



LAMBDA SCI-FI



DC Area Gaylaxians

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E-MAIL: info@lambdasf.org WEBSITE: http://www.lambdasf.org/

Gaylaxicon 2005 in Boston!!



an announcement from Wayne Wilkening (Con Chair)

In 2005, the Gaylaxians Science Fiction Society (GSFS) will be hosting the annual GLBT-focused Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror convention of the Gaylactic Network - Gaylaxicon 2005. The convention will be held in the Boston metro area with initial target dates of July 1-4, 2005. The dates are subject to change, based on hotel and guest availability.

At the convention we'll have the both an artist and author guest of honor, dances, an art show, dealers room, gaming, videos, a masquerade, and all the extras you expect from a Gaylaxicon, such as the Chocolate Symposium and our trademark GLBT-focused programming.

Memberships and more information are available now at:

www.gaylaxicon.org/2005



Next LSF Meeting - Nov. 10th -

The next LambdaSci-Fi meeting will be held at James Crutchfield's apartment (1414 17th St., NW, #413) on Sunday, November 10th. The business meeting will begin at 1:30 PM; and the social meeting will begin at 2:00PM. Please bring some munchies or soft drinks, if you can. See you there!

Winners of This Year's Spectrum Awards Raffle

announced by Rob Gates

A very big thank you to everyone who supported the 2002 Gaylactic Spectrum Awards with donations of prizes or purchase of raffle tickets. This year's raffle and donations brought in a little over \$400 for the Awards.

[Ed. Note: Raffle tickets were available both at Worldcon/ConJose and via the Internet. The drawing itself was held at the October LSF meeting, in the presence of all meeting attendees.]

We've had an opportunity to contact all of our winners and have set the prize delivery in motion, so we thought we'd let everyone know who our winners were in the fund-raising raffle.

* Character Naming in a Story (donated by Steve Berman, Gaylactic Spectrum Award finalist author) - won by Randy John, Texas.

* 5 Upcoming Lethe Press Titles (donated by Lethe Press, publisher of Steve Berman) - won by Tom Maclaney, Michigan.

* Assortment of Recent Genre Works (donated by *Wavelengths*) - won by Joey Shoji, California.

* Collection of 2002 Gaylactic Spectrum Award Finalists (donated by Publishers) - won by Dale Everett, California.

If you have any questions

The LSF Book Discussion Group



If you're interested in lively discussions of F&SF books (with an emphasis on elements of interest to the LBGT community), we invite you to join the LSF Book Discussion Group. Each month, we conduct fascinating round-table discussions of works by significant F&SF authors.

The LSF Book Discussion Group generally meets on the 4th Thursday of every month, starting at 7:00 PM. **But the next meeting, a SPECIAL combined Nov./Dec. meeting, will be held on December 5th** (at Peter & Rob's house, 1425 "S" St., NW -- for directions or more details, call 202-483-6369).

Here's the schedule for the next several months:

--- **December 5th (2002)** - *The Ghost Sister*, by Liz Williams; moderator: Carl.

--- **January 23rd (2003)** - *Dance for the Ivory Madonna*, by Don Sakers; moderator: TBA.

--- **February 27th (2003)** - *Sea Dragon Heir*, by Storm Constantine; moderator: Greg M.

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about the Gaylactic Spectrum Awards, or wish to donate at any time during the year, please let me know - or visit our website at:

<http://www.lambdasf.org/spectrum/>

Watch for more Gaylactic Spectrum Awards news announcements soon!

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WHAT'S INSIDE?

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**Minutes of the
Oct. 13th LSF Meeting**
from Scott
(with editorial assistance from Carl)



**Lambda Sci-Fi:
DC Area Gaylaxians**

We finally achieved a quorum at the meeting and the following proposals were voted on. **Both passed.**

Proposal 1 – I propose that each year, Lambda Sci Fi pay (a) the domain **name registration for lambdasf.org**, and (b) the web hosting bill as a standing bill – just like the P.O. Box – i.e., without needing to vote on it each year.

Proposal 2 – I propose that LSF donate **\$200 towards the running of the GLBT fandom suite** being run/organized by Carl Cipra for the Gaylactic Network at **the 2002 World Science Fiction Convention** in San Jose, CA.

