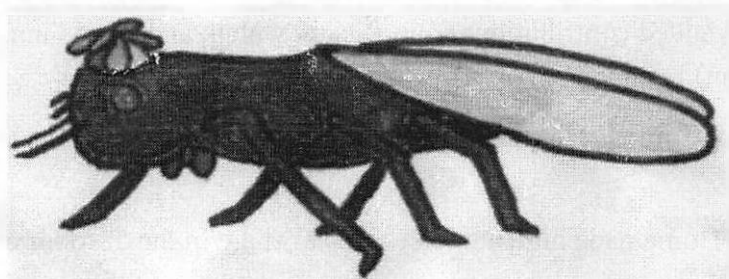


Smofcon 40

Program Guide

December 1, 2023 - December 3, 2023

Providence, RI



The big blue bug is a symbol of Providence RI; we added the symbols of Smofdom, a propeller beanie and bow tie.

Smofcon 40 thanks the following organizations and individuals for their generous sponsorship:

Chengdu Worldcon 2023 - Chinese snacks & beverages in the Lincoln Room

Buffalo NASFiC 2024 - Salty snacks & chocolates in both hospitality rooms

Readercon - Cookies & GF cookies from Lori Meltzer both consuites

Seattle Worldcon 2025 - Friday midday 5th floor consuite starting at 12 noon & two C-R boxes

New Amsterdam Science Fiction & Fantasy Fandom, sponsors of HELIOSphere and the 2024 World Fantasy Convention - Saturday morning 5th floor & C-R boxes Chip and Dale

Glasgow 2024, a Worldcon for Our Futures - Saturday midday 5th floor consuite starting at 12 noon & C-R boxes Kelvin and Clyde

LA in 2026 Worldcon Bid - Sunday morning 5th floor consuite & C-R boxes, Pathfinder and Voyager

Philcon - Sunday midday 5th floor consuite starting at 12 noon

CoNZeland - Support for the added expense of running a fully hybrid Smofcon

Members of the Albacon committee - Headsets for all attending members to support a fully hybrid Smofcon

SWOC, the 2024 Seattle Smofcon bid - Support for the added expense of running a fully hybrid Smofcon

Chicon 8 - Logistics truck & overall budget support

Arisia - Two C-R boxes

Boskone - Two C-R boxes

And the following individuals:

Geri Sullivan & Don Fitch - Thursday night 5th floor consuite beverages starting ~8pm – whenever

Covert Beach, Michael Nelson, & Bob McIntosh - Saturday night 5th floor consuite beverages, with added contributions from Rick Kovalcik and Jim Mann. Starting ~10pm (after the Q&A session)

Geri Sullivan & Tammy Coxen - Sunday night 5th floor consuite beverages starting ~8pm – whenever

Lori Meltzer - Homemade gluten free cookies to share in the 5th floor consuite

Everyone who brought chocolate to share in Smofcon hospitality spaces!

Smofcon 40 is sponsored by Massachusetts Convention Fandom, Inc., a 501c(3) nonprofit organization. Address inquiries to MCFI, P.O. Box 1010, Framingham, MA 01701, or visit MCFI.org for further information

1:00 PM Friday

So You Want to Bid a Traveling Convention? - *Ocean State A*

A successful bid for a traveling convention starts long before you ever accept a \$20 bill or announce your intentions. In this workshop Tammy Coxen, Helen Montgomery, and Bobbi Armbruster will take you through the entire bidding process - how to prepare to launch a bid, and then once you do, how to run it successfully. What do you need to know? What resources do you need? How do you do it? When do you start? Heck, where do you start? How long does it take? Does it ever stop?

Tammy Coxen, Bobbi Armbruster, Helen Montgomery

1:00 PM Friday

Seattle Worldcon 2025 Planning - *Ocean State D*

The Seattle Worldcon 2025 committee is hosting a small group discussion for Seattle Worldcon 2025. This is a place where potential volunteers can get information about what current plans are, what is needed, and to talk with the Chair.

Kathy Bond, SunnyJim Morgan

3:30 PM Friday

Zambia and Planorama Demonstrations with Q and A - *Ocean State B/C*

Demos of two program planning software tools by some of the folks who created them. Time will be available for Q and A.

Peter Olszowka, Gail Terman

3:30 PM Friday

Fan Table Kit - *Ocean State A*

Talk about how to assemble and ship a Fan Table Kit for your convention (not just the bid book, but all the other gear as well). There will be a presentation of what ConZealand did for their fan table kits.

