

Instant Message



Issue 1018 • March 2025

Instant Message is the newsletter of the New England Science Fiction Association, Inc. It is published every month with a meeting, usually 11 issues per year. The NESFA clubhouse is located at 504 Medford St, Somerville MA 02145. Our telephone number is 617-625-2311. Our website is <https://www.nesfa.org>. We can be reached via email at roster@nesfa.org for address changes and other updates to the roster, sales@nesfa.org for questions about NESFA Press, and info@nesfa.org for other questions about NESFA. NESFA® and Boskone® are registered trademarks of the New England Science Fiction Association, Inc. For access to the NESFA/Boskone Discord server: <https://tinyurl.com/BoskoneDiscord>.

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Business Meeting Attendance List (2025-3-16)

Dave Anderson	Rebecca Brumberger	Dave Grubbs	Ken London	Michael Rasnick
Judy Bemis	Lis Carey	Mike Kerpan	Mary Olszowka	Joe Ross
Wes Brodsky	Maria Daggett	Rick Kovalcik	Peter Olszowka	Tim Szczesuil
Ann Broomhead	Joni Brill Dashoff	Paula Lieberman	Kelly Persons ¹	Ben Yalow

^[1] NESFA Meeting Only

^[2] Boskone Debrief Only

Boskone Debrief 2025-3-8

Meeting started 12:05 pm EST

The following is a condensed report on the Debrief, focused mostly on action items. The meeting was over six hours long and the notes were originally much longer. The full notes can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/B62DebriefNotes>

The meeting opened with an introduction by Dave Grubbs to the ground rules. Joni (chair) thanked her staff and then talked about the changes she made: using function space to deal with noise complaints and changing the health policy. She also changed how guest liaisons function to have one person per guest. Opinions on the splitting of guest liaison position were mixed but generally negative.

Events went well overall, but there were technical issues with email that made some communication more difficult than it should be, as well as with pre-con event promotion, protocols for getting event participants into the reg system in a timely fashion, and attendance of late night events. The Saturday night bar was also very underused and we need to think about restructuring Saturday night in general to have things flow better.

Program went well overall, despite some minor timeline slippage. There were some issues with guest communication and Tech communication that need to be resolved. Program is also looking to experiment with other planning software to see if it fits its needs better than the current software. The various sub-areas of program mostly worked well, though we should swap rooms between filk and kaffeklatsches for noise control reasons, restock on metallic pens for autographing, and do a better job of flagging which readings are too big for the normal reading rooms and move them into bigger rooms.

Dragonslair worked well overall, but think that more promotion would be helpful. They also brought up the possibility of some sort of after-hours activities for adults.

Room-level space allocation worked well overall. We need to do a better job of making sure doors are properly unlocked so that they can be closed during events in order to prevent noise bleed. We also need to make sure to review room layouts in a more timely fashion.

Art show worked well. Sales were up overall, due to increased print sales. The Mangan Collection auction was a success.

Con suite was a success. Nevertheless, there were issues with shopping, the plastic floor covering becoming a safety hazard, and with wheelchair/mobie access when the room was very busy.

Gaming went well, but reported lower attendance, possibly due to weather. They also had issues with the hotel's digital signage. We should think about going back to paper schedules outside program rooms next year.

Vonage (phone service) worked but we need more advance planning about where the phone is going to be put for next year to avoid delays.

Dealers Room worked but there were issues about not getting chain fence to close things down in a timely fashion. It also seems like the Galleria may be less bright overall than it used to be. Better planning around dealer load-in/load-out is needed and we should think about getting volunteers to help with that to speed things up.

Authors Alley went well, but we should think about getting the schedule to pubs earlier so that it can go into the pocket program earlier.

Sunday night staff dinner worked well, but was more expensive than originally planned. Opinions on the new catering were mixed.

Narnia (Coat Check, Scavenger Hunt) was delayed in its pre-con work due to staff illness. There were also communications issues between areas when it came to things like handling volunteers.

Dead Dog went well. There was lots of extra soda (especially Pepsi). People had to be kicked out at the end.

Geri reported some problems with audio issues in recordings from Harbor I. There were also small hiccups when bringing up Virtcon (the version of the online program guide with streaming links) this year. We need more checklists to make sure that everything happens correctly.

The various pre-con publicity and informational things (email PRs, flyers) happened. The souvenir book didn't. There were production issues relating to lost covers and overloaded power drops when doing at-con production of the pocket program. We should have made sure to mention that in advance. We should also consider formally merging pocket program and souvenir book going forward.

The Boskone Book happened. We need to come up with a way of numbering and signing that does less wear and tear on the books. We also need better coordination between Boskone Book Sales/Pickup and Dealers.