It was formally announced that there will be a **Gaylaxicon in 2004**, which will be held in San Diego, AND a **Gaylaxicon in 2005**, which will be held in Boston. Neither con has yet settled upon exact dates for their cons. Alan Lutton is the con chair for the San Diego, while Wayne Wilkening is the Boston con chair. Both cons are now accepting registrations. [Ed. note: Membership information and applications can be accessed via the LSF website.]

The LSF social meeting began with reminders about upcoming events. CapClave is this-coming Saturday (October 19), in Silver Spring, MD. While not an LSF event, a number of LSF members will be attending.

Rob reported that Lambda Sci Fi is the community partner for **Reel Affirmations** this-coming Saturday night (October 19) for the genre film *Don't Ask, Don't Tell*. The film will be shown at 11:00 PM at the Lincoln Theater (13th & U Street NW, across from the U Street Metro green line station). Rob encouraged everyone to attend. Carl will be invited up on the stage to speak for two minutes or less. It was noted that another genre film will be showing at Reel Affirmations, entitled *Jesus Christ, Vampire Hunter*, on Sunday, October 20, at the DC Jewish Community Center (16th & Q Streets NW).

The subject of the next **Lambda Sci Fi book discussion** (Oct. 14) will Me-

lissa Scott & Lisa A. Barnett's *Point of Dreams*, which is both a Lammy and Spectrum Awards finalist. The combined November/December LSF book discussion will occur on Dec. 5th; the discussion topic will be *Ghost Sister* by Liz Williams.

Peter and Rob are hosting another ab-fab **LSF video party** at their home on Saturday, Oct. 26. The video party is Halloween-themed, so be sure to bring your favorite horror videos and DVD's.

The annual GLBT-friendly **Darkover convention** will be held in Timonium, MD over Thanksgiving Weekend. Carl will be attending, as usual, and will be hosting a GLBT fan party at the convention on Saturday night, November 30th.

Michael C. may organize an outing to see the new movie *The Ring*. Stay tuned for details.

Rob passed around the *Sigma* newsletter from the Pittsburgh science fiction group.

In **TV news**, *Haunted* is well-liked. *Birds of Prey*, based upon DC Comics comic book of the same name, appears to be promising. The plotline for *Buffy* is getting thankfully lighter this season. On *Smallville*, Clark Kent 'came out' to his high school buddy, Pete Ross. Season collections are coming out on DVD for both *Babylon 5* and *Farscape*.

In **book news**, Carl predicted that Judith Merrill's biography and Ray Bradbury's biography – two books that have just been released – will both probably be nominated for next year's Hugo "Other Works" award category. Clive Barker's latest book, *Arabat*, has just come out. So has Jonathan Carroll's *White Apples*. Rumor has it that Mike Resnick's new "Santiago" sequel will be coming out sometime in the near future.

Rob and Peter offloaded a small set of genre movie posters from their home (about to be renovated). The posters were sold/auctioned off, with all proceeds going to LSF.

As a special treat, LSF member and award-winning author **Antonio Ruffini**

read his twenty-minute short story titled, "Old Earth Honor." His story was well-received by all attendees.

Rob explained that the Spectrum Awards, is now an organization independent of the Gaylactic Network, funded entirely by donations and special fundraising activities such as **the Spectrum Awards raffle**. (Note: Tickets for this raffle were sold at Worldcon and via the internet. Approximately 60 tickets, at \$5/ticket or \$25/5 tickets, were sold.) Rob then conducted this year's raffle drawing for the four prizes, with LSF attendees as witnesses. The four raffle prizes were:

* A complete set, with many signed, of all 2002 Finalists from all three categories (Best Novel, Best Short Fiction, and Best Other Work).

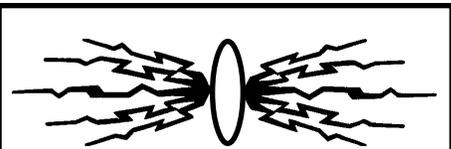
* An assortment of new, recently released genre novels.

* Copies of the next 5 titles released by Lethe Press, which should include the next work from this year's double finalist, Steve Berman.

* The naming of a character, and a copy of the work in which that character appears, in an upcoming work from Steve Berman.

