baen Books until the summer of 2021, when he resigned to take up the life of a full-time writer.

An amateur historian, erstwhile boxing enthusiast, and life-long science fiction fan, Christopher knew he wanted to be a writer since he was 8-years-old, and sold his first

novel—*Empire of Silence*—at 22. Additionally, Christopher runs a modestly successful YouTube channel, also called the *Sun Eater*, where he discusses publishing, popular culture, and writing in general—as well as hosts other writers for discussions and engages directly with his readers. *Empire of Silence* won the Manly Wade Wellman Award for Best Novel in 2019, as well as the Hellfest Literary Prize for its French edition in 2021. His subsequent novels were twice nominated for the Dragon Award. His books have appeared in 5 languages. He curated 8 short story anthologies for Baen Books, including *Sword & Planet*, *Time Troopers*, and *Worlds Long Lost*. His work has also appeared in Marvel Comics.

Writer GOH Cassandra Clarke

Cassandra Rose Clarke's novels have been finalists for the Philip K. Dick Award, the Romantic Times Reviewer's Choice Award, and YALSA's Best Fiction for Young Adults. Her poetry has placed second in the Rhysling Awards, been nominated for the Pushcart Prize, and appeared in *Strange Horizons*, *Star*Line*, and elsewhere. Her latest novel is *Forget This Ever Happened*, now from Holiday House.

Cassandra graduated in 2006 from The University of St. Thomas with a B.A. in English,

and two years later she completed her master's degree in creative writing at The University of Texas at Austin. In 2010 she attended the Clarion West Writer's Workshop in Seattle, where she was a recipient of the Susan C. Petrey Clarion Scholarship Fund. She is represented by Stacia Decker of the Dunow, Carlson & Lerner Literary Agency. A collection of manuscript materials related to Cassandra's work are now available digitally through the Cushings Manuscript Collections Database at Texas A&M University.



Gaming GOH Stephen Buonocore



Stephen Buonocore is a hobby game entrepreneur, game media personality, game industry veteran, as well as a former financial services industry IT professional. Buonocore is the retired founder, owner and President of Stronghold Games, formed in 2009 to publish quality hobby board and card games. Stronghold Games and Indie Boards & Cards merged in 2018 to form Indie Game Studios, where he continued in his role as President. Buonocore provided vision and guidance for hundreds of game titles, both developed within the company and in partnership with global publishers. Stephen Buonocore is the host of *Board Games Insider*, one of the most popular hobby game audio/ video podcasts.

He has appeared in interviews on television, radio, and numerous game media outlets to promote the hobby game industry.

Buonocore retired from Stronghold Games in 2020, rebranding as "The Podfather of Gaming", and is found as such on his Youtube channel and other social media platforms.

Stephen Buonocore became a board game designer as well, signing a board game with Asmodee in 2023. In late 2023, Buonocore and over one dozen investors from the hobby game industry announced the creation of a new publisher, PLAY TO Z. Buonocore serves as Chairman of the Board.

He serves on the Board of Directors of the World Series of Board Gaming, and the Arizona Astrobiology Center for Development (AABCD). The Arizona Astrobiology Center, a 501(c)(3) organization, is a hub for diverse scientific endeavors, providing bold and transformative dialogue to make astrobiology discoveries relevant to the experiences of all people on Earth.



Musical GOH Rhiannon's Lark

Have you ever wanted to hear a Disney princess singing about the things you love...board games, ninjas, and krakens? **Rhiannon's Lark** is happy to make your wish come true.

Alyssa Yeager is an accolade-winning musician including the Pegasus award for "Best Performer" and

Guest of Honor appearances at various festivals and conventions. This geek-goddess-girl has eight full-length original albums and tackles everything from t-rexes to moral dilemmas with insightful lyrics, gorgeous vocals, and gentle humor.

Artist GOH Jake Clark

Jake Clark makes badass art for badass stories. Full of grit and storytelling, his work is geared to instantly capture attention. Using 3-d modeling software combined with digital painting, his fully custom creations play with perspective and scale in a way few other covers in the industry do.



Toastmaster Michael Jon Khandelwal



Michael Khandelwal Michael Khandelwal is the Executive Director of The Muse Writers Center, a nationally recognized literary center in Norfolk, Virginia. An award-winning writer and teacher, he writes poetry, fiction, editorials, profiles, and feature articles, which have appeared in Rattle, Coastal Virginia Magazine, Alt Daily, and elsewhere.

Michael teaches poetry and fiction

workshops for The Muse, and is the current Chairperson of the Norfolk Electoral Board and a member of the Norfolk Commission on the Arts and Humanities. A graduate of the University of Southern California (BA & MPW), he is a past web content management specialist for The American Council on Education and the past President of the 2008 Electoral College of Virginia.

Featured Guests



Featured Musical Guest Mikey Mason

Mikey Mason spent more than a decade as a full-time standup comedian. He headlined on all four coasts, performed multiple times each on NBC, at the legendary House of Blues, and the Hard Rock Casino. He even headlined the Atlantis Resort and Casino in the Bahamas. But it wasn't enough.

In 2011, he released a song expressing his geekier side (She Don't Like Firefly) that went viral on YouTube and got him featured on Nerdist.com, SyFy, MTV Geek News, The Funny Music Project, DrDemento.com, and even Time mag-

azine. Eleven albums and 6 EPs later, his lifelong love for fantasy, science fiction, cats, video and role-playing games continues to inspire his music and help him evolve, not only personally, but musically and professionally.

Today his profession is creating art and music with geeky themes. His performances are fueled by his passions and sharpened by long years of experience as a stand-up comedian. He's performed at theaters, bars, comedy clubs, casinos, colleges, festivals, and conventions across the US, hosted podcasts, exhibited at art shows, created a coloring book, and more, continually expanding his horizons as to what his next project will be.



Featured Musical Guest Blubbering Humdingers

We are **Scott, Kirsten, Aiden, Liam, and Chuck!** We create acoustic nerd rock for gamers, geeks, and galactic guardians, Browncoats, centaurs and mandalorians; hobbits, elves, and wizard gangsters; avengers, defenders, and black-belt hamsters; elder gods, small gods, fans of Tripod; Fremen, Atredies, Houses of the Landsraad; Hufflepuff sandwiches, pitches & snitches, trans-inclusive feminist witches; lions and tigers and bears (oh my); the droids you're looking for, and the last Jedi; samurai cats, I am Groot... and every manner of hoopy frood. Listen to the songs of our people. Most of us hail from Cary, NC (Chuck is from Richmond, VA). We've been making music together in various forms for many years, and started this Humdinger thing around 2007. We don't have a "sound" but we do have a mood. And that mood it fun. And friendship. We have two moods -- fun and friendship, and a night out with a ... well, you get the idea. Come celebrate fandom with us.



Featured Science Fiction Guest Adam Oyebanji

I was born in Coatbridge, in the West of Scotland, more years ago than I care to remember. Though, now I come to think about it, who actually remembers being born? I moved east to Edinburgh, by way of Birmingham, London, Lagos, Nigeria, Chicago, Pittsburgh and New York: a necessary detour, because traffic on the direct route is really, really bad. I'm a graduate of Birmingham University and Harvard Law School, and work in the field of counter-terrorist financing, which sounds way cooler than it is. Basically, I write emails, fill in forms, and use spreadsheets to help choke off the money supply that builds weapons of mass destruction, narcotics empires, and human trafficking networks. In my writing life, I'm a member of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers Association and the British Science Fiction Association.



Featured Horror Guest Alyssa Hazel

Alyssa Hazel is a Weird Fiction and Horror writer who enjoys exploring the weird, horrible and wonderful through her work. Her pieces have found homes in Bluestem, the Red Coyote, and the Dark River Review. While her specialty is anthologies (she has four) she's rather proud of her sci-fi thriller *The Third Test*.



Featured Space Opera Guest

Kacey Ezell writes emotionally charged adventure fantasy and science fiction. She is a two-time Dragon Award Finalist for Best Alternate History and won the 2018 Year's Best Military and Adventure Science Fiction Readers' Choice Award. She has written multiple bestselling novels published with Chris Kennedy Publishing, Baen Books, and Blackstone Publishing. Additionally, she is a retired helicopter pilot with 3000+ hours in the UH-1N Huey, Mi-171, and EC130 helicopters. She is married with two daughters. You

can join her fan community and get free stories by signing up for her newsletter at <http://www.kaceyezell.net>. Want to know more about the Ashes of Enteccea? Get access to sneak peeks and extra content by joining Kacey's Reamstories community! <https://reamstories.com/kaceyezell>.



Featured Gaming Guest Tory Brown

Tory Brown is the designer of *Votes for Women*, which launched on the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. Tory is a longtime activist and works as a political communications strategist for progressive causes. Inspired to create *Votes for Women* by games like *1960: The Making of The President*, she also enjoys playing the "new classics" like *Carcassonne* and *Ticket To Ride*. Tory has lived in Washington, DC for 15 years.



Featured Costuming Guest Lindsey Reinoehl Bartleson

Lindsay Bartleson of *Geek Diva Cosplay* has been cosplaying for just under a decade. In that time she has received multiple awards at conventions in both workmanship and stage presentation and quickly reached the Master level. She has presented many cosplay panels and has also acted as a judge for both stage presentation and workmanship categories at various conventions. She strives to fiercely represent body positivity, inclusivity, and the idea that anyone can cosplay whomever they want. She also does her best to represent the disability community. In 2020 she was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis after a severe flare that left her profoundly disabled but she hasn't let that stop her. It is a passion of hers to help new cosplayers get started and to also to help cosplayers improve their skills. She credits cosplay for helping her make a big positive impact on her life and now wants to help others do the same.



Featured Science Guest Charles Blue

(aka Blue the Science Dude) has more than 35 years of science communications experience. Charles has worked as the director of media services at the American Institute of Physics. He also served as the Writer/Editor for the National Science Foundation's Directorate for Engineering and the media relations specialist for the Thirty Meter Telescope Project. Charles also served as public information officer for the National Academy of Engineering and the National Radio Astronomy Observatory. He currently supports NASA's Planetary Science Division. Charles also is an avid Irish banjo player, sea chantey singer, and fitness instructor.



Additional Guests

Jim Beall Author, Scientist Jim Beall (BS-Math, MBA, PE) has been a nuclear engineer for over 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 at the USNRC included reactor inspector, safety analyst, and policy assistant to three different Presidential-appointed USNRC Commissioners while earning the agency's Meritorious and Distinguished Service awards. Coauthor of Journal of the British Interplanetary Society (JBIS) paper, "Ecological Engineering Considerations for ISU's Worldship Project" and Elsevier's "Interstellar Travel: Purpose and Motivations." Baen Books has published several of his non-fiction articles on a variety of subjects, including generational starships, shipyards, the electrical grid, "Atomic Follies," recycling, borders, warships (of sea and space), and artificial intelligence.

