PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044 - (202) 232-3141 - Issue #153 - Dec. 2002 E-MAIL: info@lambdasf.org WEBSITE: http://www.lambdasf.org/

JONATHAN HARRIS 1914 – 2002



Jonathan Harris, known to millions of fans around the world as TV's Dr. Smith from the now-classic sci-fi fantasy series Lost in Space (1965-1968), died suddenly near his home in Encino, California, following a brief illness. The 87-year-old actor was a veteran of hun-dreds of stage, television and film performances, including memorable guest appearances in shows like Twilight Zone, Bewitched, and Battlestar Galactica and films such as A Bug's Life and Toy Story 2. But it was as the cowardly, flamboyant, but always lovable Dr. Zachary Smith that Harris will forever be remembered.

Harris was the son of Russian-Jewish immigrants. (His original name was Jonathan Charasuchin.)

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Reminder: Annual LSF Book Exchange Scheduled for January 12th Meeting

That's right, gang, the Holiday Season is almost upon us again; and it's time for a short reminder about Lambda Sci-Fi's upcoming thir teenth annual book exchange, which will occur at the January 12th meeting! All LSF members are invited to participate in this "blind book exchange" -- and visitors are invited to join in the fun, too!

Briefly, this will be an opportunity for LSFers to exchange copies of their favorite science-fiction, fantasy, or horror books/videos/etc. and, thus, get to know each other a little better. For those of you unfamiliar with the process, here's how it works: You won't be assigned to exchange books with any particular person - it's a "blind" exchange, where participants will get their pick from a pile of anonymous wrapped packages. There will be full details on the exchange in the next (January) LSF newsletter.

Next LSF Meeting - Dec. 8th -

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. $\Lambda \Psi \Phi$

The next Lambda Sci-Fi meeting will be held at James Crutchfield's apartment (1414 17th St., NW, #413) on Sunday, December 8th. The business meeting will begin at 1:30 PM; and the social meeting will begin at 2:00 PM. Please bring some munchies or soft drinks, if you can. See you there!

Remember: Officer elections will be held at this meeting. (For details, see November meeting minutes on page 2 of this newsletter.) Absentee ballots (either by mail or by e-mail) must be sent to the Speaker before the meeting begins.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

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ΛΨΦ

Minutes of the Nov. 10th LSF Meeting

reported by Scott

As announced, the floor was opened for **nominations for LSF Officers**. Carl (our current Speaker) reported that no nominations had been e-mailed in from non-attendees. The following individuals were nominated for office at the meeting: Speaker: Michael C.; Treasurer: Rob; Membership Coordinator: Peter; Secretary: Scott R.

Officer elections will be held at the December 2002 meeting. [Ed. note: Non-attendees are reminded that they can mail ore-mail their votes in to the Speaker. To be counted, votes must be received by the Speaker prior to the Dec. 8th meeting.]

The **Treasurer reported** that all outstanding bills have been paid. The current LSF bank balance is \$2050.61.

Carl reminded everyone that hewill be hosting a **GLBT party at the Darkover** convention on Saturday, November 30, 2002. LSF members are invited to attend, even if they are not attending the con.

Carl also related a discouraging tale about a problem with the Fairmont Hotel in San Jose, the "party" hotel at WorldCon this past Labor Day weekend. It appears shortly after the con, the Fairmont charged an additional "room damage" charge onto the credit cards of many con attendees who had paid via credit card. [Ed. note: A "con" within a con, as it were!] A number of con attendees (including Carl) complained to the hotel (and some even lodged Better Business Bureau complaints); and the additional charges were eventually reversed. Carl reported that, with this controversy finally resolved, he should now be able to provide a final accounting of all donations, expenses, etc. (with the excess to be forwarded toward the Gaylactic Networksponsored GLBT room party at next year's Worldcon in Toronto).

During the social portion of the meeting, a number of upcoming LSFE vents were announced, starting with: The new

Jonathan Harris

As a young boy in the Bronx, he realized his love of acting and began self-imposed and self-taught training to rid himself of his New York accent and dialect. At the age of 18, he legally changed his name to Jonathan Harris; but, afraid of his parents' dis-approval, he did not alert them of his desire to perform.