[Ed. note: For the names of the winners of the drawing, see Spectrum Awards article on page 1 of this newsletter.]

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An immense and ever-increasing wealth of knowledge is scattered about the world today; knowledge that would probably suffice to solve all the mighty difficulties of our age, but it is dispersed and unorganized. We need a sort of mental clearing-house: a depot where knowledge and ideas are received, sorted, summarized, digested, clarified and compared.

H.G. Wells, *The Brain:
Organization of the Modern
World* (1940)

Blood and Guts on Menu for Romania Dracula Park

by Adrian Dascalu

(news item passed along by Scott)

BUCHAREST (Reuters)

Scary jelly, blood pudding and brains will be on the menu if Romania goes ahead with a Dracula theme park, but critics are more afraid it could spoil the nearby medieval birthplace of "Vlad the Impaler."

Romania plans to build the park near the Transylvanian town of Sighisoara, birthplace of 15th century Romanian Count Vlad Tepes, or Vlad the Impaler, who is thought to have inspired Irish author Bram Stoker's Gothic novel *Dracula*.

The government said on Monday it planned to go ahead with the \$30 million Disney-style park despite widespread resistance.

U.N. cultural body UNESCO says the park — expected to feature a horror castle, a "vampirology" institute and restaurants serving gory dishes — would kill the medieval atmosphere of Sighisoara, which dates back to the 13th century.

A Tourism Ministry spokesman told Reuters on Monday the location of the park depended on a study due out next month, rather than UNESCO's views.

"We respect UNESCO's stand... but this is a government project and UNESCO cannot put constraints on it. If the experts think that Sighisoara is the right place, we will build it there, there is no doubt about it," he said.

Government promises of around 3,000 new jobs in the park have won over many locals, hit hard by unemployment. But some fear the provincial town's morals will be eroded.

"This place will be invaded by those who practice satanic rites and by drugs. I already saw satanic graffiti in our cemetery," local Lutheran priest Hans Frolich said.

"What could children see in such a park? People who sharpen their teeth and drink blood or some crazy guys clad in bed sheets and posing as ghosts?"



It's ridiculous," Frolich said.

Glossy Tourism Ministry brochures advertise workshops for sharpening teeth into fangs at the park, as well as mock torture chambers with stakes and knives.

"Building a Dracula park near Sighisoara would endanger the cultural value of the city," UNESCO Secretary-General Koichiro Matsuura said this month after visiting the town, which is listed as protected by the U.N body.

Critics also point out the park would be far from any big city or international airport, which could hinder its success.

**Human beings can
always be counted on
to assert with vigor
their God-given right
to be stupid.**

**-- Dean Koontz,
*False Memory***

Charles Sheffield 1935 - 2001



Charles Sheffield, 67, physicist, science fiction writer, and former chief scientist of Earth Satellite Corporation (a Bethesda-based raw data analysis company), died of brain cancer Nov. 2 in Rockville, MD. He is survived by his wife of five years, author Nancy Kress, as well as by 4 children from 2 previous marriages.

Dr. Sheffield was a prolific writer, with numerous nonfiction books, short stories, and novels to his credit. He also wrote over a hundred technical papers on such subjects as astronomy, image processing, space travel, gravitational field analysis, nuclear physics, and general relativity. He began to explore creative writing at age 40, after discovering a lack of well-written, scientifically-accurate science fiction. His first published short story was "What Song the Sirens Sang" (*Galaxy Magazine*, 1977). In 1992, Sheffield won the John W. Campbell Memorial Award for best science fiction novel (*Brother to Dragons*); and he won both the Nebula and Hugo Awards for his 1993 novelette *Georgia on My Mind*.

Sheffield was a frequent program participant at science fiction conventions. He and Nancy Kress were also guests at Gaylaxicon 1999. In February of this year, his fascinating novel *Aftermath* was the very popular subject of the Lambda Sci-Fi Book Discussion Group.

Puritans in the New World: F&SF-Style

two short reviews by Carl Cipra

What with the celebration of Thanksgiving coming up later this month, I figured this would be a good time to review F&SF books dealing with a Pilgrim-type theme. And, as it turns out, I'd recently finished reading a couple of books that fit the bill: Celia Rees' *Witch Child* (Candlewick Press, 2000) and Peter Ackroyd's *Milton in America* (Vintage, 1997).