Aaron Brite Scientist GenX feral nerd from the womb raised on TOS and the original Wild Wild West reruns while "recreating" some of those gadgets (thankfully to little success). Grew up to become an Air Force avionics tech and then Supply Sergeant where he caught the hazmat bug. Now a corporate environmentalist by day and involved in multiple science fiction fandoms any other time. Well any other time not filled by real life.

Emily Jane Buehler Author Emily Jane Buehler writes cozy fantasy romances where everyday people (and fairies) have adventures and fall in love. Her stories are lighthearted with action and adventure, love and magic, and protagonists who learn to believe in themselves and find their courage. And yes, they are kissing books. She thinks of them as the beach reads that Princess Eilonwy packs when she goes on vacation. Emily Jane believes that by portraying positive relationships with good communication, romance novels can help readers envision such connections for themselves, model consent, and portray diverse types of relationships and people. They can be a fun escape while still having depth and contributing to a better society. Emily Jane has a chemistry background and worked for years as a bread baker before publishing her first book, *Bread Science: The Chemistry and Craft of Making Bread*, which includes the science of bread-making as well as the step-by-step process. She teaches baking classes at the Campbell Folk School in western Carolina along with her sourdough starter, Rocky Baldougha. She has also published a memoir about her bicycle trip from New Jersey to Oregon called *Somewhere and Nowhere: A Bicycle Journey Across America*. Emily Jane lives and works in Hillsborough with a bossy, bite-y cat named Coco. She is a freelance copyeditor of science papers. When she has any free time, and even when she doesn't, she likes to hike with her partner, write paper

letters to friends outside of Kim's Bakery, and defuse Coco by letting him kill his feather toy. She is online at janebuehler.com and emilybuehler.com.

Jason Cordova Author Bestselling author Jason Cordova has had his novels published in multiple languages around the world. He was both a John W. Campbell Award and Dragon Award finalist (though not in the same year). Author of the Black Tide Rising novel *Mountain of Fire*, and co-author of *Monster Hunter Memoirs: Fever* with Larry Correia, he currently resides in North Carolina with his muse and a plethora of animals.

Ben Davis Scientist Ben Davis has a Ph.D. in Nuclear Physics and an M.S. in Nuclear Astrophysics from the University of Notre Dame. He taught at the college level for several years on a number of technical subjects ranging from computer programming and math to, of course, astronomy and physics. In the late nineties, he took up a career in software and industrial controls engineering (robot programming and electronics are fun as they seem). As a lifelong fan of science fiction, his main avocations now involve history, futurism and skepticism. When not traveling with his wife, playing with his dogs, climbing rocks, or attending cons, he spends his spare time pondering general relativity, the search for extraterrestrial intelligence and the effects of antimatter on the dark matter/dark energy problem. Sometimes, he hunts for true psychics, ghosts and other paranormal phenomena to no avail.

Ana Ellis Author L. Ana Ellis, a sleep-deprived government worker by day, lets her imagination roam free while writing science fiction late into the night. After spending her days toiling over spreadsheets in a windowless cubicle with fluorescent lighting, and unbeknownst to her coworkers who think she spends her evenings watching cat videos, she spends her nights creating worlds that are more of a commentary on the present than an accurate prediction of the future. Speculating about how societies will change in the future fascinates her; she is undeterred that so far she has been wrong 100% of the time. Ellis's debut novel, *Panacea Genesis*, was a semifinalist in the 2023 Self Published Science Fiction Competition. She has published three novels, all in the *Panacea Trilogy*. She lives in the Washington, DC area with her husband and two cats. When procrastinating, she occasionally posts on Instagram as [lana.ellis.books](https://www.instagram.com/lana.ellis.books). She publishes under the indie press *Fire-Forged Books*.

Jim & John Gaines Author Jim and John Gaines write sci fi together as J.M.R.Gaines. Their novels *Life Sentence* and *Spy Station* form part of the *Forlani Saga* series, along with *Earth Regained* (in progress). They have also published space-themed short stories and poetry in a variety of journals. Jim is a retired literature professor and John works as a librarian



for Central Rappahannock Regional Library and writes extensively for librarypoint.com

Alexander Gideon Author Alexander G. R. Gideon's writing style can best be described by the phrase "and many people died". He's a multi-genre author of Historical Fantasy, Dark Fantasy, Sci-fi, and Horror. As the world's only Pan Librarian Wizard, he's an expert on most things, from High Magick and spirit summoning, to eldritch texts, to making you look like the Kings, Queens, and other Monarchs you know you are! As an optician, he's a master at crafting light bending wearable artifacts! No matter what you wish, Gideon has a spell, book, or word for you! Get news on his latest releases and appearances at AlexanderGideon.net, and find him anywhere on any social media @PanLibrarianWizard

Nicole Glover Author Nicole Glover is the author of the historical fantasy series, *Murder and Magic*, which begins with *The Conductors*. When she's not writing, she's working as a UX researcher where her knowledge about murder and other mysteries is surprisingly useful.

Brad Goodman Scientist Brad has been a guest at local science fiction conventions for more than thirty years. Now retired, he worked for NASA Langley Research Center, at their Visitor Center, and in support of traveling exhibits. Later he worked for the Science Museum of Virginia. These assignments came as a result of being a space-program fanatic from the earliest days of NASA. He is a member of The Planetary Society.

H.Y. Gregor Author H.Y. Gregor was born in Portland, Oregon, but will always call the mountains of Colorado home. She holds a bachelor's degree in political science but put it down often enough to narrowly avoid law school. Now she spends as much free time as possible weaving fantasy tales and battling plot gremlins. Her short fiction has earned Silver Honorable Mention awards from the Writers of the Future contest and published in a number of anthologies. These include contributions to Chris Kennedy Publishing's 4HU, William Alan Webb's *Last Brigade*, and a multi-genre spread of stories with Knight Writing Press, CKP, and Three Ravens Publishing. Her debut novel, *Stonewhisper*, released in June 2023. Current projects include the *Vechnoye Saga*, a spinoff series in Jon R. Osborne's *Milesian Accords* world. When not writing, she can often be found at writer's conferences and retreats, sporting an overstuffed messenger bag and too many pens (just don't ask to borrow one).

Robert Hampson Author, Scientist Dr. Robert E. Hampson is a neuroscientist, professor, and author who spends his time exploring the frontiers of memory research and the far reaches of the imagination. With a Ph.D. in Physiology & Pharmacology, he studies how brains encode memories and develops futuristic technologies like neuroprosthetics. By day, he's a professor at Wake Forest University School of Medicine, mentoring students, teaching science communication, and occasionally wondering why coffee isn't considered a research tool. By night, he's a hard science fiction author who turns real-world science into thrilling, charac-

ter-driven stories. His work has earned accolades for scientific accuracy—because, let's face it, nothing ruins a sci-fi adventure like bad science. With over 30 short stories, multiple novels, and critical praise for works like *The Moon and the Desert*, Dr. Hampson proves that science and storytelling make a perfect pair. Whether decoding neurons or crafting futures, he's always pushing boundaries!

Kim Iverson Headlee Author, Publisher Kim Iverson Headlee lives on a farm in the mountains of southwestern Virginia with her family, cats, fish, goats, Great Pyrenees goat guards, someone else's cattle, half a million honey bees, and assorted wildlife. People and creatures come and go, but the cave and the 250-year-old house ruins—the latter having been occupied as recently as the midtwentieth century—seem to be sticking around for a while yet. She has been a critically acclaimed author since 1999 and a student of Arthurian lore for more than half a century. In 2016, she became the first author to publish a sequel to any of Mark Twain's novels, and *King Arthur's Sister* in Washington's Court went on to enjoy copious praise and sales rankings. Now, *Queen Morgan le Fay*—the only major character Twain did not kill off—reprises her majestic glory and hilarious hijinks in *King Arthur's Sister the Once and Future Queen*.

David Hensley Author David is an East Coast Hepaw born and raised in southwest Colorado. The town of Dolores, to be specific. He's been a lot of places and done a lot of things since then, including cowboying in the Utah desert and twenty years as an aviation structural mechanic for the United States Navy. No matter where he's been or what he was doing, David has been obsessed with storytelling. His lifelong pursuit of a well-told tale delivered him to Three Ravens Publishing's door. You can find him at davidwhensley.com.

H.P. Holo Author 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, expecting only her husband and a few Gunpla nerds to read it—so naturally it became an Amazon bestseller. In the process of writing the *Titan Mage* series, though, she also discovered that while she likes writing smart stuff, she also likes writing smut stuff. Pretty spicy smut stuff, too, 'cause if you're gonna do it, you might as well do it hard. If all her books are also love letters, then this series is a love letter to sexy people in giant robots and the



Additional Guests

Continued

chili emojis they get up to. On both her 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, in fact, 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 Author 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.

J.F. Holmes Author/Publisher J.F. Holmes is a retired Army Senior Noncommissioned Officer, having served for 22 years in both the Regular Army and Army National Guard. During that time, he served as everything from an artillery section leader to a member of a Division level planning staff, with tours in Cuba and Iraq, as well as responding to the terrorists attacks in NYC on 9-11. From 2010 to 2014 he wrote the immensely popular military cartoon strip, “Power Point Ranger”, poking fun at military life in the tradition of *Beetle Bailey* and *Willy & Joe*. His books range from Military Sci-Fi to Space Opera to Detective to Fantasy, with a lot in between, and in 2017 two are finalists for the prestigious Dragon Awards. In 2018, he launched Cannon Publishing, specializing in military science fiction, fantasy and thrillers, with an emphasis on works from up and coming authors.

Scott Huggins Author Having been born in California and raised in Kansas, Scott Huggins grew up as confused as one might expect. He began writing seriously in college in between student exchanges spent in post-Soviet Russia and

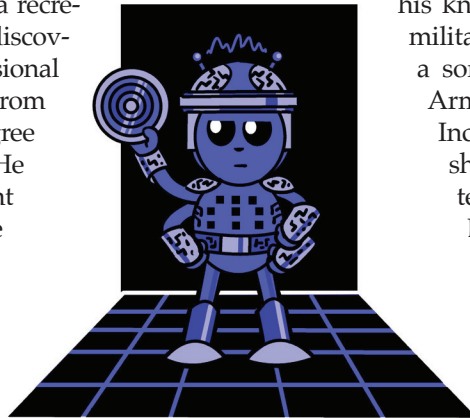
Germany, and was one of the last Writers of the Future in 1999. The future arrived immediately thereafter and nothing has been the same for him since. Huggins is the author of eight books, including the *Across the Endless Ocean* series, as well as the chronicles of James and Harriet, the slightly heroic veterinarians of the Evil Dark Lord who has conquered the world and needs someone to keep the dragons healthy. Huggins is also the only winner of both of Baen’s writing awards, and was once given a sword by his fans.