Throughout the 1950s, Harris guest-starred in dozens of television productions, including Lights Out, Studio One, Kraft Television Theater and Zorro (opposite Guy Williams), to name just a few. It was his role as the imperious hotel manager on the shortlived sit-com The Bill Dana Show (coupled with his growing reputation for a no-nonsense always-on-time professional) that brought Harris to the attention of producer Irwin Allen, who in 1965 was scouting around for the perfect actor to play the nefarious saboteur, Dr. Zachary Smith in Lost in Space. After briefly considering other actors like Caroll O'Connor and Eddie Albert for the part, Allen chose Harris, who, within weeks of the show's premiere in September 1965, had all but stolen the show from co-stars Guy Williams, June Lockhart, Marta Kristen and Mark Goddard. With the aid of a bubble-headed robot (called "Robot") and child actors Angela Cartwright and Billy Mumy, Harris added new

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dimensions to the Smith character, making him more lovable and childlike in a way that endeared him to fans, but often infuriated his fellow actors. He would often rewrite his own dialogue and gave numerous suggestions to Allen and the Lost in Space creative Harris's scene-stealing was team. rewarded by the consistently high ratings the series achieved during its three-year run, and during its continued popularity for nearly four decades in syndication and on cable. Rather than hiding from his small-screen alter ego, Harris loved the character he had created and wore it proudly throughout the balance of his career.

Although virtually retired from the screen in his later years, Harris delighted in performing voice over roles in dozens of animated children's cartoons for television (Problem Child, Freakazoid!, etc.) and was a featured contributor to the Walt Disney Productions/Pixar Studios-produced feature films, A Bug's Life (as "Manny the Praying Mantis") and Toy Story 2 (as "The Fixer"). At the time of his death, Harris was preparing for his return to television as Dr. Smith in the upcoming NBC television movie, Lost in Space: The Journey Home, to be produced by Fox Television Studios and Synthesis Entertainment.

ΑΨΦ

Harry Potter movie! Rob is coordinating another LSF movie outing to see the new Harry Potter movie (Sunday, Nov. 17, 4:15 PM showing, Uptown Theater). People interested in attending are strongly encouraged to order tickets ahead of time at www.fandango.com etc. As a reminder, the November/December LSF book discussion meetings have been combined for Dec. 5, 2002. The selected book is Ghost Sister by Liz Williams.

There may be a traditional LSF New Year's Eve party at Julian's new residence. Stay tuned for details.

A brief discussion was held regarding LSF's participation as a community partner for the **Reel Affirmations**

Film Festival this year. Many LSF members attended the showing of the sponsored film *Don't Ask, Don't Tell*; and the universal response to this movie was pretty much "Don't ask; don't tell; don't go see it!" (Nyuk yuk!)

Peter encouraged attendees to purchase **the new LSF polo shirt**. He discussed the project, passed around copies of the order form (which included a depiction of the logo design), and reminded everyone that the **deadline for orders is November 15th**.

Rob reminded everyone that **the first 12 years of LSF newsletters** — April 1990 through March 2002 – are available

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The House of the Scorpion by Nancy Farmer (Atheneum Books, 2002)

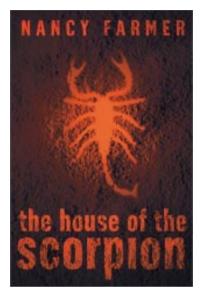
a short review by Carl Cipra

Nancy Farmer writes YA (young adult) F&SF novels. Well, the blurbs and reviews describe them as "YA" fare; but I don't know that I fully agree. I'm just not sure how "young" an adult you'd want to turn loose on the two Farmer novels I've read. Don't get me wrong -- her books are *good*; it's just that they might be a little gritty for the run-of-the-mill *Harry Potter* fan!

Back when I was doing background reading/research to prepare for moderating the LSF book discussion of Dark Matter, I finally decided to pull Farmer's The Ear, the Eye and the Arm (her second novel, 1994) off the shelf and read it. That novel, winner of the Newbery Honor Award, is set in Zimbabwe in the late 22nd Century. I'd call it an "F&SF novel" because it's basically SF with a few supernatural elements added in (sort'a like Keith Hartman's The Gumshoe, the Witch, and the Virtual Corpse). At any rate, besides telling a rousing good adventure yarn about a young brother and sister, it also manages to deal quite effectively with such themes as mutations, being different, the harsh inequities of the rich/poor class structure, pollution, kidnapping, terrorism, sexism, and disease. Quite a heady combination, isn't it? And not the sort of thing I'd expect to find in a YA novel. (I mean, we're not exactly talking about Nancy Drew Meets the Hardy Boys here!)

Farmer's latest book, *The House of the Scorpion*, goes beyond *that*!