I found it interesting that both novels are very similar in background and setting. For both books, the story begins in about the year 1660, with the main character fleeing to New England to escape Royalist retribution after the fall of Cromwell's Commonwealth. Both novels also go to great lengths to depict the less-than-idyllic life of early American settlers – a life filled with hardship, conflict, austerity, intolerance, and bigotry. (Remember: New England in the 1660's tended to be settled by religious dissenters whose object wasn't so much the search for "religious toleration" as it was an attempt to find a place where they could practice their own austere brand of Protestant Christianity without interference from – or even proximity to – people with differing customs or religious beliefs.) Granted, both authors tend to "lay it on a little thick" from time to time; but I can't help but think that these novels offer a salutary alternative to the "sweetness and light" version of The First Thanksgiving that has so firmly entrenched itself into the Anglo-Saxon American mythos.

This is not to say, however, that *Witch Child* and *Milton in America* present either similar or interchangeable stories. Indeed, Rees and Ackroyd use similar background and setting to tell very different stories. They approach "the early New England experience" from very different angles, are written in very different styles, and have very different objects in mind. These novels aren't even the same brand of F&SF: *Witch Child* is (just barely) a work of historical fantasy; and *Milton in America* is very definitely an "alternate history" story.



Witch Child is a young adult novel that tells the story of a 14-year-old girl living amidst the turmoil of the English Civil War and the Commonwealth of Oliver Cromwell. (An introductory note explains that it's "actually" based on "a remarkable collection of documents termed 'the Mary papers.' Found hidden inside a newly discovered and extremely rare quilt from the colonial period, the papers seem to take the form of an irregularly kept journal or diary.") The young girl believes herself to be an orphan raised by her Grandmother, Eliza Nuttall, in a small cottage on the edge of the forest. The story opens in March, 1659, when Grandmother is dragged off by a mob of Puritan villagers, tried as a witch, and hanged. The girl would undoubtedly soon have shared Mother Nuttall's fate; but at the last minute she is almost literally snatched from the clutches of a self-appointed Witchfinder by a mysterious gentlewoman. The woman turns out to be the girl's mother, wife to a highly-placed Parliamentarian and herself an influential member of the hidden community of English Witches – she had fostered her daughter with Mother Nuttall to teach her the lore of the Craft and to keep her safe during the dark days of the Civil War. Now, with the death of Mother Nuttall and the impending restoration of the English Monarchy, the woman realizes her young daughter is threatened both by witch-hunters and vengeful Royalists and conceals her – under the name of Mary Newbury – among a group of

Puritans heading for America. (To stay with her real parents would seal Mary's fate almost as surely as if she were condemned as a witch. Her father is one of the Parliamentarians who'd signed the death warrant of King Charles I; and the return of King Charles II guarantees an unrelenting manhunt and eventual traitor's death for both him and his wife, as well as the utter ruin of Mary's life.)

So, off to the New World goes Mary Newbury, in the care of kindly old Martha Everdale (who, by the way, is *not* a witch and does not know anything about young Mary's parents). What follows is a fascinating first-person narrative that presents a strikingly accurate portrayal of life in a Puritan settlement. Paradoxically, it is in New England that Mary meets the fate she escaped back in *old* England – towards the end of the novel she is discovered to be a witch and finds herself once again in the hands of religious fanatics. (This portion of the story – clearly based on the records of the Salem witch trials – is reminiscent of Walter Miller's stage play, *The Crucible*, right down to the ambitious, lying little girls who betray Mary to the religious authorities.)

Earlier, I described *Witch Child* as "(just barely) a work of historical fantasy." I say this because – aside from a couple of instances where young Mary demonstrates some ESP powers (clairvoyance, influencing the behavior of a wild animal, etc.) – there really isn't a lot of overt magical power being bandied

(continued on page 5)



Stardatecards
 (A new way for ET
 to "phone home"?)

[Ed. note: Here's an interesting tidbit passed along by Kendall. As an FYI, here's what Kendall said in his accompanying e-mail note: "I think this is the silliest idea yet, but I also think it's funny, so what the hey — this was e-mailed to LSF (and TAUGUNY and a couple of other places).... Enjoy!"]