Daniel Kemp Author Finishing at Ole Miss in 1998, Dan spent the next decade in infantry assignments in South Korea and the 101st Airborne. That lasted as long as his knees and his back held out. A master’s in military history (Norwich University ‘12) and a somewhat turbulent personal life after the Army inspired what became the *Athenaeum Inc* trilogy at Cannon Publishing about the shadowy and violent world of military-intelligence contracting (*Door Number Three*, *Doubling Down* and *2025’s Triple Play*). Meanwhile he also slung out a variety of short stories. These have been on everything from intelligent combat machines and the sinking of the *Bismarck* to the feeding of dragons. He lives in the Tennessee hills south of Fort Campbell with a few dogs, a few too many cats, and a just a little bit of an unusual collection.

Chris Kennedy Author, Publisher A Webster Award winner and three-time Dragon Award finalist, Chris Kennedy is a Science Fiction/Fantasy author, speaker, and small-press publisher who has written over 65 books and published more than 500 others. Get his free book, “Shattered Crucible,” at his website, chriskennedypublishing.com. A retired naval aviator, he uses his experience to give authenticity to his military science fiction stories. Called “fantastic” and “a great speaker,” he has coached hundreds of beginning authors and budding novelists on how to self-publish their stories at a variety of conferences, conventions, and writing guild presentations. He is the author of the award-winning #1 bestseller, “Self-Publishing for Profit: How to Get Your Book Out of Your Head and Into the Stores.” Chris lives in Coinjock, North Carolina, with his wife, Sheellah, and is the holder of a doctorate in educational leadership and master’s degrees in both business and public administration. Follow Chris on Facebook at facebook.com/ckpublishing/.

Daniel Kim Cosplay, Costumer Owner of *Alchemy Arms* and member of the 501st Legion Carolina Garrison, Colonial Ministry of Defense, and customer to these and other fan groups.

Pamela Kinney Author Pamela K. Kinney gave up long ago ignoring the demanding voices in her head and has been writing ever since. Her short horror story, “Bottled Spirits,” was runner-up for the 2013 WSFA Small Press Award and consid-



ered one of the seven best genre short fiction for that year. She has various short stories and poems published in fiction and nonfiction anthologies, magazines, and online zines, a science fiction novella, an urban fantasy novel, five nonfiction ghost books, a cryptid/indigenous mythologies book, a fantasy children's picture book, and will have a YA dark fantasy novel, *Demon Memories*, by the end of 2024. Her poem, *Dementia*, got her mentioned in Best Horror of the Year, Volume 13. Find out more about her at her website, PamelaKKinney.com.

Sean Korsgaard Author, Publisher, Fandom Sean CW Korsgaard is a U.S. Army veteran, award-winning freelance journalist, author, editor and publicist who has worked with Analog Science Fiction & Fact, Baen Books, and Writers of the Future, and recently became the editor of Anvil and Battleborn magazines. His first anthology, *Worlds Long Lost*, was released in December 2022, as was his debut short story, "Black Box." He lives in Richmond, Virginia with his wife and child, along with, depending on who you ask, either far too many or far too few books.

Claire Merrick Author Tired of writing about bad news as a producer at a news station, Claire Merrick began using her free time to write urban fantasy stories. She attended FantaSci in Durham, hoping to learn from authors about the business side of publishing. One of the guests, Kevin Ikenberry, asked if she had a manuscript. Then he pointed at some of the editors in attendance and gave her a challenge: "Send them your manuscript within the next ten days." The result was an offer from Cannon Publishing to publish her first fantasy novel, scheduled to release in 2025. Merrick grew up with a love for mythology and Nancy Drew mysteries. She spent most of her life in North Carolina, inspired by the old textile mills, train depots, and trips to the mountains not far from home.

Michael Morton Author Michael Morton is a retired USAF space operations officer and wishes the Space Force happened earlier. Still, he gets to work for them as a civilian, so life isn't all bad. He writes award-winning military sci-fi and fantasy and lives in Colorado Springs with his family. When he's not writing, he enjoys camping and exploring the local distilleries and breweries.

Alfred Muller Author Alfred Muller is an author of supernatural fantasy tackling the deeper elements of the human condition with angels and demons as the backdrop. He lives in TN with his wife and son contemplating his next story.

Dennis Myers Author 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, aboard submarines and teaching younger sailors, he settled in Virginia. The story ideas he had been saving were eventually compiled into a timeline spanning thousands of years. When the opportunity came to write full time for a few months, he jumped at it with the full support of his wonderful wife, May. He hasn't stopped writing since. His most recent work, *Rise of the Automated Empire*, is available now. The first book in the series, *Final Assembly*, is a nominee for this year's Webster Award.

Melissa Olthoff Author Melissa Olthoff is a science fiction

and fantasy author who delights in sneaking in romance wherever she can. She is a lifelong geek as well as a veteran of the United States Air Force, both of which are incredibly useful when writing. Her degrees in meteorology and accounting are slightly less applicable to writing but absolutely useful when it comes to supporting her family. In 2023, she took second place in the annual Baen Fantasy Adventure Award Contest with her story "Fall From Grace" and won the Imadjinn Award Best Short Story for "Angel Wings and Demon Bones." She is published by Chris Kennedy Publishing and is best known for her novels in the Four Horsemen Universe, the Salvage Title Universe, and Hit World Valkyries, as well as numerous short stories. She can be found at her website melissaolthoff.net, chriskennedypublishing.com, Facebook, Twitter, and on her Amazon Author Page.

J.E. Pittman Author 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's currently published in the *Hidden Villains Arise* and *Behind the Shadows* anthologies and independently publishes his sci-fi action series *Pandora Squad**** and his darkly cozy urban fantasy series: *Felix Chance*. More at www.halfacrepond.com.

J.F. (Jennie) Posthumus Author Wife and a mother of five, J.F. Posthumus is an IT Tech with over a decade of experience. When she isn't arguing with computers and their inherent gremlins, or being mom to the four younger monsters (the eldest was a police officer, lost to us all in June of 2023),



Chris Kennedy Publishing—where the focus is on fun, message-free science fiction and fantasy!

"Science Fiction with a Side of Fantasy!"

<https://chriskennedypublishing.com/>

Additional Guests *Continued*

she's crafting, writing, or doing some sort of art. An avid gamer, she loves playing Dungeons & Dragons, and a variety of other board games with her family and friends. She's also a hopeless romantic, thanks to all the fairy tales she cut her eyeteeth on. They were what J.F. Posthumus learned to read before she discovered the Boxcar Children Mysteries. From there, she fell into the rabbit hole that's reading, where she discovered a love for mysteries, fantasy, and the occasional romance. Since writing was a favorite subject, she naturally incorporated her love of murder, mysteries, and fantasy into her works.

Phillip Pournelle Author and Gamer Commander Pournelle retired from the Navy after 26 years of service as a surface warfare officer, operations analyst, and joint operations planner. He served on cruisers, destroyers, amphibious ships, and an experimental high-speed vessel. He served on the Navy staff conducting modeling, simulation, and analysis where he was the founding manager of the Navy's World Class Modeling program. He served on the staff at the Secretary of Defense's Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (CAPE) doing joint mobility and maritime analysis. He served for five years in the Office of Net Assessment exploring the future security environment. He is a senior operations research analyst, net assessor, and wargame designer. He has a masters degree from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey. He helped complete Jerry Pournelle's *Janissaries: Mamelukes* and is working on the sequel. He has written several military themed short stories including one in the *RoboSoldiers: Thank You for Your Servos* anthology.

Gray Rinehart Author Growing up in Georgetown, South Carolina, Gray started writing in middle school, but "outgrew" it after college (excluding some professional publications) as he started his career in the United States Air Force. He retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in 2006. Near the middle of Gray's military career, he became more serious about writing. In 2004 he attended Orson Scott Card's "Literary Boot Camp" and proceeded to publish his first short story in 2007. He logged his first "professional" sale in 2011 and continues working toward the goal of supporting his family as a full-time independent writer.

Wes Rist Lawyer D. Wes Rist is an Atrocity Prevention Policy Advisor in the Bureau of Conflict & Stabilization Operations (CSO) at the U.S. Department of State. He previously served as the Deputy Executive Director and Director of Education and Research at the American Society of International Law (ASIL). He was a member of the Prevention and Protection Working Group (PPWG), which advised the U.S. Government on genocide and atrocities prevention issues,

and served as a co-chair of the PPWG Elie Wiesel Act Implementation Committee. Wes was the Assistant Director of the Center for International Legal Education and professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, and as a lecturer in international Law at UWE Bristol Law School. He holds a JD and an LL.M. (with distinction) in International Human Rights Law.

Sam Robb Author Sam Robb is a Pittsburgh native, a former US Navy officer, and a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University. Over the course of his life, he has acquired a wife, three daughters, several quadrupeds, and a penchant for walking down back alleys and taking pictures of graffiti. When he's not walking around, taking pictures, and making up stories to tell about what he sees, he works as a software developer and occasional politician. You can find him online at samrobbwrites.com.

Shari Robb Editor Shari Robb is a patient and loving wife. She loves Jesus, and is a trained technical writer and counselor. Now that the kids are grown, she has started an additional career as a freelance editor. She has worked as a copy editor for a couple political campaigns, multiple non-fiction books, and many short SF/Fantasy stories from the Alpha Mercs.

David Shadoin Author and Other David "Shady" Shadoin is a trouble-making, corn-fed Nebraska boy the United States Air Force managed to turn into a somewhat decent pilot of whirly birds. His debut novel, *Companion to Ghosts*, released in May 2024 from Chris Kennedy Publishing. An avid reader from a young age, he has always found inspiration listening to rock music while reading Fantasy and Sci Fi novels, and drinking single malt scotch. This love of written adventure set up Shady to moonlight as a new author trying to find a good outlet for creative ideas that start with nothing more than a misplaced pop culture reference and some DnD dungeons.

Wayland Smith Author, Gamer, Fandom WAYLAND SMITH is the pen name for a native Texan who has lived in Massachusetts, New York, Washington DC, and presently makes his home in Virginia. His rather unlikely list of jobs includes private investigator, comic book shop owner, ring crew for a circus (then he ran away from the circus and joined home), deputy sheriff, writer, and freelance stagehand. Wayland's novels so far include *In My Brother's Name*, *Tools of the Trade*, *Cadre Clash*, and *Old Gods and New Drugs*, the first two books in the *Wildside* series. He has short stories in the anthologies "Cat Ladies of the Apocalypse", "HeroNet Files, Vol 1", "SNAFU: An Anthology of Military Horror," and "Misfits of Magic," among many others. He has spoken on panels at WorldCon, DragonCon, DC AwesomeCon,



MystiCon, and RavenCon. A black belt in shaolin kung fu, he is also a fan of comic books, reading, writing, and various computer games (I'll shut 7 Days to Die down in one more hour. Really). He lives with a beautiful woman who was crazy enough to marry him, and the spirits of a few wonderful dogs that have passed on.

