"With infinite complacency men went to and fro over Southwest Virginia about their little affairs, serene in their assurance of their empire. Toward the close of the 1970's, fannish intellects vast and cool and unsympathetic regarded the region with envious eyes, and slowly and surely drew their plans to hold a convention unlike any that had been seen in that area before."

By 1979, several members of Roanoke, Virginia's first science fiction fan group, the Nelson Bond Society, had attended a number of conventions in other cities and states. While Roanoke already boasted a con (also started by NBS members) held at a local high school, they wanted to bring home the immersive experience of a weekend-long event held in a hotel, and began their planning accordingly. They chose the name MystiCon from a list of over 200 suggestions submitted by the committee members. Their mailing list was painstakingly compiled from personal contacts and letters to the editor published in comics and science fiction or fantasy related magazines.

The original MystiCon took place in Blacksburg's Sheraton Red Lion Inn over the July 4th weekend of 1980. It was chaired by Suzanne Winfield and included an art show, a huckster room, several movies (on reels of film!), a masquerade, a con suite, numerous program items, autograph sessions, filk-singing, an art auction, a game room, a banquet, and excellent parties. The GoH was Hugo and Nebula winner Gordon R. Dickson, author of *Dorsai*, *Spacepaw*, *The Dragon and the George*, and dozens more novels and collections. Other guests included Robert Adams, Paul Dellinger, David Friedman, Steve Miller, Sharon Lee, and multi-Hugo-winning artist, Frank Kelly Freas. Several guests wrote short, short stories on the back of Kelly's oversize art postcards, and the original brief tales were auctioned off. The fannish ghod, Roscoe (who takes the form of a carefree giant beaver) was introduced as the unofficial mascot of the convention. He continued to appear on fliers and on most program book covers throughout the series.
After the efforts poured into the initial MystiCon, it was decided to cut back and put on a relaxacon the following year. MystiCon 1-1/2 was held at the Jefferson Motor Inn in downtown Roanoke, with Somtow Sucharitkul, Thai composer and creator of the Mallworld series, as the GoH and author Jack Chalker serving as Toastmaster. Writer Ralph Roberts and members of the Society for Creative Anachronism were additional guests. Main activities took place in the dining room, with others, such as the filk-sing scheduled for motel sleeping rooms.

MystiCon II in 1982 was a full-size convention held at the Sheraton Salem near Interstate 81. It was chaired by Steven Stanley. The GoH was Sam Moskowitz, author, anthologist, S-F historian and teacher, and chair of the first World Science Fiction Convention in 1939. Other guests included Tim Sullivan, M.A. Foster, Rudy Rucker, Ralph Roberts, and the Rev. Don Batty. A special treat included a large-screen projection television showing a variety of movies on the then popular VHS tapes.

This was followed in 1983 by another relaxacon, MystiCon 2.5, held again at the Jefferson Motor Inn, though in August rather than July (with this change becoming permanent for the remaining MystiCons.) The GoH was author Orson Scott Card, making one of his early convention appearances, and performing his hilarious “Secular Humanist Revival.”

In 1984, MystiCon III was set to take place at the Holiday Inn - Tanglewood, just outside Roanoke, but that establishment underwent a change of management and canceled the contract only weeks before the convention date. The committee was able to book the Thrifty Inn - Airport and hold a scaled-down version of the convention, though one without the use of dedicated function space. All events (including dealer sales) took place in motel rooms. Noted author, editor, and co-founder of Carcosa Books, Karl Edward Wagner, was the GoH. Other guests included Rudy Rucker, Paul Dellinger, Jerry Page, Somtow Sucharitkul, Alexis and Dolly Gilliland, and John Maddox Roberts. Editor Ted White served as Toastmaster. A luncheon banquet took place at the nearby Steak & Ale restaurant.

MystiCon Pi, a third relaxacon, was chaired by Will Adams and took place in 1985 at Roanoke's Thrifty Inn - Civic Center. Somtow Sucharitkul repeated as the GoH, with Alexis Gilliland and Ralph Roberts as additional guests.

There was talk of another MystiCon (and even some fliers), but the series ended with 1985. Then, after a quarter of a century, a strange thing happened. Fans, most no more than teenagers in the 1980’s (and some not even born then), decided to bring MystiCon back, bigger and better than before; and they did. But that's another story.