NESFA Sales happened. We should think of ways to handle people who want to buy year-ahead memberships from Sales rather than Reg, or when Reg is closed. We also need to make sure that the hotel sets up tables in the right places. We should also design an at-con NESFA Membership form that leaves room for a receipt in the copies that get made.

We printed too many copies of Helmuth. The new editor did a good job but could maybe have used some additional mentorship. Some people wish that he'd accepted more of the news pieces that they'd submitted. Getting copies onto Discord and the website quickly was a win.

An updated Restaurant Guide was created. Pickup was higher from Reg than from info desk.

Signs were printed on time and mostly got where they were needed. More help in dropping them off and picking them up is needed going forward. Better signs towards Otis and Stone would be helpful if the hotel allows it.

We need to make an effort to get our website accurate before it gets archived and the live site is rolled over to the next year.

Hotel was mostly normal. The River of Darkness is still an issue. People booking party suites should let us know ASAP so that we can get them blocked correctly.

People asked for press packets this year; we should put one together.

We did some stuff with Instagram this year. We need a volunteer for this who both knows how modern social media works and who regularly attends meetings.

Sharon says that email happened and that she answered questions on all kinds of topics. Rick also helped. It might be helpful to have an extra person on the info address to learn the ropes.

Apart from people playing with toy lightsabers in an unsafe way, there were no known code of conduct issues. We likely won't have a lightsaber dealer going forward. We should consider tightening up the code of conduct to make it clear that POTENTIAL to harm others is not okay.

We need a person to take the lead and to make sure that all rooms and con spaces are properly accessible for people with mobility aids (mobies, wheelchairs, walkers, etc). There were reports of crowding in Staff Den.

For publicity, we did parties (waffle parties at Balticon and Albacon plus our dessert party with Philly at Readercon) as well as flyers. We should do more publicity.

Ecommerce worked. We should make sure to plan our promotional push for the Boskone Book earlier, the next time we have one.

Reg went well overall. We will need to order badge stock and laminate for next year and possibly labels as well.

Volunteers says that more advance notice of when areas are going to need people at-con would be helpful.

SBOF happened. We need signage to point to the microwave and crockpots.

There was a party board. We should look into making a better one for next year.

We had badges. Geri says that we should get an earlier start on them next year.

Geri says that fan amusements were well-received and she would like to do it again. She also says that the new layout for bid tables was great. We should consider offering a Saturday-only option for fan tables

There were costumes but not much recognition. Stephanie says we should do more and that she has some ideas. Sharon says she's not sure where most of the costume ribbons have ended up. Ann says she found some in office.

Office worked. We need to remember to turn in any lost items to hotel security. We should reconsider the no-internal-lost-and-found policy going forward. Our masking tape is getting old and we need to replace it soon. We need some more sharpies and a new three hole punch.

Shopping mostly worked but Dave was doing stuff too close to con and there was a communication issue with con suite. We need a new person to do this next year. Rick says that person should be somebody with a key and a debit card.

Set up and teardown happened. Walt said that we need to do a better job coordinating dealers load-in and tech.

Program AV went smoothly because we got rooms early. Tech office should bring a supply of office stuff like sharpies and pens for internal use. People putting together kits of equipment pre-con need to make sure they include all the cords.

Zambia happened. Improvements to Zambia in future years are being planned.

People need to communicate with people the way they want to be communicated with.

We need to come up with ways to use and showcase the photos taken by the official photographer.

People need to be reminded to copy the official alias for their roles when they send emails.

The chair will get her gift later – possibly at Balticon.

Nobody has any final announcements.

The meeting finally ended after 6 pm.

NESFA Business Meeting 2025-3-16

Meeting started at 2:05 pm EST

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 2:05 PM EDT.

(Quorum for a meeting (30% of regular membership): currently 8, or 30% of 24)

PROXIES:

Gloria Lucia Albasi to Sharon Sbarsky, Dave Cantor left a proxy for Pat Lang, but she didn't make it so it went unused.

CORRECTIONS TO THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:

None noted.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (RICK KOVALCIK):

I have appointed Kylie Selkirk to run the 2025-2026 Short Story Contest.

I am appointing Dave Cantor to head the 2025 Nominating Committee. If you are interested in also serving on the 2025 Nominating Committee, please let me or him know asap.

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT (SHARON SBARSKY):

No report. I recommend not falling on ice, especially the week before Boskone.