Scott Sykes Author S.M. Sykes never saw himself as a writer, facing struggles with English classes in school. Even his wife, who doubles as his editor, can attest to occasional challenges with organizing his thoughts. However, despite these obstacles, he discovered a passion for storytelling that he couldn't ignore. Beginning with his debut novel, *Eyes of Blue* in 2018 at the age of 38, he found the genesis of his stories in a simple idea that sparked in his mind. As the narrative unfolded, it took on a life of its own, leading to the ongoing series that began with *Eyes of Blue* and continues with his current project, *Loss of Blue*. With *Loss of Blue*, he aims to weave together the threads of his previous works into a conclusion that is both profound and satisfying. Balancing a full-time job with his writing endeavors, which include advertising and marketing his work, has proven challenging. Yet, his motivation lies not in financial gain or replacing his day job but in the satisfaction of sharing his ideas with readers. Looking ahead, he remains focused on his writing journey, eager to explore where it may lead. He invites others to join him on this adventure by checking out his books and sharing their thoughts.

Max Thompson Cosplayer Hello there and welcome to my channel! My name is Bash, The Prop Slayer! My channel is dedicated to bringing game and movie replica weapons and armor to life. My main sources of inspiration are Final Fantasy, Star Wars, and The Lord of The Rings. I was introduced to cosplay and prop making in 2010 when I started my screen accurate Mandalorian armor set. I was applying for the Official Member Status for the Mandalorian Mercenary Costume Club, and since then I've been volunteered with various projects in the military as well as goods for the public.

Vivian Valentine Author The author of The Amelia Temple Series, Vivian Moira Valentine is a rad trans lady who loves monsters. When she was a child, she found the Crestwood House Monster Series at her local library and it's all been downhill from there. Now everything she likes is horrible. When not writing, Vivi enjoys card and board games and plotting out more tabletop RPG campaigns than she will ever have time to run. Vivi lives in Virginia Beach with her

amazing wife Frankie and their son, as well as an ever-growing collection of action figures.

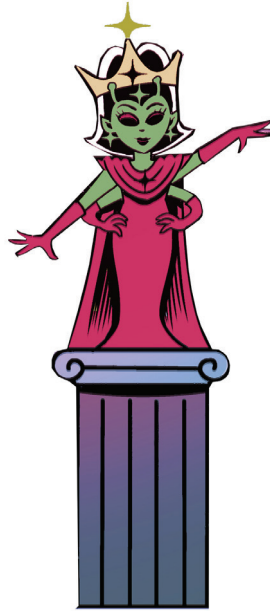
Steve Vickers Author Steve Vickers writes SF, fantasy, and historical fiction but has a thing for werewolves and trolls. He lives in Colorado Springs and has an MFA in Creative Writing/Genre Fiction from Western Colorado University. *Troll Hunt*, a novella in the Troll Lands universe, is his first published work. He is completing a novel set in

the same universe. He served in space operations fields for 24 years in the US Air Force and continued supporting the Air Force and Space Force after his retirement from active duty. He is married, with two sons and two knucklehead dogs.

Mark Wandrey Author International bestselling author of military sci-fi, space opera, and zombie apocalypse, Mark Wandrey is also the only 4 time DragonCon Dragon Award finalist! Newest Release – *Winged Hussars: Andromeda* – Book 9 in the 4HU Phoenix Initiative series, set in the Four Horsemen mil-sf universe. Living the full time RV lifestyle as a modern day nomad, Mark Wandrey has been writing science fiction since he was in grade school. He launched his professional career in 2004 with the release of *Earth Song – Overture*. Now, 15 years later, he has more than 30 books out, including many bestsellers. His favorite is military science fiction. However, he also pens *Zombie Apocalypse (ZA)* in the form of his 2016 Dragon Finalist “A Time to Die”, book 1 in the Turning Point series. The series is complete and available on Amazon, continuing with Book 2, “A Time to Run”, and finishing with “A Time to Live”.

Rowan Worth Author Rowan Worth's first book, *Past Imperfect*, introduced a family of shapeshifters trying to stop an enemy intent on destroying their small pack. Her next release is *The Lost Prince*, the first book in a science fiction series about an asteroid miner who finds an abandoned battleship deep in an asteroid field, hurling her and her team into a centuries-old mystery and an interstellar power struggle. Rowan lives in Virginia where she enjoys writing, editing, and growing flowers and herbs. Find out more at her website and subscribe to her newsletter *Worth Reading!* for all the latest release information: <http://rowanworth.com> Explore a universe of Romance...Suspense... and a Touch of Paranormal Heat.

Ben Yallow Fandom, Editor Ben Yallow has attended about 900 cons, and worked on about a third of them, with jobs ranging from gofer to Chair of both regionals and the Worldcon. He has also edited 4 books for NESFA Press.



Guest Groups

Cornucopia Productions
Blibbering Humdingers
Legend LARP

LARP Group
 Musical Group
 LARP Group

NekoCon

Society for Creative Anachronism

Vampire, the Masquerade

Con Table

LARP Group

MarsCon 2025 Programming

A Short History of Military Science Fiction Reading and writing stories about the military is not new. Using the military, or military-type elements in science fiction is almost as old as science fiction itself. Join our panelists as they discuss the history of military science fiction and major milestones in the development of military sci-fi as its own sub-genre. **Panelists:** Sean Korsgaard, Mark Wandrey, Daniel Kemp

Adding Food and Eating in Stories Not only is the consumption of food necessary for our survival, feasts and eating make up a huge part of our various cultures and traditions. How do we write food and eating into our stories in realistic ways? There may be actual food made and consumed at this panel...

Moderator: H.P. Holo **Panelists:** Emily Jane Buehler, Alexander Gideon, J.E. Pittman

AI: What Can It Do, What Should It Do, & How Do We Write AI into our Stories Join scientists and authors as they discuss Artificial Intelligence, including the possibility that companies are beginning to use AI to create art to not have to pay artists, actors, writers, etc. for their work. But is AI all bad? How might we be able to use it to help us? And how can we write it into our stories in an authentic way and a way that will satisfy our stories and our readers? **Panelists:** L. Ana Ellis, Phil Pournelle, Adam Oyebanji, Daniel Kemp

Are All Empires Evil? Governance in Space How might empires that cover more than one planet be governed? How would order be maintained? Do empires have to be evil in order to hold together? Join our panelists as they discuss how multi-planet or multi-system federations or empires might be governed, from galactic senates to loose confederations. **Panelists:** Kacey Ezell, Wes Rist, Jacob Holo, Rowan Worth

Are We the Baddies? This panel includes discussions on the experience of creating opposition decks in games, of playing "the baddies" (e.g. the Axis powers in Axis & Allies, the anti-suffragists in Votes for Women, etc.), and what is involved in making and playing a game that is fun for all players. **Moderator:** Phillip Pournelle **Panelists:** Stephen Buonocore, Tory Brown, Stephen Glenn

Baen Roadshow Review the past year and look forward to the upcoming one. Authors connected with Baen Books will discuss how things have gone and what to look forward to. **Moderators:** Jason Cordova | Gray Rinehart **Panelists:** Kacey Ezell, H.P. Holo, Jacob Holo, Scott Huggins, Chris Kennedy, Sean Korsgaard, Michael Morton, Adam Oyebanji, Melissa Olthoff, Phillip Pournelle, Christopher Ruocchio

Beyond the Chainmail Bikini: Battling Toxic Objectification in Fandom Everyone says "sex sells" but does it have to? Do we need to cater to heterosexual men in order to make a profit selling art at Comic-Cons and Sci-Fi Fantasy conventions? Can we create, write, and/or cosplay beautiful images of both men and women in respectful poses and outfits and still attract fans? Our panel will discuss objectifica-

tion in art and fandom and what we can do to change it for the better. **Panelists:** Jake Clark, Lindsey Reinoehl Bartleson, Ben Yallow, Kim Iverson Headlee

Boarding Action Bring your Nerf arsenal and protective eye-wear!! Defend yourself and your team from your enemies (at least the pretend enemies of the moment)! Open to all ages, though it's highly recommended that those 12 and under have supervision. Those 8 and under must have an adult present to participate. There will be some loaner Nerf tools, should you need them. Loaners are limited and are distributed on a first come-first serve basis. **Panelists:** Jon Baker

Building a Gaming Community Are you looking for more players for your favorite board games? Board games bring people together, but it takes the players to make that happen. Kevin and David talk about their experience organizing friends and future friends into board gaming communities. This panel will include discussion on the logistics of organizing game play, the concept of the "third space", and what transforms disparate board game enthusiasts into a community of friends. **Panelists:** Kevin Fowler, David Seletyn

Cannon Publishing Roundtable Join the senior staff at Cannon Publishing and their principal authors as they discuss their new and upcoming projects. **Moderator:** John Holmes **Panelists:** H.Y. Gregor, Mike Morton

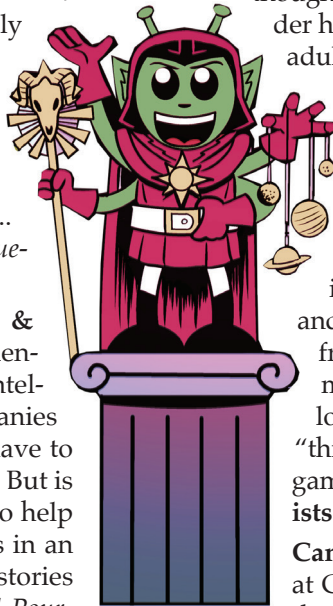
Characters with Personality This workshop will focus on using personality types and archetypes in developing relatable characters as both protagonists and antagonists. **Panelists:** L. Ana Ellis, Adam Oyebanji, Alyssa Hazel

CKP: The Year Ahead Review the past year and look forward to the upcoming one. Authors connected with Chris Kennedy Publishing will discuss how things have gone and what to look forward to. **Moderator:** Chris Kennedy **Panelists:** Kacey Ezell, and More

Create an Interstellar Legend What can be created when an artist, an author (or two or three), a musician, a scientist and a costumer get together? Hopefully, an Interstellar Legend that can lead a Galactic Empire! Taking ideas from the audience, the professionals will build a character with a rough sketch portrait (with a signature look), a reasonably fleshed out backstory and a theme song. Come see what our experts can concoct. **Moderator:** Rob Hampson **Panelists:** Jake Clark, Christopher Ruocchio, Rhiannon's Lark, Max Thompson

Dm-ing for Beginners So you wanna be a Dungeon Master but haven't the foggiest idea how to start or what to do? Come to this workshop to get tips and tricks to help you get started in the DM business. **Presenter:** Joel Lyons

