

## Escapist Expo attracts fantasy and gaming fans

BY: JORDAN HARRISON

The *Escapist* held its first ever convention from Sept. 14-16 at the Durham Convention Center in Downtown Durham.

Fans at the expo participated in a myriad of video game tournaments, such as *League of Legends* and *Gears of War 3*; attended panels, played in organized tabletop RPG sessions, and tried out some classic video games provided by the American Classic Arcade Museum in New Hampshire.

Some NCSSM students and faculty attended the Expo, each with a different experience. As a first-time convention, the Expo encountered some problems upon opening.

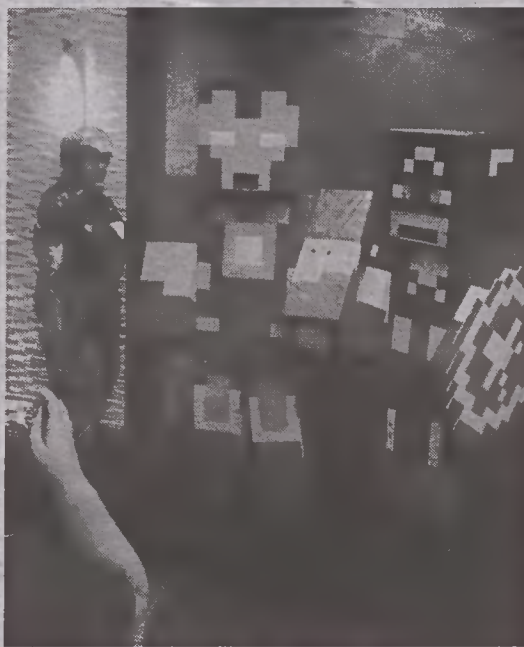
Ross Knight, SLI on 2<sup>nd</sup> Hill, said, "I was disappointed by the fact that the main expo hall was delayed by over an hour in opening. From what I

overheard the day of the event [on Friday], there was an issue with Internet connectivity and as a result, even after the main exhibition hall opened, none of the computer gaming sections were open during the times I was there."

Senior Evan Chu said, "A lot more information could have been provided beforehand, and there were not a lot of benefits for VIP tickets."

Regardless of the Expo's rough start, participants overall enjoyed the festivities. Senior Kyle Frid particularly liked *Chest High Walls*, a large-scale laser tag game modeled after third-person shooter games at Diamond View Park.

"*Chest High Walls* was really fun," said Frid. "I wish there had been more of an



8-bit Iron Man and Captain America  
Courtesy of The Escapist

intricate map set-up, but I enjoyed myself a lot."

Said senior Emmet Hobgood, "I got to be Rambo!"

The convention also included a cosplay contest, which involved making and wearing costumes to impersonate characters.

"Seeing all the cool cosplay made me want to do it myself," said Hobgood. He also enjoyed the "general aura of nerd culture" at the convention.

Said Knight, "I really enjoyed the artists that were in attendance

and even bought some items from one...the board games library available for convention goers to borrow from was [also] really well stocked and included games of all genres."

One notable panel was the Hour of Love, in which several harsh critics from *The Escapist* were forced to answer questions from convention goers nicely and lovingly.

"It had a good premise and it was great seeing some panelists," said senior Aaron Kovasckitz, "who I'm used to seeing act angry and annoyed, have to put on begrudging smiles and be witty in a round-about way for a while."

*The Escapist*, an online magazine, focuses on video games and gaming culture and also features video reviews, notably *Zero Punctuation* by "Yahtzee" Crowshaw.

## New teachers share their stories

BY SARAH LEE

### Hope Concannon

Dr. Hope Concannon grew up in Chicago, but has lived in North Carolina for the past 22 years. She has spent the past 14 years teaching in the mountains of Asheville in the western part of the state.

Concannon gained her undergraduate degree in Physics and Mathematics from Valparaiso University before earning a PhD in Physics from Duke.

She started teaching at Carolina Day School and has been there ever since. Although she is very excited to be back in Durham,

Concannon says she will "miss going to the mountains, hiking trails, and rivers around Asheville."

In addition to hiking, Concannon enjoys running, dancing, and reading. Concannon has also traveled all over the world; and after visiting Madagascar twice, she is excited to make a visit to the Duke Center.

Her subjects at NCSSM are Pre-Calculus and AP Statistics.

An interesting fact: "I enjoy African drumming (djembe) and playing the traditional West African rhythms."

### Emily Maxwell

Ms. Emily Maxwell is originally from Plano, Texas, but currently a resident of Chapel Hill.

She graduated from the University of Northern Texas, earning B.A. in Biology; University of Texas at Dallas, receiving M.A.T. with Environmental Science; and studied Geosciences at University of Texas at Dallas and Marine Sciences at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Maxwell has taught Biology and Chemistry at NCSSM for many years, but is new to teaching distance learning at NCSSM.

This year she will be

teaching Ecology, Evolution, and AP Environmental Science in DEEP.