TREASURER'S REPORT (ANN BROOMHEAD):

NESFA's cash position as of February 28, 2025 is:

Checking Account = \$34,383.46 (end of January = \$30,849.03)

Boskone 62 Bank Account = \$57,366.47 (end of January = \$35,582.76)

PayPal Account = \$500.00 (end of January = \$500.00¹)

Postage Due Account = \$10.34

The current cash balance is \$92,260.27. The end of January balance was \$66,302.93. The difference is an increase of \$25,957.34.

¹ Paypal money in excess of \$500.00 is automatically transferred into the NESFA checking account.

CLERK'S REPORT (MICHAEL KERPAN):

Clerking has continued. I took notes for the Boskone Debrief last week. They came to seven and a half pages. After talking to some people, I plan to summarize them and put the summary in the next IM along with a link to the full notes otherwise, we would be looking at a three-ounce IM.

EBOARD REPORT (MIKE KERPAN FOR THE EBOARD):

The Eboard needs to decide on the number of copies and price of *Warrior's Apprentice* to print, after first getting a sense of how much money we have (including any outstanding large bills) and how much money the current Boskone made (or lost). We will be meeting in a breakout room after the business meeting is over to discuss that. [clerk's note: After the meeting the Eboard decided to reprint 1000 copies of *Warrior's Apprentice* priced at \$25.]

The President authorized payment to an artist for art to go on a NESFA t-shirt to be worn at Anime Boston etc.

RULES COMMITTEE REPORT (DAVE ANDERSON):

No report this month. Boskone got in the way.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT (TIM SZCZESUIL):

Move to enter Committee of the Whole. No objections.

Committee exits with a motion to lower the price of *Grimm Future* to \$25 and *Conspiracy* to \$12.50. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

NESFA SALES REPORT (TIM SZCZESUIL):

Sales continue. I'm happy to report that we've finally gotten the Zelazny Volume 6 reprint. It physically hurts to reject orders for 8-10 copies every week (mostly from Amazon) because it was out-of-stock. We're still out of *Silverlock* and the *Mathematics of Magic*. Dave G. and I will be working on producing a sample physical proof copy of an Amazon POD hardcover to see if it meets our standards.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT (WES BRODSKY):

The Membership Committee moves that the attendance requirement be waived for Suford Lewis for the period November 2024 to April 2025, due to sickness and death in her immediate family.

Motion to waive attendance for Suford passes by unanimous consent.

New Members Since Last Month:

Owen DeLuca

General:

Honorary:

Robert Moore

Jeff Hecht (retroactive since 1983)

Rachel Huntington

Rebecca Brumberger

The following Voting Members must attend at least one Business Meeting for the required time before the Annual Meeting to maintain Voting Membership.

Fred Bauer

James Boggie

Elizabeth Krentz-Wee

Peter Olszowka

Anne Pelz

Tim Szczesuil

Megan Tipper

Gregg Rosenblum

Omari Hayles

Move (RKOv, Wes) to declare that Tim S should be counted as having attended this meeting. Passes by unanimous consent.

BOSKONE 62 REPORT (JONI DASHOFF):

The last bit of cleanup is being handled by Treasury. Thank you to everybody who did things. Judy is still doing at-con data entry and doesn't have a breakdown of exactly which areas spent what yet.

BOSKONE 63 REPORT (MARIA DAGGETT):

Motion from the Eboard to appoint Judy Bemis as B63 Treasurer. Vote reported later as Passes 14-1.

Move to extend year-ahead rates (\$50 adult / \$30 young adult / \$20 teen / \$20 child) through the end of April (30th).

Hearing no objection passes by unanimous consent.

NESFA PRESS REPORT (DAVE GRUBBS):

News:

- Kelley Armstrong's *Wolf's Perils* is now at PSSC and ready for sale.
- We hired a contractor who knows how to deal with Amazon Central to address Amazon's failure to list many of our books.
- We have the spec for Amazon's Print-on-Demand process and plan to experiment with it by giving them our *Compleat Boucher*. [clerk's note: Dave reports that after the Business meeting, we created PDFs of both the interior and cover of *The Compleat Boucher* (meeting Amazon's Print-on-Demand specs), posted them on Amazon, and ordered a couple of POD copies to review.]
- We are still looking for a NESFA Press assistant to work for the NESFA Press Czar and the Business Manager.

New Printed Books:

- No progress on Allen Steele's history of Space Opera project (*How The Galaxy Was Won*).
- There are no promises as yet, but it looks likely that Greg Cox, our Boskone63 GoH, will have material for a Boskone book next year.
- We continue to seek more hardcover projects. If you have a project in mind, we can help.
- A longer-term NESFA Press project is to typeset the Hymnals (NESFA Song Books) in InDesign, with the music entered into Sibelius (a music typesetting system).