Dos and Don'ts of Submitting to Indie Publishers Come meet with senior staff from Cannon Publishing to learn how to submit your manuscript to this and other independent publishing houses. The rules are different than trying to submit to mainstream houses. Manuscript submissions may



be collected at this time. Speak with the panelists for more information. **Panelists:** *J.F. Holmes, Mike Morton, H.Y. Gregor, Chris Kennedy*

Dueling Writers Come watch as our author guests of honor and author featured guests, along with some wonderful author friends, play a writing game. In two teams, authors are given prompts and a time limit. They write to the prompt before passing off the story to a teammate, who must continue the story and add details based on other prompts. The team that creates the best story from the prompts gets bragging rights and a cheesy trophy to pass between them. **Moderator:** *Gray Rinehart* **Panelists:** *David Shadoin, Cassandra Clarke, Adam Oyebanji, Alyssa Hazel, Brad Goodman, Nicole Glover*

Editing: The Whys and the Hows Revising and editing are important parts of the writing process, as well as onerous and sometimes downright boring. Join authors, editors, and publishers as they talk about why it is important not to forego these steps and how one might be able make the whole process just a little bit easier, or at least more fun. 'Cause friends and drinks always make things better! **Panelists:** *Sam Robb, Shari Robb, Ben Yallow, Jim and John Gaines*

Fandom and Mental Health Fans everywhere talk of how their participation in fandom has helped maintain their mental health. Some say that fandom has literally saved their lives. Join in the discussion of how fandom has and continues to be a balm for many in an uncertain world and concrete ways that others can help their fellow fans in the midst of the chaos. **Panelists:** *Lindsey Reinoehl Bartleson, Shari Robb, Ben Yallow, Brad Goodman*

First Contact A discussion on the pros and cons of humans making contact first, and then of the aliens making contact first. Which should we hope for? Which should we expect? **Panelists:** *Adam Oyebanji, Sheri Robb, Jim Beall, Scott Sykes*

Galatic Empires & Epic Interstellar Legends Join our Guests of Honor as they discuss what makes empires, especially galatic ones, and interstellar legends. Which empires and legends do we want to know more about? Which ones have been overdone? It's the MarsCon theme this year, but what does it mean? **Panelists:** *Christopher Ruocchio, Cassandra Clarke, Stephen Buonocore, Jake Clark*

Gemstone Divination Lithomancy, divining the future by using stones (including gemstones and crystals), has a long history, especially in the Jewish traditions. Join our Musical Guest of Honor as she helps you learn this ancient art. **Presenter:** *Rhiannon's Lark*

Generative Writing Sessions A & B Join our Author Co-Guest of Honor as she facilitates a workshop for authors and aspiring authors to spend time writing. Use the expertise of others to help you polish your draft, edit and revise, or to begin an outline. Whatever you need, they will help you with. **Moderator:** *Cassandra Clarke* **A Panelists:** *David Hensley, Steve Vickers, Emily Jane Buehler* **B Panelists:** *Sam Robb, J.F. Holmes*

Genre Blending (NSFW) Many authors, when asked to define the genre of their writing, often hemming and hawing between two or more genres. "It's like urban fantasy, but there are also elements of mystery and thriller." Can we blend together more than one genre? Should we? Are their

genres that should not be combined? Which combos are you most interested in reading? Join our panelists as they discuss cool things about writing in multiple genres at the very same time. **Panelists:** *Kacey Ezell, David Shadoin, Alyssa Hazel, Pamela Kinney*

GenX Sequels Axed What GenX beloved movies would be unable to have a sequel or be remade today? Why, what makes them beloved radioactive trouble? What could be done to redeem them and would it work? **Panelist:** *S.M. Sykes, Wayland Smith, J.F. Posthumous*

Get in the Robot! A panel of authors who spend too much money on Gunpla and Battletech models talk about giant mechs and how they influence their writing. **Panelists:** *H.P. Holo, Chris Kennedy, Melissa Olthoff, Mark Wandrey*

GPS: Global Positioning System and How It Really Works The physics and engineering behind the Global Positioning System and what it can and can't do (and who do you blame when it does go bad). **Panelists:** *Charles Blue, Jim Beall, Mike Morton, Brad Goodman*

Guest of Honor – Cassandra Clark Stop by and hear one of our Author Guests of Honor discuss her current and upcoming projects and how the writing process works for her. There will be time for questions from the audience. **Moderator:** *Teresa Bhaile*

Guest of Honor – Jake Clark Stop by and hear our Artist Guests of Honor discuss his current and upcoming projects and how the creative process works for him. There will be time for questions from the audience. **Moderator:** *Teresa Bhaile*

Guest of Honor – Christopher Ruocchio Stop by and hear one of our Author Guests of Honor discuss his current and upcoming projects and how the writing process works for him. There will be time for questions from the audience. **Moderator:** *Teresa Bhaile*

Henchmen (and Women) of the Empire Cobra, Hydra, and other followers of the bad guy. Where do they get their training? What is their motivation? Is there a good benefits package and what is the going rate for a top-notch lackey anyway? **Panelist:** *Jacob Holo, Robert Hampson, Nicole Glover, Jason Cordova*

History and Future of Board Gaming Join gaming guests Stephen Glenn and Kevin Fowler for a discussion of board gaming's past and future. If you want to talk about the origins of board gaming, why we have so many new games being published today, and what the future holds, this is a great panel for you. **Panelists:** *Stephen Glenn, Kevin Fowler*

How'd They Make That?!?!? Cosplayers and costumers explain how props and costumes can and/or are made. **Moderator:** *Max Thompson* **Panelists:** *Dan Kim, Alexander Gideon*

How Far Will Your Dollar Go in Building Cosplay? This is not a cosplay/prop making on a budget pitch, but more so where you should spend your money and get the biggest returns for them. **Panelists:** *Max Thompson, Daniel Kim, Aaron Brite*

How Societies Shape Military Forces and Vice Versa How does a society shape their military forces man, machine, philosophy, and how does the military shape the society they

Programming *continued*

serve? **Moderator:** *Phil Pournelle* **Panelists:** *Christopher Ruocchio, Kacey Ezell, David Shadoin, Daniel Kemp*

Imagining Atrocities: Using Speculative Fiction to Help Address Human Made Atrocities Speculative fiction allows our imaginations to literally run wild. How can speculative fiction help us imagine the best, and more importantly, the worst of humanity? How can these imaginings help us in 'the real world' to put an end to atrocities or prevent them altogether? **Panelists:** *Wes Rist, Claire Merrick, Alfred Muller, Pamela Kinney*

Intergalactic Empires & Epic Interstellar Legends

Join our Guests of Honor as they discuss what makes empires, especially galactic ones, and interstellar legends. Which empires and legends do we want to know more about? Which ones have been overdone? It's the MarsCon theme this year, but what does it mean? **Moderator:** *David Shadoin* **Panelists:** *Christopher Ruocchio, Cassandra Clarke, Jake Clark, David Hensley*

Mikey Mason Concerts Join one of our Musical Featured Guests for a performance of some of his extensive catalog of super geeky, super cool songs. **Presenter:** *Mikey Mason*

MarsCon Wants You! You've come to Mars-Con and had a great time! You're already making plans to come again next year. Have you thought about volunteering? MarsCon is volunteer run and we are always looking for people who want to pitch in. Come find out what kinds of things you could do and how to fit volunteering at MarsCon into your fandom life. **Panelists:** *Jennifer Cooper, Teresa Bhaile, Amy Cardona, Jennifer May*

Mythology in Fiction Authors often draw on myths and legends. How do they choose and what pit-falls must they avoid? **Panelists:** *Vivian Valentine, Steve Vickers, Rowan Worth, Brad Goodman*

Play to Your Strengths No combat experience? No problem! You can still write action scenes—we promise. Not a doctor? No time to go to medical school? We've got you covered—just keep the surgery on the page, okay? Let's talk about how you can write about things you don't know much about—or have no first-hand experience of, without losing your readers. **Moderator:** *Robert Hampson* **Panelists:** *Christopher Ruocchio, Melissa Olthoff, Jason Cordova*

Podcasts: What Should We Be Listening To? There are SO MANY podcasts out there. What should we be listening to? What should we be avoiding? Our panelists discuss ideas for what we should include in our weekly listening. **Panelists:** *Stephen Buonocore, Mike Dutcher*

Quick & Casual Games: Learn, Win, & Take Learn a quick and casual game. Play with others who are learning the game. If you win, you get to take home the copy! Even if you don't win, you have still learned a new, quick game. **Panelists:** *Matt Jackson, Dave Seletyn*

Rhiannon's Lark Performances Join our Musical Guest of Hon-

or Rhiannon's Lark for a performance of some of her extensive super geeky, super cool songs. **Presenter:** *Rhiannon's Lark*

Romantasy (NSFW) What happens when you combine the pastoral setting and magic of a fantasy with the relationships and spicyness of a romance? You get ROMANTASY. Come talk with and to authors who have or are considering writing in this emerging sub-genre. Topics covered may be NSFW. This panel is not recommended for children 14 and under. **Panelists:** *Kacey Ezell, Emily Jane Buehler, H.P. Holo, Melissa Olthoff*

RPGs as Collaborative Storytelling Role-playing games, especially table top RPGs, are often more about the story that involves all the players. The players take part in building the story from the DMs outline. Join authors and DMs as they discuss how to have a great outline and how to (as a player) run with that outline and participate in creating a great story together. **Panelists:** *David Hensley, Jim and John Gaines, Nicole Glover, Vivian Valentine*

Smash or Pass: Space Opera Characters (NSFW)

What are your favorite space operas? Which characters from this subgenre would you smash in a hot second, and which ones would you pass on? And most importantly, why? Join our panelists for this NSFW panel. Not recommended for children 14 and under without parent attendance. **Panelists:** *KC Ezell, David Shadoin, J.F. Posthumus, J.E. Pittman*

So You Wanna Host a Podcast... You have a great idea for a podcast, but how do you get one recorded? How do you get it out there? How do you get more than just your mom to listen to it? Come talk with these veteran podcasters and find out. **Panelists:** *John Holmes, H.Y. Gregor, Mikey Mason*

So You Want to Publish a Board Game? Learn about the experience of designing and producing your board game idea from the perspective of game designers and publishers. Discussion will include the how game mechanics evolve from idea to implementation, how games are playtested and refined, and how games get to market (traditional publishing, Kickstarter, etc.). **Panelists:** *Stephen Buonocore, Tory Brown, Stephen Glenn*

Social Media: Time Sink or Marketing Savior? Which is it? Is there a way to take the negative aspects of social media and use them to further an author's or artist's engagement and /or reach? **Panelists:** *Alyssa Hazel, H.P. Holo, Charles Blue, Scott Huggins*

Space Colonization: How and When? In order to build galactic empires, we first need to get out into space. Then, with the very large distances between planets, there is always the problem of getting from one place to another in a timely manner. How will that happen? How close are we to being able to travel even to the Moon or Mars in a few hours or days instead of weeks or months? **Panelists:** *Dr. Ben Davis, Charles Blue, Wes Rist*

Songwriting 101 Songwriting has two main components:



lyrics and melody. Join our musical guests as they help fledglings sort through the mechanics of a good idea and make it into a good song. **Panelists:** *Rhiannon's Lark, The Blibbering Humdingers, Mikey Mason, Jim & John Gaines*

So You Wanna Host a Podcast... You have a great idea for a podcast, but how do you get one recorded? How do you get it out there? How do you get more than just your mom to listen to it? Come talk with these veteran podcasters and find out. **Panelists:** *John Holmes, H.Y. Gregor, Mikey Mason, Dr. Ben Davis*

So You Want to Publish a Board Game? Learn about the experience of designing and producing your board game idea from the perspective of game designers and publishers. Discussion will include the how game mechanics evolve from idea to implementation, how games are playtested and refined, and how games get to market (traditional publishing, Kickstarter, etc.). **Panelists:** *Stephen Buonocore - Lead Panelist, Tory Brown, Stephen Glenn*

Space Colonization: How and When?