Helen Montgomery, Marah Searle-Kovacevic, Maree Pavletich

3:30 PM Friday

Great New Things your Convention is Doing - *Ocean State D*

What is it? What made you decide to try it? Why is it working? In what way is it new?

Meg MacDonald, Adam Wilson, Marguerite Smith, Priscilla Olson

5:00 PM Friday

So, This is Your First Smofcon - *Ocean State B/C*

What to do, what to expect, and a short history of Smofcons.

Sharon Sbarsky, Vincent Docherty

5:00 PM Friday

Hospitality - *Ocean State A*

What does hospitality mean to your convention? How do we do hospitality better? Let's talk about location, Covid-related concerns, and hotel policies surrounding food and beverage.

Kathy Bond, Gay Ellen, Marah Searle-Kovacevic, Mike Kerpan

5:00 PM Friday

Panelists, Moderators, and the Code of Conduct - *Ocean State D*

Is it now the job of the panel moderator to be the one mindful of the CoC as the panel unfolds? What do/should moderators and panelists (and audience members) do when a misstep occurs?

etana, Janice Gelb, Marguerite Smith

8:00 PM Friday

Friday Evening Ice Breaker - *Ocean State B/C*

Meet other Smofcon members by Speed Smoffing! Find out who they are, what conventions they are involved in, what they know and want to learn about, and how to contact them later. Do all this in 3 minutes, then move over one space and meet someone else!

Sharon Sbarsky

8:00 PM Friday

Play If I Ran the Con/Zoo Game - *Ocean State A*

The insider's guide to everything that can possibly go wrong at a convention! If I Ran the Con/Zoo is a game where the players make decisions about the Bidding, Planning, and At-Con phases of a World Science Fiction Convention. Come play the game before working on new scenarios that reflect current convention happenings.

Anna Bradley, Gail Terman

10:00 PM Friday

Video Conferencing Software We All Love to Hate - *Ocean State B/C*

What is out there? Zoom, Airmeet, Google Meet, Discord, Slack, MS Teams, Webex, GoToMeeting, Gather Town. Includes demos/discussion of various platforms.

Rick Kovalcik, Anna Bradley, Peter Olszowka, Skip Morris, Kathi Overton

10:00 PM Friday

Writing New If I Ran the Con/Zoo Game Scenarios - *Ocean State D*

Since the last edition came out in 2015, many things in the world have changed. COVID has brought a whole new set of worries and limitations to the convention space. Attendees expect new, hybrid spaces as well as safe spaces to exist. Let's write some new scenarios that take into account the happenings of the last decade.

Leslie Turek, Helen Montgomery, John Pomeranz, Vincent Docherty, Priscilla Olson, Ann Marie Rudolph

9:00 AM Saturday

Publicity, PR, and Social Media - *Ocean State A*

Let's talk about doing it right. How do you unravel disasters? Talk about both design and what information should be included. What different social media platforms/other publications should you use?

Meg MacDonald, Marah Searle-Kovacevic

9:00 AM Saturday

Chengdu Worldcon Debrief - *Ocean State B/C*

Hear from the Chengdu Worldcon team about their experience running the first Worldcon in China.

Helen Montgomery, Ben Yalow, Joe Yao, Rastlin Chen, Tina Wang, Dave McCarty

9:00 AM Saturday

Expanding the Convention Outside the Hotel - *Ocean State D*

We are no longer limited to the space and time where the convention is being held! We can visit an artist's studio, tour the historic site featured in an author's new novel, get a report on exciting scientific developments directly from the lab working on them, or speak with real astronauts in space. Now that it's so much easier to bring convention members to places too distant, small, or otherwise inconvenient for our members to attend, how should we be doing it? Should we be emphasizing live visits that allow the attendees to interact with our distant speakers? Should we pre-record portions of the session to allow demonstrations that would take too long for a panel slot (e.g., letting us see the creation of a piece of art from start to finish)? What technology is best for bringing the remote presentation into the convention and letting the convention interact with the presenters?

Colin Harris, Shana Worthen, Sara Felix

10:30 AM Saturday

Publications for 21st Century Conventions - *Ocean State A*

The use of paper publications at conventions has changed drastically in the last twenty years. Fewer attendees are using them (if they pick them up at all). Some cons have eliminated paper documents altogether; others are publishing online only. How have publications changed? What is the need for publications in the 21st century? For those still remaining, what tools, techniques, and processes do you use to improve quality, reduce costs, and improve efficiency? What other changes for publications will occur in the next decade?