Once again, the action is set in "the Third World" some time in the next century; but this time it's in North America rather than Africa -- specifically in a little country known as Opium, which lies between the United States and Aztlan (formerly Mexico). Opium is an



officially-recognized enclave ruled by a small cartel of powerful and ruthless drug lords. Their principal cash crop consists of thousands of acres of white opium poppies, and their sole export is (as the country's name implies) processed opium. All field work in Opium (indeed, menial work of almost any kind) is performed by *eejits*, human serfs/ slaves whose docility is guaranteed by embedded computer chips.

The most powerful of Opium's drug lords is Matteo Alacran, aka El Patron. (Alacran is Spanish for "scor-Alacran's influence is felt pion.") wordwide (including, as he does, at least one U.S. Senator on his payroll); and he's been at his trade for a very long time indeed. You see, Matteo Alacran is 140 years old; his longevity is based upon implants from a series of clones grown from cells harvested when he was a young man. The clones' intelligence is routinely destroyed at "birth" -- except for one, the latest. Enter the novel's young hero: Matteo Alacran, the Clone, aka Matt. aka Mi Vida. For some unknown reason, El Patron has ordered Matt to be spared; and Matt is raised inside the Alacran compound itself, almost like a human pet. The rest of the Alacran family (El Patron's surviving son, grandson and wife, and greatgrandson) are scandalized; and Matt is whipsawed between periods of being pampered and educated by El Patron and (in the absence of El Patron -- or when his mental capacity suffers the occasional downturn) periods of imprisonment and mistreatment by the rest of the family. (Matt's relationship with his "cousin" Tom has definite parallels with Harry Potter's relationship with Draco Malfoy.) No one seems to know why El Patron has ordered such exceptional treatment for Matt. When Matt turns 14, however, El Patron's health goes into a definite decline; and it becomes obvious even to Matt that he'll probably never live to see his 15th year. After all, El Patron always gets what he wants; and no one ever escapes from Opium!

See what I mean? Cloning, drug trafficking, technology-enhanced slavery, organized crime and government corruption, body-harvesting -- pretty strong stuff! I can't help but marvel at reviews that cite this novel's target audience as "ages 12 and older" or "ages 11-14"! Back when I was that age, I seem to remember reading Heinlein's Citizen of the Galaxy, Robert E. Howard's Tales of Conan, and Tanar of Pellucidar by Edgar Rice Burroughs! (OK, the world has changed since then, but still...) You know, maybe what I really object to is the fact that labeling The House of the Scorpion as "YA literature" will rob it of the wider audience it so richly deserves. Make no mistake about it: this is a good book! It's well-written science fiction: it contains characters you can care about (even some of the "bad guys"); and it gives you plenty of food for thought. My recommendation is that you should definitely add The House of the Scorpion to your reading list. The Ear, the Eye and the Arm is good -- but The House of the Scorpion is definitely better. I wonder what Nancy Farmer's next novel will be like? ΛΨΦ



As Seen in *TV Guide* passed along by Carl



[from "Roush Rant", 09/28/02]

Does cable's Sci Fi Channel not understand its core audience - a group known for putting the fan in fanatic? Some of these people still haven't forgiven NBC for canceling the first Star Trek, in 1969. How does Sci Fi expect such ardent souls to react after it gave the fantastically entertaining Farscape the boot before it could film a promised fifth season? (The remainder of the fourth season resumes in January.) Yes, the show is expensive – it certainly looks it - but even if the ratings were flat, Farscape gave the network credibility, acclaim and prestige. Without it, Sci Fi is just another green-cheese merchant.

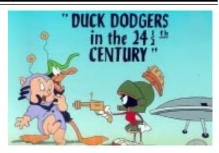
[from "Insider", 11/09/02] "Homer Run!" by Jason Cohen



Looks like Homer Simpson may get to be the Isotopes' mascot after all. Last year, Springfield's hungriest baseball fan kept his beloved Isotopes from

relocating to Albuquerque. The show's writers didn't pick Albuquerque because it sounds funny – the New Mexico city really had been looking for a team. Now it has one that will soon be called the Isotopes.

It came about after a local newspaper conducted a poll to name the minor league team. When 57 percent of approximately 115,000 voters favored the Isotopes, team president Ken Young was sold on the idea. Now the team is in talks with Fox about a partnership. "If we can market it with *The Simpsons*, that'd be great. But if not, it's still a name that's appropos to the area," Young says of New Mexico's atomic research history. So bring on Dancin' Homer!



"Duck Redux" by Michael Davis

What's the big idea? Looney Tunes at the Movies. Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck and Road Runner are headed back to where their careers began: the movies. From the 1930s through the early 1960s, Looney Tunes shorts were a moviegoing staple. Now 12 new cartoons are in production and a few may reach theaters as soon as Christmas.