In order to build galactic empires, we first need to get out into space. Then, with the very large distances between planets, there is always the problem of getting from one place to another in a timely manner. How will that happen? How close are we to being able to travel even to the Moon or Mars in a few hours or days instead of weeks or months?

Panelists: *Dr. Ben Davis, Charles Blue, Wes Rist, Jim Beall*

Speculative Poetry Often, speculative fiction in the form of prose gets the most attention. Just as prose seems to get more interest and attention than poetry regardless of the genre. Join our panelists as they discuss speculative fiction in poetry form, its unique difficulties and rewards, and who we should be reading in this genre. Panelists will also attempt to answer your questions about speculative poetry. **Panelists:** *Cassandra Clarke, Gray Rinehart, Jim & John Gaines, Pamela Kinney*

Storytelling in Anime and Manga Some think that Anime and Manga are just comic books and cartoons, while others swear they are art forms in their own right. Join our panelists as they discuss Anime and Manga and the storytelling that is an inherent part of these forms. Come with an open mind, these people are very persuasive. **Panelists:** *J.E. Pittman, H.P. Holo, Alfred Muller, Sean Korsgaard*

The Best Second-In-Command What makes a great XO/Number 1 and who nailed the job? Who bombed? Who stood out for entirely not job related reasons? **Panelist:** *Wayland Smith, Dennis Myers, Mike Morton, Steve Vickers*

The Blibbering Humdinger Concerts Join one of our Musical Featured Guests for a performance of some their extensive catalog of super geeky, super cool songs. **Presenters:** *The Blibbering Humdingers*

The Business of Writing Come learn about the nuts of bolts of getting your writing to produce income. How do you find a publisher? Is it worth it to try and publish your own work? How difficult is it to navigate services such as Amazon

for distribution? Should you even try? **Panelists:** *Kim Iverson Headlee, H.Y. Gregor, John Holmes, Claire Merrick*

The Garbage Belt: What Should We Do About It? There is A LOT of trash in space, so much so that there are professionals whose sole duty is to track that garbage and make sure it doesn't damage functioning satellites in orbit. But, it's not like there are Coke cans and banana peels up there. What is in the Garbage Belt and how should we deal with it? **Panelists:** *Mike Morton*

Them's Fightin' Words: Writing Combat Scenes in Science Fiction Many science fiction works include some sort of combat as an integral part of the story. If you've been in the military, how do you write combat scenes that don't overwhelm the reader and stay authentic? If you haven't personally seen combat, how do you write combat scenes that are realistic? Come work with these veteran writers of combat scenes. Bring your current work and get some tips and pointers. **Panelists:** *Chris Kennedy, Jacob Holo, Jason Cordova, Wayland Smith*

The Reads You Need to Hide (NSFW) Authors talk Spicy Books, why they like to write them, and why we like to read them. This panel encourages audience participation. **Panelists:** *H.P. Holo, Melissa Olthoff, David Shadoin, Emily Jane Buehler*

There's No Chaplain on the Enterprise A lot of science fiction depicts a future with no religion at all, or the subject of religion is never really brought up—and when it is, it is often a disorganized spirituality. Organized religions, if they appear, are almost invariably evil. But regardless of one's opinions on religion, it is a fundamental part of human life and culture. How can we write about religion in our science fiction settings? Should we? **Moderator:** *Christopher Ruocchio* **Panelists:** *Gray Rinehart, Alexander Gideon, Kim Iverson Headlee*

TMG Business Meeting The Mercenary Guild will have a business meeting. If you are a member of the Guild, you are highly encouraged to attend. If you are not a member yet, you may come and observe the proceedings. **Panelists:** *Teresa Bhaile, Aaron Brite, Jon Baker, Dan Kim*

Unblocking Writer's Block How do you write when the words just aren't wordin'? See what these authors do to re-inspire the muse once they stop screaming at their empty pages. **Panelists:** *H.P. Holo, J.F. Posthumous, David Hensley, Scott Sykes*

Using Tarot as a Writing Tool There are many different tools that can be used to help a writer out of sticky situations and blocks. The Tarot deck is one of those tools. Come see if using the Tarot is something that could help in your writing journey. **Panelists:** *Cassandra Clarke, J.E. Pittman, Wayland Smith, Vivian Valentine*

When the Good Guys Turn Out to be the Bad Guys Jedi are evil. Starfleet is fascist. What happens to us when our revered good guys turn out to not be quite so good? Or when they are down right bad? Join our panelists as they discuss



Programming *continued*

how even the best of the good guys has some evil in their hearts. **Panelists:** Philip Pournelle, Claire Merrick, Vivian Valentine, Alfred Muller

World Building for Fun & Profit The fun comes from drawing maps and defining cultures. The profit part comes when you build a world that your characters inhabit to such a degree, that you sell a ton of books or stories. Come find out those tips and tricks that can make your world an exciting

place to be. **Panelists:** Scott Huggins, J.F. Posthumous, Claire Merrick, Mark Wandrey

Your Weird Civilization is Infringing Upon My Utopia (Empire) We discuss the idea of a utopian society and explore the question of the perfect utopian society (*STNG v Ferengi*) for everyone. Is it even possible? **Panelists:** Tory Brown, Sheri Robb, L. Ana Ellis, Adam Oyebanji

MarsCon 2025 Family Programming

Alien Slime Lab Warning: Extraterrestrial substances detected! Join our cosmic scientists to mix up your very own batch of alien slime. Learn the secret formula for creating stretchy, squishy, colorful goo while conducting safe and supervised experiments. Each young scientist will take home their own container of custom-made alien slime. Put on your lab coat (aprons provided) and get ready to get messy! All ages welcome and all materials provided. Please note: Our slime is non-toxic and washable, but participants may want to wear clothes that can get messy. Children with sensitivities to common craft materials should check with staff about ingredients. Children 8 and under must have a parent or guardian present.

Board Game Party Join the excitement at our kid-friendly board game party and dive into the captivating worlds of strategy and teamwork! Unveil the mysteries of Forbidden Island, help the Doomlings survive the Apocalypse, or embark on a sushi-making adventure with Sushi Go Party! Kids will learn the rules, hone their decision-making skills, and strategize together in a thrilling quest for victory. Don't miss this chance for young minds to explore these thrilling games, fostering camaraderie and strategic thinking in an atmosphere buzzing with laughter and friendly competition.

Book Swap for Kids & Teens Trade your earthbound books for new cosmic adventures! Bring a gently used science fiction or fantasy book and discover your next interstellar reading journey. Whether you're fascinated by space pirates, alien civilizations, or magical quests, you'll find treasures to transport you to new worlds. All donated books should be appropriate for kids or teens and in good condition.

Craft Time with Ms. Frizzle Ms. Frizzle has come to join us from Walkerville Elementary School! She had to leave the Magic School Bus at home, but she's here to make a craft with the MarsCon children! Join her for a fun craft that you can take home. **Moderator:** Nina Gordon **Panelist:** Lindsey Reinoehl Bartleson

Interstellar Scavenger Hunt Join us for a Bingo Scavenger Hunt at this year's MarsCon! Come get your bingo card and explore the convention. You might even win a prize if you can use your powers of observation, and a little luck, to fill in all the sights on your card! Bring your curiosity and sense of adventure to seek out all the cool sights MarsCon has to offer!

Miniature Painting for Kids & Teens Are you ready to bring your tiny space heroes and cosmic creatures to life? Come to Family Programming to learn the secrets of miniature painting! We'll cover essential techniques including priming, base coating, dry brushing, and detail work. Each participant will receive a miniature figure to paint and take home. Perfect for both beginners and young artists with some painting experience. Ages 10+ recommended. All materials provided; space may be limited. Please note: While acrylic paints are washable, you may get messy.

Saturday Morning Cartoons for Kids Travel back in time to the golden age of Saturday morning cartoons - in space! Put on your PJs, bring your stuffy, and join us for some classic animated sci-fi adventures. From *The Jetsons*, to *Transformers*, and *Dexter's Laboratory*, these beloved cartoons will spark imagination across the galaxy!

Science Talk for Kids Charles Blue, our Science Featured Guest, has a special event prepared for our children and teens. He's asked for dry ice, but he won't tell us why. Come find out what cool science stuff Mr. Blue can teach us. **Moderator:** Nina Gordon **Panelist:** Charles Blue

Sci-Fi Movie Trivia for Kids & Teens Calling all young space explorers and movie buffs! Come test your knowledge on iconic films, memorable characters, and out-of-this-world plot twists. Whether you're a fan of classics like *Star Wars* or *E.T.*, or more modern hits like *Big Hero 6*, there's something for everyone. You can play as a team or on your own. Whether you're a budding filmmaker or just love to escape to other worlds, this is the perfect chance to showcase your sci-fi smarts and make new friends along the way. **Moderator:** Nina Gordon

Storytime Are you ready for an adventure? We invited our Guests of Honor, Cassandra Clarke and Christopher Ruocchio, to share a kids' book that inspired them as they were growing up. Kids, and kids at heart, should bring a stuffy and grab a comfy seat for story time at MarsCon! **Moderator:** Nina Gordon **Panelists:** Cassandra Clarke, Christopher Ruocchio

Family Friendly Monster Movie

Magic the Gathering: Deck Building for Kids

Magic the Gathering: Play Basics for Kids

Events & Demos

Barony of Marinus Hearing of Petitions This local chapter of the international Society for Creative Anachronism cordially invites you to witness a slice of life in the Barony. Come see Medieval era clothing, etiquette, and maybe even combat, as the Barony holds a Hearing of Petitions. You might even be able participate! **Panelists:** *Barony of Marinus*

Game Demo - Better Letters Learn to play this brand new game, taught by Gaming Guest of Honor Stephen Buonocore. Better Letters is a quick playing word game played in 60 second rounds

Game Demo - KalieDOS Learn to play this brand new game, taught by Gaming Guest of Honor Stephen Buonocore. KaleiDOS is a ladder climbing, trick taking card game.