My name is David Thai from the H.R. MacMillan Space Centre here in Vancouver. I writing to inform you that we have a new special program at the Space Centre called "Stardatecards". These Stardatecards allows you to send messages to the Universe!

The H.R. MacMillan Space Centre's Gordon MacMillan Southam Observatory is the location where Stardatecards' laser adapted telescope transmits your messages to the astronomical destinations of your choice!

Proceeds from the sale of Stardatecards help to support our valued programs and services.

I was wondering if you could somehow include this in your members newsletters and/or your website and help us spread the word on the program to anyone who maybe interested. If you do include this information into your newsletter or include it on your website, could you please provide a link or send a copy. For information on Stardatecards please follow the link or copy and paste it into your browser.

<http://www.hrmacmillanspacecentre.com/spec.htm#stardate>

[Ed. note: I went to the website and browsed around for a while. (Yes, I

Puritans

continued from page 4

about. The "witchcraft" displayed in this novel is primarily the "Wicca-craft" reputed to be the foundation of modern Wicca. Aside from a few instances of ESPer powers, *Witch Child* is a very well-written historical novel, with sympathetic, well-written characters and an exciting, engrossing plotline. I definitely recommend it.

Milton in America is, in some respects, also a very well-written historical novel – but, unlike *Witch Child*, it's also definitely a work of F&SF – it's an "alternate history" novel. Also unlike *Witch Child*, the main character in *Milton in America* is not a fictional character – it's the one and only John Milton. Yes, *that* John Milton, the one you read about in English Lit. classes, the blind poet who authored one of the greatest works of fantastic literature, the epic *Paradise Lost* (completed 1665, published 1667).

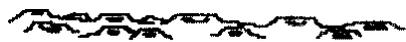


John Milton
 1608 - 1674

As with any good work of alternate history, *Milton in America* starts with a "when" and deals with a "what would have happened if." The "when" is 1660, the year the Commonwealth ended and the Stuart Dynasty (in the person of King Charles II) was restored to the English throne. The "what would have happened if" stems

know how to do that!!) Not a bad little website. At any rate, these Stardatecards cost \$19.95 US, which includes shipping of a certificate that recounts your message, its target, etc. You can even have them send additional certificates to "friends and family" at \$9.95 per additional certificate. It sounds like an interesting variant on that commercial venture from a few years ago whereby you could name a new star.]

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from Milton's response to those great events. John Milton, as a staunch Puritan, had every reason to fear the Restoration of the Monarchy.



He had published a defense of the execution of King Charles I, become a vocal and public apologist for the Commonwealth, and served as Latin secretary (sort of an official correspondent) to the Commonwealth's Council of State – for all of which he could rightfully expect some form of retribution (possibly execution) at the hands of the returning Royalists.

In *our* timeline, Milton went into hiding for a short period, was eventually forgiven by the Crown, and devoted the rest of his life to poetry. In this novel's timeline, however, Milton so fears for his life that he secretly flees to New England with his young aide, Goosequill (who is fictional and frequently provides comic-relief). First he is shipwrecked; then he is rescued and joyfully welcomed by the local Puritan community; and eventually he becomes the spiritual dictator of the brethren of New Milton. As had happened during the English Civil War, Milton's religious and civic duties so come to dominate his life that he has no time for poetry. His lifelong Puritan zealotry, reinforced now by the sycophants among his followers, becomes the guiding principle of his life. He becomes a self-justifying tyrant whose every dealing with "the other" – be it in the form of "heathen savages" (i.e. Native Americans), "shameless Romish idolators" (the nearby Royalist/Catholic settlement of Mary Mount), or homosexuals and "witches" discovered among his own people – is harsh and unforgiving.

As with the (as yet incomplete) change from Anakin Skywalker to Darth Vader on the silver screen, it is chillingly fascinating to watch Milton's transformation. *Milton in America* provides a graphic reminder that a great artist isn't necessarily a nice person – as well as providing (as mentioned earlier) a salutary warning regarding the nature of religious bigotry in any time and place.