Reprints:

- The latest reprint of *Silverlock* (2nd edition) has reached PSSC and is ready for sale.
- 560 copies of the latest reprint of de Camp & Pratt's *The Mathematics of Magic* arrived at PSSC the week after the Business Meeting.
- The second edition, with a new ISBN (because it was completely re-typeset and is 56 pages shorter) of Bujold's *The Warrior's Apprentice*, has been created. After the Business Meeting, we submitted it for printing, and after some interaction with Sheridan about the colors of the cover and spine foil, it is now in production.
- We have not taken any steps to reprint our Frederic Brown books (*From These Ashes* and *Martians and Madness*).
- Predictions show that we will run out of a handful of books over the next four months, including Bujold's *Dreamweaver's Dilemma*, Henderson's *Ingathering*, Zelazny Volume 1: *Threshold*, and the second edition of the Ellison biography, *A Lit Fuse*. We have plans to reprint all of them because they are some of our best sellers. The sales and eboard groups will discuss the priority order of any reprint projects.

eBooks:

- * [Ongoing] The ebook states of two Tenn books are still not available on Amazon, nor are the ebook states of both Fredric Brown books.
- * The ebook for John Myers Myers's *Silverlock* has (finally) been posted for sale.
- * The ebook state of *The Ides of October* is still on the table. The contents are far too complicated and change too fast for physical reprints to be reasonable, but an ebook could be updated quickly and regularly. Chris Kovacs is prepared to provide updates.

Technical items:

- The NESFA Press shared drive contains files for every NESFA Press project we found on our original "N:" drive, plus anything we have created or updated since then.
- Our master ISBNs file is in the NESFA Press shared Drive in 01-Management/Catalog/ISBNs.docx. An extracted text file named ISBNs.txt sits beside it for easy searching.

E-COMMERCE REPORT (SHARON SBARSKY):

We're continuing to sell books. The new prices for *The Grimm Future* and *Conspiracy!* are now live. Boskone sales continue through Square, and book sales continue through Miva.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE (KRISTEN SEIBERT):

No report.

SALES AT CONVENTIONS (STEPHANIE SHIELDS):

There is a Sci-Fi show in South Burlington, VT at the end of April. Stephanie and Rick have offered to go and sell NESFA Press Books and perhaps some of our donation overstock. Motion (Kovalcik, Kerpan) to have NESFA cover the cost of the hotel room (about \$300 total for two nights). Motion passes 12-0.

CLUBHOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT (RICK KOVALCIK):

A couple of folding chairs have broken over the last couple of months. We are tight on chairs, especially on game days. Unless there is an objection I plan to purchase another six folding chairs to replace the two broken ones and give us four more. [clerk's note: The chairs have arrived and had tennis balls added to their feet]

We have investigated the smell in the stationery room. It is actually coming from under the main room. The best solution we have thought of so far is to air out the hatch to the main room whenever possible. I fixed the hinges on the hatch and replaced the hasp. We finally got around to placing six mouse traps that were bought a while ago.

We redid the covering of the front door by putting a printout of the NESFA Shield etc down below and buying a new shade which would only need to be pulled down halfway. Hopefully this will work better than the broken shade we had before.

IT COMMITTEE REPORT (SHARON SBARSKY):

Computers are functional; printers are being finicky. We're tweaking the NESFA Press site. The B62 website has been flattened and the b62.boskone.org sub-domain now points to it. A b63.boskone.org sub-domain was created. It redirects to the www.boskone.org site, which still identifies itself as B62. That will be fixed as we update the website with B63 data. We should come up with a schedule for making announcements on social media.

COMPUTER REPORT (RICK KOVALCIK):

We have a "new to us" HP 9050 printer to replace the broken one on the table in the blue room alcove. It cost \$200 plus a tank of gas to go get it from Poughkeepsie, NY. We probably should salvage whatever parts we want from the broken one and recycle it.

We still need to address the issue with the color printer.

HOTEL COMMITTEE REPORT (GAY ELLEN DENNETT):

Not present. We still have a hotel. We received a hotel bill which we have paid.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE REPORT (MIKE KERPAN):

We have a library. Cataloging is moving along. We've actually finished the Ace Doubles and moved on to other doubles and collectible series (Choose Your Own Adventures, Perry Rhodan. etc.). Thanks to LB we now have color-coded "you are here" maps around the clubhouse to help people find where the various parts of the library are.

MAIL ROOM REPORT (DAVE CANTOR): Mail continues.**NOMINATING COMMITTEE (DAVE CANTOR):**

Not here. If you are interested in serving on it, please let Rick or Dave C. know asap.