When asked about the reason for choosing NCSSM, Maxwell expressed that, "Curiosity first attracted me to NCSSM; working with the faculty and students at NCSSM keeps me coming back. This year, I am most excited about working in Distance Learning to export the S&M experience to students at other schools in NC."

An interesting fact: "I grew up on the site of the last conflict between Native Americans and settlers in the county; we had a historical marker in our backyard."

### Dennis Yeh

Mr. Dennis Yeh, a native of Murrysville, PA, "the esteemed setting of a certain tale about a Zack and a Miri" as he notes, is most excited about "bringing balance back to the Force in my discipline at NCSSM."

After studying Cognitive Science at Northwestern University, Mr. Yeh taught at NCSSM from 2005 to 2010, only to return two years later to teach Computer Science.

An interesting fact: "I don't drink coffee."

### Kim Monahan

Dr. Kim Monahan received her B.S. from University of Georgia in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and her PhD from UNC-Chapel Hill in Genetics and Molecular Biology.

Monahan was born and raised in Pompton Plains, New Jersey, only 25 minutes outside of New York City.

A SPIRE Fellowship Scholar, Monahan conducted a cancer research and studied Ras signaling in *C. elegans* at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Before coming to NCSSM, Monahan taught courses at UNC-Chapel Hill, Fayetteville

State University and Alamance Community College.

An interesting fact: Monahan enjoys hiking at national parks with her family.

Monahan's most extreme experience was at Half Dome in Yosemite Park where she used cables to scale the granite surface during the last quarter mile of the hike.

### Gail Boyarsky

Ms. Gail Boyarsky spent most of her life in Durham.

After earning her B.S. from Duke in Geology and MAT from UNC-CH in science teaching, Boyarsky began her career as an electron microscopist in a cell biology lab at Duke University, but switched to teaching, mostly in Chapel Hill, over 25 years ago.

As an instructor of Climate Change Biology and AP Environmental Science, Boyarsky appreciates the amount of interest in the environment in the NCSSM community.

An interesting fact: Two of Boyarsky's nephews and one of her nieces have attended NCSSM.

### Joseph LoBuglio

Dr. Joseph LoBuglio grew up on Long Island in New York.

He studied mechanical and aerospace engineering from Princeton University, and aeronautics and astronautics from Stanford University before earning a PhD in environmental engineering from UNC-Chapel Hill.

LoBuglio has worked for a number of industries, including automotive, solar energy, HVAC, water treatment, and aerospace.

Most recently he worked as the associate director for research at The Water Institute at UNC, working to ensure safe water for the world.

At NCSSM, LoBuglio

is teaching mechanical engineering, robotics, and related fields.

An interesting fact: "I was once a penguin keeper at the New England Aquarium."

### Darrell Spells

Dr. Darrell Spells is a native of Fayetteville, North Carolina.

After graduating from Duke University with a B.S. in Chemistry, Spells attended University of Texas at Austin where he earned his PhD in Organic Chemistry.

At NCSSM, he is teaching Organic Chemistry, Advanced AP Chemistry, and General Chemistry. He calls teaching at NCSSM, "an opportunity to teach bright motivated students from all over the state of North Carolina."

An interesting fact: Spells attended Duke University on a football scholarship.

### Charlie Payne

Mr. Charlie Payne grew up in Richmond, VA, and earned his BA and Med in Education from the University of Richmond.

After several years of teaching and managing a small retail store of running equipment, Payne began coaching track and field at Duke University where he met his wife, an assistant basketball coach at Duke and an assistant field hockey coach at UNC-Chapel Hill.

For the last twenty-four years, however, he has taught at Northern Durham High School while presenting physics at NSTA and AAPT, and teaching physics for a graduate program for teachers at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Payne's subject at NCSSM is Physics with Advanced Topics.

An interesting fact: Mr. Payne has coached track and cross country for 44 years.

## Newly hired Mentorship coordinator starts

BY CARL YIN

Dr. Sarah Shoemaker started this Monday as the new full-time Mentorship coordinator.

John Kirk, the current Mentorship coordinator, will continue to be involved in the Mentorship program, but will phase out his involvement as the year continues.

The hire comes after a proposed expansion of the Mentorship program, which made it necessary to find a full-time coordinator for the program.

With potential new sources of funding, especially for transportation to mentorship locations, the Mentorship program will be able to accommodate more students in the program, starting for this year's junior class.

Shoemaker has an extensive background of research. She grew up in Ohio, and came to the triangle area to do her post-doctorate research at UNC. She received her doctorate from Case-Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio.

Her research was based on neuroscience, focusing on axon regeneration.

She decided to join the NCSSM faculty due to her passion for teaching and research.

"I love teaching, I have always loved teaching," Shoemaker said. "To be able to teach [mentorship students on the field of] research is such a unique thing."

Shoemaker has enjoyed her time thus far on NCSSM campus.

She said that "students here are so impressive and so fun." Shoemaker was also very impressed with the students here, and added, "[They] have an excitement for research."