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****INFORMATION ABOUT LAMBDA SCI-FI: DC AREA GAYLAXIANS****

Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians (LSF) is an organization for gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered (GLBT) people, and their friends who are interested in science fiction, fantasy, horror and related genres in all forms (SF/F/H). LSF's primary goals are to have fun, to provide a community, and to:

- promote SF/F/H, with particular attention to materials of interest to GLBT people and their friends;
- provide forums for GLBT people and their friends to share their interest in SF/F/H;
- promote the presence of GLBT elements within SF/F/H and within fandom; and
- promote SF/F/H within the GLBT community.

Annual membership fees are \$20, for which you will receive this monthly newsletter and a membership directory. Newsletter submissions are always welcome.

Meetings are usually held on the second Sunday of each month at a private residence. The next Lambda Sci-Fi meeting will be held on **Sunday, November 10th**, at James Crutchfield's home: 1414 17th St., NW, #413 (near DuPont Circle) - 1:30 PM for business meeting; 2:00 PM for social meeting. Please bring some munchies or soft drinks, if you can. Hope to see you there!

Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians is an affiliate of **the Gaylactic Network**, an international organization for gay people and their friends who are interested in science-fiction and fantasy.



Con Calendar

by Carl, Mike C., Peter, and Rob



Nov. 29 - Dec. 1, 2002 **DARKOVER GRAND COUNCIL MEETING XXV**. Holiday Inn Timonium (Timonium, MD). GoH: Deborah Christian; Artist GoH: Rebecca Liptak; Special Guest: Katherine Kurtz. Membership: \$40, until 11/1/02; \$45 after that. Make checks payable to "Armida Council" and send to: Armida Council, PO Box 7203, Silver Spring, MD 20907. (This is a very GLBT-friendly convention. LSF will host a room party on Saturday night.) Website: www.darkovercon.com

Dec. 13-15, 2002 **PHILCON 2002**. Marriott Center City Hotel (Phila., PA). Principal Speaker: Connie Willis; Artist GoH: Donato Giancola; Special Guests: David Gerrold, Nalo Hopkinson, Spider & Jeanne Robinson. Membership: \$45, until 12/2/02; \$50 after that. Make checks payable to "Philadelphia Science Fiction Society" and send to: Philcon '02 Registration, PO Box 126, Lansdowne, PA 19050-0126.
For more information: info@philcon.org Website: www.philcon.org

Feb. 14-16, 2002 **KATSUCON NINE**. Hyatt Regency Crystal City (Arlington, VA). Anime, gaming, cosplay, dealers, panels, guests. Membership: \$45 until 12/31/2002 (no pre-registrations after 12/31). Make checks payable to "Katsucon" and send to: Katsucon, Attn: Registration, PO Box 222691, Chantilly, VA 22153-2691.
E-mail: katsucon@katsucon.org Website: www.katsucon.com

May 23-26, 2003 **BALTICON 37**. Wyndham Baltimore Inner Harbor Hotel (Baltimore, MD). GoH: Sharon Lee & Steve Miller; featured artists: Sheila & Omar Rayyan. Membership: \$35 until 12/15/2002; \$40 from 12/16/2002 to 2/28/2003; \$45, 3/1 - 4/30; \$50 at the door. Make checks payable to "Balticon 37" and send to: Balticon 37, PO Box 686, Baltimore, MD 21203-0686.
E-mail: balticoninfo@balticon.org Website: www.balticon.org

Aug. 28 - Sept. 1, 2003 **TORCON 3 (The 61st World Science Fiction Convention)**. Metro Toronto Convention Centre & surrounding hotels (Toronto, Ontario, Canada). Guests of Honor: George R.R. Martin (author), Frank Kelly Freas (artist), Mike Slyer (fan), Spider Robinson (Toastmaster). Membership: as of 7/1/02, \$170 for attending adults; will go up! Make checks payable to "Torcon 3" and send to: Torcon 3, PO Box 3, Station A, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5W 1A2.
E-mail: info@torcon3.on.ca Website: www.torcon3.on.ca

Sept 19-21, 2003 **CAPCLAVE 2003**. Hotel: to be named later (DC Metro area). Guest of Honor: William Tenn. Membership: \$30 thru 8/1/2003; \$35 thru 9/5/03; \$40 at the door. Make checks payable to "Capclave" and send to: Capclave 2003 Registration, c/o Cathy Green, 3003 Van Ness St. NW, Apt. W527, Washington, DC 20008.
E-mail: info@capclave.org Website: www.capclave.org