Sara Felix, A. L. Raden, Peter Olszowka, Skip Morris

10:30 AM Saturday

How Should Conventions Respond to Author/Writer/Actor Strikes? - *Ocean State B/C*

Science fiction fandom celebrates authors, screenwriters, actors, animators, and many other people who work in our genre. One way that we can support those people is to make sure that they have the right to organize and demand fair payment for their work. We can help them in their fight against having their work stolen to power AI. How should a convention respond and support those who may be on strike and unable to promote their work?

Janice Gelb, Kathy Bond, Petrea Mitchell, Vivian Abraham

10:30 AM Saturday

How We Create 24/7 Program Schedules for Time Zones Around the World - *Ocean State D*

Most will tell you time zones are evil, but why? And how do we work with them? How do we make sure that we have volunteers, and staff, and participants, and audience able to partake of our conventions during their own waking hours when some are on opposite sides of the planet?

Anne K Gray (Netmouse), Anna Bradley, Marguerite Smith, Vincent Docherty

1:00 PM Saturday

Are SF Clubs Dying/Shrinking? - *Ocean State A*

Should we be doing something about it? How is this affecting conventions? Why have a con at all? Where are all the Worldcon and Smofcon bids? Are we only looking at a narrow subset of fandom?

Elayne Pelz, Priscilla Olson, Kevin Standlee, Rick Kovalcik

1:00 PM Saturday

Converging Realms: The Future of Hybrid Conventions - *Ocean State B/C*

Let's talk about staffing and equipment needs for a hybrid convention. What about the challenges of chat rooms? How do we make both sides of the screen feel included? What does it mean to be a hybrid convention? What is the impact on both attendees and the convention itself? When is it appropriate to attempt hybrid and when is it contra-indicated?

Sharon Sbarsky, Anne K Gray (Netmouse), A. L. Raden, z!, PK1048 (Paul Kraus)

1:00 PM Saturday

Dealing with Systemic Structures of Oppression as a Convention - *Ocean State D*

Should we be boycotting places, including countries, known for human rights violations? How do we run events in spaces of oppression? Should we run events there?

Vivian Abraham, Kathy Bond, Nchanter, etana

2:30 PM Saturday

Hybrid Build 101 Workshop - *Ocean State A*

This is a workshop to learn what it takes to set up tech for a hybrid program item or social space. You'll learn what equipment is needed and the right way to setup the room. Also, special warnings for what not to do! If there is time, we'll talk about things to remember to remember about striking the room. (In-person attendance numbers may be limited.)

PK1048 (Paul Kraus), Peter Olszowka, z!

2:30 PM Saturday

Recruiting Staff - *Ocean State B/C*

One of the most outstanding characteristic of fans is that they do their thing — conventions, fanzines, clubs, and blogs — as a gift to fandom or for themselves. Paying it forward at a convention may include designing badges, maintaining a website, volunteering time at a registration desk, office desk, running tech equipment, checking for badges for the dealers room, etc. Sometimes a carrot is needed to recruit staff and have them return in future years. Is providing a comp or refunded membership and a place to get something to eat becoming more common? What about crash space? Can conventions that don't do those things survive? Are there other incentives that conventions have successfully used?

Tom Traina, Angela Jones, Bruce Farr, Marguerite Smith

2:30 PM Saturday

Accessibility with Hybrid Needs in Mind - *Ocean State D*

How do you preserve privacy and intellectual property while still supporting accessibility? What about accessibility issues with various platforms, hybrid social spaces, and so on? Just because your con will be hybrid doesn't mean you can stop providing in-person accessibility and best universal design practices. Let's talk about conflicting room set-up needs between equipment and space for mobility devices. Also remote platforms and how they interact with captions and screen readers.

Gail Terman, Adam Wilson, Shana Worthen, etana

4:00 PM Saturday

Innovative Approaches to Program - *Ocean State A*

What are new and innovative program types, approaches to program, or just sparkling new ideas for old forms? How do you build a program that appeals to today's convention membership? And what cool things have you seen in the wild?

Kathy Bond, Tammy Coxen, Vivian Abraham, Ian Stockdale

4:00 PM Saturday

Running Inclusive and Diverse Conventions - *Ocean State B/C*

What does that mean? Why is it important? How do you accomplish it? Share thoughts, solutions, and good (and bad) strategies. Can you satisfy everyone? How about anyone?

Nchanter, Gail Terman, Meg MacDonald, Tom Traina

4:00 PM Saturday

Are Art Shows Failing or Shrinking? - *Ocean State D*

What can we, or should we, do about it? We will talk about Art Show issues including how to make attendance worthwhile for professional artists and members alike. Can hybrid Art Shows work?