Game Demo - King's Coalition Learn to play this brand new game, taught by Gaming Guest of Honor Stephen Buonocore. King's Coalition is a drafting and set collection game where you make the best 7 cards in hand by meeting the requirements of bonuses and creating sets and sequences.

Jam Session, Open Mic & Filking Join several musicians, both those who make their living with their music and those who play because they love it, as they jam together. If you play, bring your instrument and join in. If you don't, come, listen and join in when you feel comfortable. **Panelists:** *The Blibbering Humdingers*

Legend LARP Combat Demonstration Legend LARP will demonstrate medieval and fanstacy combat. **Panelists:** *Legend LARP*

MarsCon Trivia Night Get your team together for MarsCon's version of a pub quiz! Questions range from all sorts of trivia. Play for laughs and bragging rights. **Presenter:** *Kevin Fowler*

MarsCon Win, Lose, or Draw Join in the MarsCon tradition of the audience participation game show event! Everyone is divided into two teams. Each team has an artist, and the rest of the team guesses what the artist is drawing. Be careful! Time is limited and if your team doesn't guess correctly, the other team has a chance to guess. Come for the laughter, come for the fabulous prizes! It might be the most fun you have at MarsCon. **Presenter:** *David Seletyn*

Masquerade & Charity Auction Panelists: *Lindsey Reinoehl Bartleson, Jake Clark, Max Thompson, Mikey Mason, Michael Kandewahl*

"Normal is Boring" Interactive Children's Concert For children and kids at heart! Come prepared to sing, dance, and express yourself as we create new songs together. Enjoy favorite campfire sing-alongs plus Alyssa's original children's music about feelings, superheroes, and being weird. *Rhianon's Lark*

Saber Light Knights Battle Tournament Light Saber Battles Tournament hosted by Saber Light Knights. Come see what real light saber battles look like and get more information about joining this unique group. Contact Saber Light Knights

at saberlightknights.hamptonroads@gmail.com about participating in the tournament.

Terraforming Mars with Stephen Buonocore In the 2400s, mankind begins to terraform the planet Mars. Giant corporations, sponsored by the World Government on Earth, initiate huge projects to raise the temperature, the oxygen level, and the ocean coverage until the environment is habitable. In Terraforming Mars, you play one of those corporations and work together in the terraforming process. However, you must compete for prestige which is awarded not only for your contribution to the terraforming, but also for advancing human infrastructure throughout the solar system, earning awards, and achieving specific milestones. Playing with Stephen is on a first come - first served basis. Seats are limited.

Vampire: The Masquerade – Day 1 Day 1 starts with a quick Q&A, especially for those who were not able to attend the afternoon's workshop. Once gameplay begins, characters are introduced and the chronicle begins. The stage is set, the mystery identified and the players begin to investigate how a family was murdered and what, if any, connection that has to the strange green fires in the City Wood. At the end of the night, a short reflection time will allow players to comment on what worked and didn't work this day.

Vampire: The Masquerade – Basic Character Creation and Gameplay Attend the Drop-In Session to learn more about Vampire: The Masquerade. If interested, you can create a character with which to play for the weekend. Gameplay basics will also be discussed. People who attend this workshop will learn how to make a character, receive an overview on the rules for tests, player interactions and discipline use.

Votes for Women with Tory Brown Votes for Women is a card-driven game covering the American women's suffrage movement from 1848-1920, culminating with the ratification (or rejection) of the Nineteenth Amendment. The game provides competitive, co-operative and solitaire play, with co-operative and solitaire play against the "Oppobot." To win, the Suffragist player must have Congress pass the proposed Amendment and then have three-fourths of the states (36 of the then 48 states) ratify the Amendment. The Opposition player wins by either preventing Congress from passing the proposed Amendment or by having 13 states reject the Amendment. The game lasts for six turns - a turn consisting of drawing cards from the players' own decks, bidding on strategy cards, and then six rounds of card play where a player may play a card for an event or discard a card to campaign, organize or lobby Congress. If Congress has proposed the Amendment but neither 36 states have ratified nor 13 states have rejected, then the game goes to Final Voting. Playing with Tory is on a first come - first served basis. Seating is limited.

MarsCon Policies

MarsCon Convention Policies and Code of Conduct

To ensure a memorable and respectful experience for all participants, we've outlined detailed guidelines and policies. These policies apply to all people who have purchased membership, volunteers, staff, guests, vendors, and artists. Please familiarize yourself with all convention rules and guidelines provided. Respect convention facilities, venues, and property. By attending MarsCon you agree to adhere to the following policies:

Badges

You must wear and visibly display your MarsCon membership badge at all times to be admitted into any MarsCon event space or function. Badges are non-transferable. If you are asked to show your badge and/or identification by any MarsCon staff, you are required to do so. Lost badges will not be replaced and you will be required to purchase a new MarsCon registration.

Anti-Harassment Policy

MarsCon is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all attendees, guests, volunteers, and staff. We value diversity and welcome individuals from all backgrounds, identities, and perspectives. Harassment in any form will not be tolerated during the convention. Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

1. *Verbal Harassment* – Offensive comments, slurs, or derogatory remarks related to race, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, age, religion, or nationality.
2. *Physical Harassment* – Unwanted physical contact, unwelcome advances, or any form of physical intimidation.
3. *Sexual Harassment* – Unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or any other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.
4. *Stalking or Intimidation* – Following someone around the convention, repeatedly contacting them against their wishes, or engaging in any behavior that causes fear or distress. Please do not photograph individuals without their consent, especially if they appear

uncomfortable or are engaged in private activities. Cosplay is not consent.

5. *Bullying or Threats* – Deliberate intimidation, targeted humiliation, or threats of violence.

Reporting Harassment – If you experience or witness harassment or feel uncomfortable due to the actions of others,



please report it immediately to any MarsCon staff member. You can also report harassment at the convention registration desk.

Consequences of Violating this Policy – Anyone found to be violating this policy will be subject to appropriate actions, including but not limited to warnings, expulsion from the convention without refund, and involvement of local law enforcement if necessary.

Costumes and Weapons/Props

At MarsCon, we celebrate creativity, imagination, and the diverse characters from the worlds of science fiction and fantasy. Costumes are a wonderful way to express your passion and fandom.

To ensure a fun and respectful environment for all attendees, we have established the following costume policies and requirements:

General Requirements:

1. *Respect Others* – Costumes should not include elements that could be considered offensive, insensitive, or that could make others uncomfortable based on race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or any other characteristic.
2. *Appropriate Attire* – Ensure that your costume maintains a level of decency suitable for a public event.
3. *Safety First* – Avoid costumes that could pose a safety risk to yourself or

others. This includes sharp or pointed props, or any items that could potentially cause harm.

4. *Children's Costumes* – Costumes worn by children should be suitable for their age and the convention environment. Ensure that the costume is comfortable and safe for the child.

Weapons and Props – all weapons and props as part of costumes must comply with the following requirements:

1. *Safe and Non-Threatening* – All props should be safe, lightweight, and made of materials that do not pose a risk of injury or harm to others. Blunt and lightweight materials such as foam, rubber, cardboard, or plastic are encouraged.
2. *Peace-Bonding* – Upon entry, all weapons and props must be presented to convention staff for inspection and peace-bonding. Peace-bonding involves securing or marking the item to indicate it has been inspected and deemed safe for use within the convention.

Approved props will be marked in a visible manner by convention staff to indicate compliance with safety regulations.

3. *Carrying and Display* – Props and weapons must be carried openly and visibly in convention areas at all times. Concealed or hidden weapons are strictly prohibited.
4. *Non-Threatening Behavior* – Use of props or weapons should not intimidate, threaten, or cause alarm to other attendees. Engage in respectful and non-threatening behavior while displaying your props.
5. Attendees are solely responsible for the weapons and props they bring or wear as part of their costume. MarsCon assumes no responsibility or liability for any incidents involving weapons/props brought by attendees. Attendees agree to indemnify and hold harmless MarsCon from any claims or liabilities arising from their wearing or use of any costume, weapon or prop during the convention.

Prohibited Items – the following are expressly prohibited at MarsCon, regardless of any costume or circumstance:

1. *Functional Firearms* – functional firearms and live ammunition are strictly prohibited.

2. *Projectile Weapons* – Projectile weapons such as bows, crossbows, slingshots, or any item that launches projectiles (even harmless ones) are not allowed. Note that an official MarsCon program (one that is listed in the MarsCon program book) for harmless projectile weapons (Nerf guns) is an exception to this prohibition.
3. *Explosive or Pyrotechnic Devices* – Any object that includes pyrotechnics, fireworks, smoke bombs, or any explosive devices are strictly prohibited.
4. *Real Uniforms* – MarsCon attendees shall not wear uniforms of official law enforcement, emergency services, or military personnel. Such uniforms are not permitted as costumes, nor shall anyone impersonate or attempt to impersonate such individuals. Costumes that indicate allegiance or affiliation with any real political or military movement are strictly forbidden.

Social Media Sharing

At MarsCon, we encourage attendees to share their experiences and excitement about the convention on social media platforms. However, it is essential to uphold respect, privacy, and the overall positive atmosphere of the event. When posting convention photos online, be mindful of others' privacy and obtain consent before tagging or posting photos that include identifiable individuals. When sharing any content created by others, provide proper credit and attribution to the original creators whenever possible. If expressing personal opinions, ensure they are clearly stated as individual perspectives and not representative of MarsCon as an organization. MarsCon reserves the right to request the removal of any content that violates Marscon's policies including Marscon's anti-harassment policy, or that adversely impacts the convention's reputation or attendees' experiences.

We ask that you use official convention hashtags in posts to enhance visibility and unity among attendees.

Event Space and Convention Area Usage

To ensure the smooth operation of the convention and the comfort of everyone, please observe and adhere to the following policies regarding the use of event space and convention areas:

Public Areas – Convention areas, including hallways, lobbies, panel rooms, vendor halls, and designated event spaces, are considered public areas. Please respect the rights and comfort of others when using these spaces. Use convention areas, such as lounges or seating areas, considerately. Keep pathways clear and allow for the free flow of traffic. Maintain reasonable noise levels in shared spaces. Be mindful of others, especially during discussions, social gatherings, or late-night activities. Help maintain cleanliness by disposing of trash in designated bins and keeping common areas tidy.

Use of glitter, confetti, fog machines, or smoke machines is prohibited anywhere in the hotel. Using sprinkler heads to hang decorations is also prohibited anywhere in the hotel.