PROCUREMENT REPORT (DAVE ANDERSON):

As usual, I buy supplies like toilet paper and paper towels. People continue to donate soda and munchies.

AWARDS (RICK KOVALCIK) :

Fellowship Award (Rick Kovalcik): No award this year.

Gaughan Award (Sharon Sbarsky): We presented the Gaughan award to Eleonor Piteira (<http://eleonorpiteira.squarespace.com/>). Vince Docherty took it back to Europe and mailed it from there.

Short Story Contest (Rick Kovalcik for Steven Lee / Kylie Selkirk): The winners were announced at Boskone. All the award certificates have been mailed out.

Skylark Award (Joe Ross): The winner, Ian Randall Strock, was announced at Boskone. He was surprised and speechless.

CLUBHOUSE AND ONLINE ACTIVITIES (WEDNESDAY NIGHTS, READING, WRITING, OTHER):

Things continue.

NESFA READING GROUP (WES BRODSKY):

The last book read by the group was *Steal Across the Sky* by Nancy Kress. There was the usual enlightening discussion. The next book, to be discussed online Friday, April 4, 2025 - 7:00pm to 9:00pm, is *This Case Is Gonna Kill Me* by Melinda Snodgrass (writing as Phillipa Bornikova).

GAMING COMMITTEE REPORT (STEPHANIE SHIELDS):

Not present. No report. Game days continue.

MEDIA COORDINATOR REPORT (MIKE KERPAN):

People continue to like our theme nights. We had an Ancient Rome night last night (3/15) in honor of the Ides of March. Next up is Anime and Animation followed by General Media the week after.

MCFI LIAISON (RICK KOVALCIK):

MCFI is starting to think about maybe running another CostumeCon.

WORLDCON LIAISON (SHARON SBARSKY):

No actual changes in upcoming Worldcons or Worldcon bids. Hugo Nominations closed on 14 March. Seattle plans to hold online Business Meetings on four dates; we will see how it works out. BWAWA (Balt-Wash area group) has withdrawn its bid for an upcoming Smofcon due to the current political climate.

SILENT AND SILLY COMMITTEES: All silent

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: None

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

We have general Boskone Ribbons to be given out at other cons.

Motion to Adjourn at 15:36 (Anderson, Grubbs) Passes unanimously. Meeting adjourned 3:16. Only 1:11 long!

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March 26, 2025

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In Times To Come

(See www.nesfa.org/events for the full schedule)

- Mar 25** 7:30-10:30 pm • **Bluesy Tuesy.**
See www.bluesytuesy.com for details
- Mar 29** 7 pm-whenever • **Media Night**
- Mar 30** noon-whenever • **Game Day**
- Apr 1** 7:30-10:30 pm • **Bluesy Tuesy.**
See www.bluesytuesy.com for details
- Apr 3** 7-9 pm • **GenderFree Scottish Country Dance**
- Apr 4** 7 pm-9 pm • **NESFA Reading Group.**
Book: *This Case is Gonna Kill Me* by Melinda Snodgrass
- Apr 5** 7 pm-whenever • **Media Night**
- Apr 6** 2 pm-whenever • **NESFA Business Meeting**
Online via Zoom.
- Apr 8** 7:30-10:30 pm • **Bluesy Tuesy.**
See www.bluesytuesy.com for details
- Apr 12** 7pm-whenever • **Doctor Who Meetup and Social**
- Apr 13** noon-whenever • **Game Day**
- Apr 15** 7:30-10:30 pm • **Bluesy Tuesy.**
See www.bluesytuesy.com for details

Pay your dues by PayPal. Use paypal@nesfa.org

- Apr 17** 7-9 pm • **GenderFree Scottish Country Dance**
- Apr 19** 6 pm-whenever • **Media Night**
- Apr 20** noon-whenever • **Game Day**
- Apr 22** 7:30-10:30 pm • **Bluesy Tuesy.**
See www.bluesytuesy.com for details
- Apr 25-27** • **New England Fold Festival**
In Marlborough, MA. See neffa.org for details.
- Apr 26-27** • **Vermont Sci-fi, Fantasy & Horror Expo**
In Essex Junction, VT. NESFA will have a booth.
- Apr 26** 6 pm-whenever • **Anime and Animation Night**
- Apr 27** noon-whenever • **Game Day**
- May 2** noon-6 pm • **NESFA Reading Group.**
Book: *The Mountain in the Sea Me* by Ray Nayler
- May 3 - 4** noon-6pm • **Somerville Open Studios**
- May 4** noon-whenever • **Game Day**
- May 8 - 11** • **PAX East**
- May 11** • 2 pm-whenever • **NESFA Annual Meeting**
Online via Zoom.