Sara Felix, z!, Angela Jones, Lisa Hertel, Scott Zrubek

8:00 PM Saturday

Future Worldcon and Smofcon Q and A - *Ocean State B/C*

Presentations from current Worldcons, and upcoming bids for Worldcons and Smofcons - with Q and A for each. Smofcon 40 members will decide on the location for Smofcon 41.

John Pomeranz, Saul Jaffe

9:00 AM Sunday

Mark Protection Committee Meeting - *Ocean State A*

Meeting of the WSFS Mark Protection Committee. Observers welcome.

Kevin Standlee, Ben Yalow, Bruce Farr, Linda Deneroff, Donald Eastlake 3rd, Nicholas Whyte

9:00 AM Sunday

Negotiating Hotel Contracts with Hybrid Needs in Mind - *Ocean State B/C*

Lets talk about negotiating hotel contracts, for both one-offs and recurring events and for both large and small events, as there's quite a variance in negotiating power depending on those conditions. We will emphasize hybrid needs (internet, etc.), pandemic attrition clauses, hospitality restrictions, and more.

John Pomeranz, Kathy Bond, PK1048 (Paul Kraus), Skip Morris

9:00 AM Sunday

Current and Future Smofcons - *Ocean State D*

This Smofcon has a strong theme of hybrid conventions. It is also making every program item (and most of the social space) available to remote members. Is this working? What can we fix this weekend? What should future Smofcons be doing? And what subjects should be their focus/theme?

Sharon Sbarsky, Marah Searle-Kovacevic, Shana Worthen, Vincent Docherty

10:30 AM Sunday

Convention Website Design - *Ocean State A*

Conventions include websites as part of their online publicity, often instead of printed flyers or progress reports. A good website is necessary for fully or partially hybrid conventions. What are required components for the basic website (besides convention name, dates, location, rates, Guests of Honor, etc.)? What is required for hybrid portals, including how to avoid common UI speedbumps.

Janice Gelb, Colin Harris, Petrea Mitchell

10:30 AM Sunday

Let's Talk About It - *Ocean State B/C*

We have learned that some things people thought were okay to say 10/15/20+ years ago are not acceptable now. But how do we know what they are? Put anonymous questions in the box at Program Ops (or into an anonymous form shared on the convention discord for remote attendees) all through Friday and Saturday. On Sunday morning in this panel we will answer questions, discuss the topics submitted, and work on getting everyone onto the same page. (No genuine question will incur CoC violation reports or the like.)

Helen Montgomery, Gail Terman, Nchanter

10:30 AM Sunday

Dealer Rooms and Exhibits with Hybrid Needs in Mind - *Ocean State D*

Is there a way to replicate the best parts of the dealer room for dealers and members not physically at the convention? Can we still stumble upon the wonderful item we never knew existed that we just have to have? Is it reasonable for dealers to expect there to be enough browsers and buyers to justify staffing their virtual "table" as well as their physical table throughout the convention? Do conventions have a role in facilitating sales transactions (or even transfers of purchased merchandise)?

Angela Jones, Anne K Gray (Netmouse), Elspeth Kovar, Lisa Hertel

1:00 PM Sunday

What Do Program-runners Want in a Program-running/Building Software Application? -

Ocean State A

Do you create/run/attend program items at conventions? Do you use tools (index cards, post-it notes, spreadsheets, dedicated software, etc.) to do so? Come to this panel and tell us what you like about what you use, what is missing, what you really wish some software out there had for this purpose, what you really wish no one did, and what you hate with a burning passion. We will write your feedback and insights down and make it available to the folks writing various convention running and program creating software out there.

Gail Terman, Anna Bradley, Peter Olszowka

1:00 PM Sunday

So, You Want to Chair a Convention? - *Ocean State B/C*

The prestige! The power! The responsibilities! The time! The anxiety! The need to fire a friend?! Why? Who should be the bid chair? What about Worldcon? How about co-chairing? Talk about things you wish you knew before you took the job and the things you thought you knew that you now know were wrong.

Vincent Docherty, A. L. Raden, Catelynn, Sharon Sbarsky, Tammy Coxen

1:00 PM Sunday

Creating Convention Social Spaces with Hybrid Needs in Mind - *Ocean State D*

Social spaces are hard in the best of circumstances, but how do we make them work in a hybrid environment? How do we make both in person and remote attendees feel included and like they are part of the same convention?