Reserved Spaces – Certain areas may be reserved by MarsCon for specific activities or events. Respect these designations and avoid trespassing or disrupting activities in reserved spaces unless you are actively participating.

Panel and Event Rooms – Attendees are encouraged to attend scheduled panels, workshops, and events. Respect the speakers, moderators, and fellow attendees during these sessions.

Dealer's Room and Vendor Halls – Avoid blocking aisles or disrupting other attendees' access to vendor tables.

Personal and Group Activities – If planning a group gathering or meetup, please coordinate with convention staff to ensure space availability and compliance with convention policies. For photo or video shoots within convention areas, be mindful of other attendees and seek permission before including them in your shots.

Accessibility and Accommodations – Respect accessibility guidelines and provide space for attendees with disabilities or special needs. Respect designated areas or accommodations for nursing, prayer, quiet reflection, or other specific purposes.

Certain Marscon events spaces may have additional policies related to entry and conduct that will be posted outside

of the space.

Lost and Stolen Items

MarsCon is not responsible for any items lost, missing, or stolen during the convention. You are solely responsible for your own personal property. If you come across any lost or abandoned property, MarsCon asks that you please turn that in to the MarsCon Registration Desk. Inquiries about any missing or lost property also should be directed to the MarsCon Registration Desk.

Advertising, Flyers, and Solicitation

Do not distribute or display any advertising materials, flyers, leaflets, or promotional items without prior approval from MarsCon. Soliciting, canvassing, or promoting services, products, or events without authorization is not permitted within convention areas. Any approved advertising or promotional materials must be displayed or distributed in areas specifically designated for such purposes. MarsCon convention staff reserves the right to remove any unapproved advertising materials found in convention areas without prior notice.

Unauthorized Vendors Prohibited

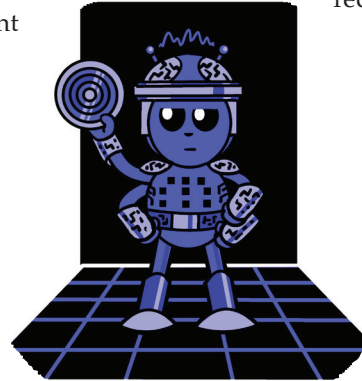
Unauthorized vending or sale of goods within convention areas is strictly prohibited. Only vendors approved and designated by MarsCon are permitted to conduct sales or offer goods within the convention areas.

Food and Beverage

No food or beverage of any kind may be brought into any Marscon event space or function. If you violate this policy, Marscon and hotel staff have the right to remove you from the convention if you refuse to comply with this hotel requirement. We encourage you to patronize the hotel restaurant and other food and beverage establishments provided by the hotel.

Alcohol

MarsCon strictly adheres to all state and local laws and regulations regarding alcohol consumption, as well as hotel policies. Attendees are responsible



MarsCon Policies *continued*

for their alcohol consumption, and MarsCon assumes no liability for alcohol consumption by attendees. Please drink responsibly and be mindful of your own and others' well-being. Intoxicated or disruptive behavior due to alcohol consumption will not be tolerated. Anyone causing disturbances or violating convention policies while under the influence of alcohol may face immediate removal from the premises.

Room Parties Disclaimer – MarsCon does not organize or officially endorse room parties held by attending guests. Any room parties organized by hotel guests are independent of the convention and are considered private events hosted by the individuals involved. As such, room parties held by attendees are separate from official convention activities and MarsCon assumes no responsibility for these events. Guests hosting or attending room parties are responsible for their actions, conduct, and adherence to all local laws, including those related to alcohol consumption, noise levels, and room occupancy limits. MarsCon, its organizers, staff, and volunteers are not liable for any incidents, damages, or disputes arising from room parties held by attending guests.

Attendees participate in these events at their own risk.

Anyone holding room parties, whether private or open, should arrange on their own with the hotel to place their room reservations in an area designated by the hotel.

Smoking

Smoking, including the use of electronic smoking devices, is not permitted in any of the convention facilities.

Prohibition on Illegal Substances

The possession, distribution, or use of illegal substances within convention areas is strictly prohibited. Attendees must comply with all local, state, and federal laws regarding illegal substances. Violations may result in immediate removal from the convention without refund.

Children

Children should be supervised by a responsible adult throughout the convention. Parents or legal guardians are responsible for the conduct of their children at the con-

vention. Select Marscon event spaces may have minimum age restrictions for entry.

Please help maintain a family-friendly atmosphere by being mindful of language and behavior around children.

Animals

Animals are not permitted within the



MarsCon event space or at MarsCon functions, except for registered service animals with valid identification. MarsCon is a supporter of local humane societies and may allow the humane society to bring their animals to the specific event function.

Media Consent and Release Policy

By purchasing a membership to Mars Con, all attendees grant Marscon unrestricted permission to use and re-use their name and likeness, any statements provided by the attendee (including voice recordings), and any images, photographic portraits, editorials, video, digital or film images, or any pictures taken of the attendee, whether individually or in conjunction with other photographs, in any printed or video-graphic matter, in all media (including the Internet), taken or captured by MarsCon staff or their designees for any purpose allowed by law. This includes, but is not limited to, publicity, illustration, promotion, art, editorial, advertising, trade, and other media activities for the benefit of Marscon. Attendee waives any right to in-

spect or approve the finished product or products that may be used in connection with the above mentioned matter.

Attendees further understand they may not be informed in advance of the specific use of their name, statement(s) or image(s). Attendees understand that any photographs, videos and other media taken by MarsCon staff or their designees will be included in MarsCon files and presented on the Marscon website or other social media. Attendees agree that the images and copyright privileges of the images shall be the sole property of MarsCon, will not be returned and that attendee will have no right or interest in them. Attendees understand and acknowledge they will NOT receive any compensation for the use of their name, statement(s) or image(s), as it is used in conjunction with the representation and promotion of MarsCon. Attendees hereby hold harmless and release MarsCon, and all people acting under their permission or authority, from any liability in connection with the use of their name, statements and images as outlined above.

This consent is given in perpetuity and does not require prior approval by the attendee.

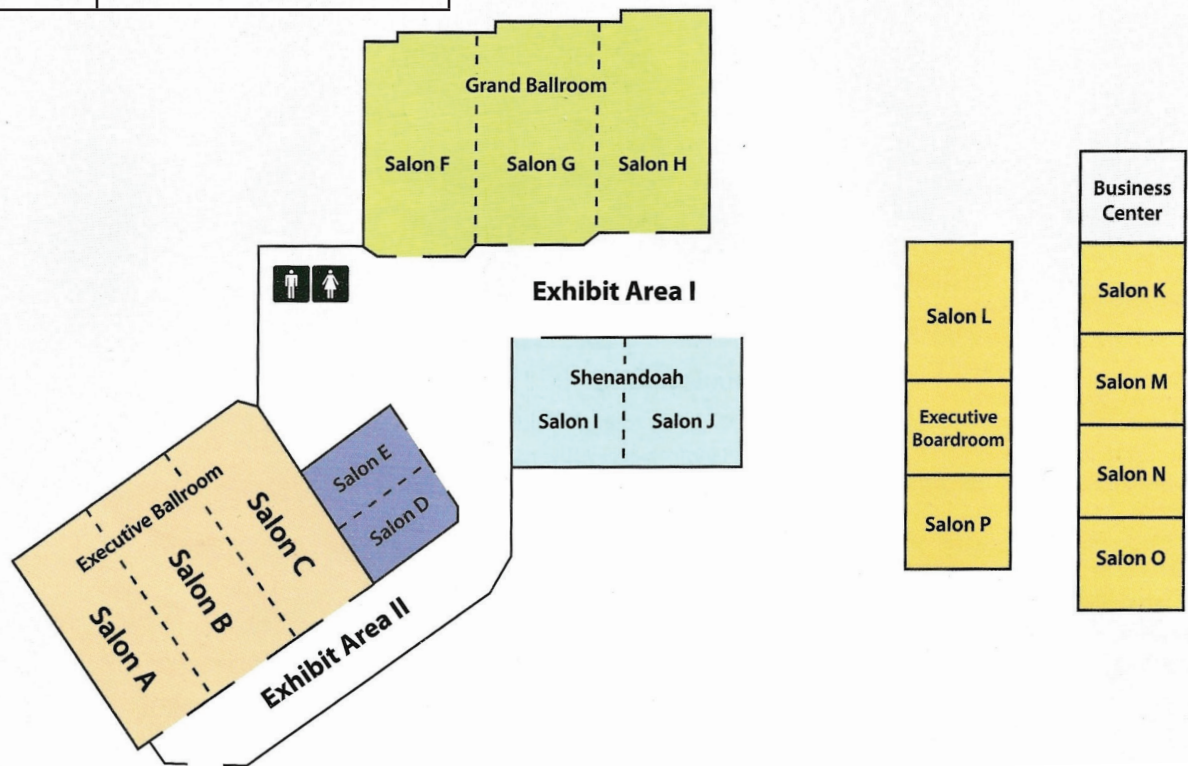
Acceptance of MarsCon Policies and Consequences of Policy Violations

By attending MarsCon, convention attendees acknowledge and agree to all of the terms outlined in these convention policies. In addition, all local, state and federal laws, statutes and ordinances must be followed. Attendees agree to follow all instructions from convention staff regarding these policies, including decisions regarding compliance therewith. MarsCon reserves the right to change or modify any policy at any time without prior publication notice.

Anyone found to be violating these policies will be subject to appropriate actions, including but not limited to warnings, expulsion from the convention without refund, denial of admission to future convention activities, and involvement of local law enforcement if necessary.

Hotel Layout

Salon A, B, C	Dealers Room
Salon D, E	Video Game Rooms
Salon F, G	Main Programming; Stage Programming
Salon H	TAGS Board Games/ Gaming Programming
Shenandoah Room Salon I, J	Programming
Salon K	Art Room
Salon L	Programming
Salon M, P	RPG Gaming
Salon N	LARP (Vampire: The Masquerade) & RPG Gaming
Salon O	Family Programming
Executive Boardroom	Con Ops



Art Gallery & Art Auction

Gallery hours:
Friday 1/13/23: 3pm-8:00pm
Saturday 1/14/23: 10am-6pm
Sunday 1/15/23: 10am-12pm

During the Convention attendees may place silent bids on artwork in the Art Room during its open hours and purchase artwork through Quick Sale

(Quick Sale is only available on items that have no prior bids). On Sunday morning the gallery opens for a final round of silent bids and Quick Sale, followed by results of the silent auction at 12:00 PM in Salon L (ConOps). During the announcement of the results the Art Room will be temporarily closed. Bidders must attend the silent auc-

tion results at 12:00 PM on Sunday to ensure they claim their winning bids. Winning bidders of the silent auction will purchase their artwork in the Art Room after the results of the silent auction are announced and pick up their purchased art. Payments that will be accepted are cash, check written to the artist, or credit/debit card.

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