Anne K Gray (Netmouse), Mike Kerpan, Petrea Mitchell

2:30 PM Sunday

Hybrid with Remote Musicians - *Ocean State A*

During the pandemic, the New England Folk Festival (NEFFA) used software to 'align' two remote participants so that an online music panel with, say, a musician and dance caller, was possible. We'll talk about how they did it, and how well it worked.

Beth Kevles, Jonathan Young

2:30 PM Sunday

What Can We Learn From Chengdu? - *Ocean State B/C*

The Chengdu Worldcon was a very unusual Worldcon in many ways (and that's an understatement). Many of the things they did – like build an entire convention center for the event – are out of reach for most Worldcons. What are some of the attainable/possible things and positive lessons that conrunners in the rest of the world can take away?

Tammy Coxen, Ben Yalow, Donald Eastlake 3rd, Helen Montgomery, Vincent Docherty

2:30 PM Sunday

Credit Card Processing - *Ocean State D*

Credit cards are no longer optional for most conventions. While twenty years ago a convention got by with a swipe box and account on one of the few big vendors (Elavon, Paymenttech, etc), today there are a plethora of other options including Square, PayPal, Venmo, Stripe, and others. Integration with portable devices or web payments are increasingly important. How does your convention do CC processing? What vendors, hardware, software, etc, are best for conventions? How does a convention get started with CC processing? Do you have any tips to share? Do you have any pitfalls to warn about?

Catelynn, Alan Fleming, Skip Morris, Rick Kovalcik, Alex von Thorn

4:00 PM Sunday

Feedback Session - *Ocean State B/C*

Feedback about Smofcon 40.

Rick Kovalcik, Lisa Hertel, Sharon Sbarsky

Thanks to our Committee:

Chair - Lisa Hertel

Cartographer - Suford Lewis

Code of Conduct / Incident Response / Oversight Committee - MCFI Officers

Con Suite (Downstairs - Lincoln) - Mike Kerpan,

Con Suite (Upstairs) - Joni Dashoff

Assistant - Gay Ellen Dennett

Information - Rick Kovalcik, Sharon Sbarsky

Hotel - Ben Yalow

Program - Sharon Sbarsky

Program Staff - Anna Bradley, Tammy Coxen, Ruth Sachter, Gail Terman

Registration - Jenny Kraus, Asst. Saul Jaffe

Promotions / Social Media - Tammy Coxen

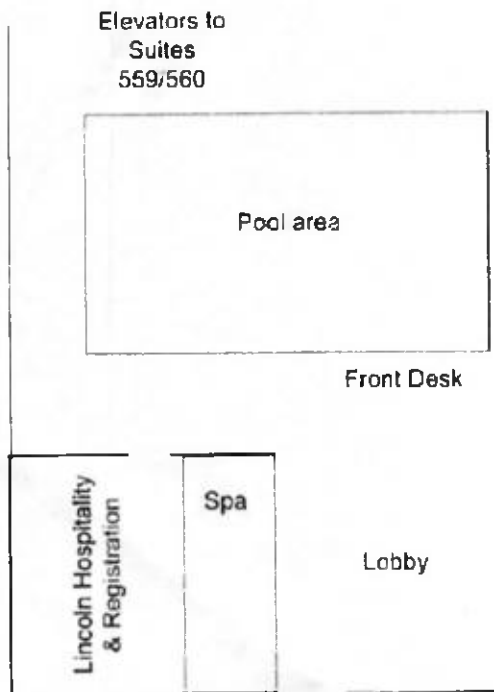
Sign Shop - Robert Luoma

Sponsorships - Geri Sullivan

Tech - Paul Kraus plus numerous staff

Treasurer - Saul Jaffe

Website / E-commerce - Catelynn Cunningham and all the members of MCFI



Elevators/Stairs to Program

Lobby Level

Lincoln Hospitality and Day Registration

When facing the Hotel Front Desk go left (away from the Hotel Restaurant) until you get to the Lincoln Room.

Upstairs Hospitality and Evening Registration

When facing the Hotel Front Desk go left (away from the Hotel Restaurant) until you get to the Guest Elevators and take them to the 5th floor. Look for rooms 559 and 560.



Program Rooms (Ocean Ballroom)

When facing the Hotel Front Desk take the hallway to the right of the Front Desk (the side with the Hotel Restaurant) until you get to the Elevators and Stairs.

Go down one floor and the Ocean Ballroom will be diagonally on the right.

Please remember that medical grade masks are required in Program Space. We will have some masks available.