"The shorts are aimed at adults, but they try to be child-friendly," says producer Larry Doyle, a *Simpsons* veteran who is overseeing the multimillion-dollar commitment to restore the Looney Tunes interlude as part of the cinema experience. Warner Bros. is hoping to show the kid-aimed cartoons before such major releases as its *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, while the edgier shorts will warm up audiences for adult-oriented features.

An exclusive peek at one of the new cartoons reveals that Warner Bros. aims to recapture the pace, pungency and anarchic spirit pioneered by Chuck Jones *et al.* "Attack of the Drones" is six minutes of mayhem that ruthlessly parodies the George Lucas empire and blockbuster-effects movies. (In this vision of Hollywood, an Oscar-like award is given for Best Performance by a Special Effect.)

And Duck Dodgers... is coming back. In this appearance, Dodgers uses a photocopier to clone himself. Other shorts in production include: "Daffy Saves Christmas," a dark take on Santa Claus, who runs an oppressive North Pole sweat-shop where signs warn LESS NOISE, MORE TOYS; and the tentatively titled "Reaper Madness," a twisted Tweety and Sylvester tale in which Granny is stalked by the grim reaper.

Yep. Turns out, that's *not* all folks. $\Lambda \Psi \Phi$



November Minutes

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on a CD in PDF. The CD's are \$10 each. It was noted that a copy of the CD was provided gratis to the Rainbow History Project.

Book news: Liz Williams is releasing her third book, Poison Master. Ellen Kushner's and Delia Sherman's The Fall of the Kings has just come out (set in the same universe as Swordspoint). Harry Turtledove's alternative history, Ruled Britannia, has been released. (Plot summary: The Spanish Armada conquered England. Ten years later, William Shakespeare is caught in a web of intrigue when he is asked to write two plays, one commemorating the life of Spain's King Phillip and the other to rouse English feeling against the country's occupiers.) Walter Mosley's Futureland (a series of nine inter-connected stories) has recently been released in paperback format. Carl recently purchased a new "urban horror" novel by Perry Brass and reported that it looks like he might actually enjoy it. (Watch for details.)

Movie and TV news: Movies coming out soon: Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers, Star Trek: Nemesis, Die Another Day (James Bond), and Disney's Treasure Planet (an animated adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's Treasure Island). Both Spirited Away and The Ring were highly recommended. The first season of Babylon 5 is now out on DVD. The first season of Farscape is now available on DVD as a boxed set. The Russian superhero Colossus may appear in the nextX-Men movie. (The actor stands 6'8" tall.) Arne commented that he wondered how the movie adaptation of Arthur C. Clark's Childhood's End will be received. The Sci Fi Channel is heavily promoting its 20-hour Spielberg series Taken. Unauthorized sequels to the Harry Potter movies have been coming out in China.

Assorted items: Jonathan Harris, the actor who played "Dr. Smith" on Lost in Space, recently passed away. Also, author and scientist Charles Sheffield has

(continued on page 5)



Dr. Who: Warsmith from e-mail sent to the LSF website & forwarded by Kendall

[Kendall's comment: I know we have at least one Doctor Who fan, but the UK might be a bit far to travel for this....;-)]

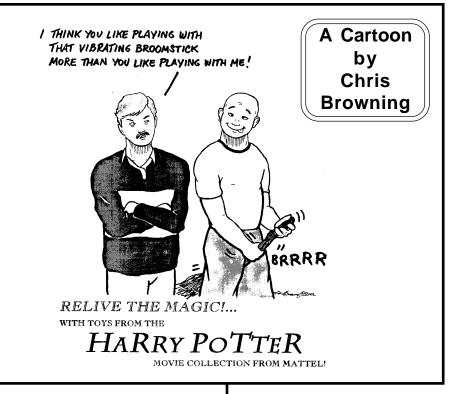
The Battered Suitcase Theatre Company (www.batteredsuitcase.co.uk) proudly presents *Doctor Who: Warsmith*, a thrilling new Doctor Who stage adventure from the writer/director of *Hellblossom* and *Vox Dei* (November 6th to 9th, 2002, at the New Theatre Royal, Portsmouth).

They come in the night, dark and faceless, and vanish in a flash of light, taking with them England's brightest and best. Summoned to the war-torn Earth of 1943 by the daughter of a previous companion, can the enigmatic time-traveller known only as the Doctor (Mike O'Doherty) solve the mysterious abduction of scientists from the Top Secret research facility at Bletchley Park? What is happening? What is the strange connection with the Doctor's

current companion, the exiled Prince Karnak (Gavin Sheffield, reprising the role form both *Hellblossom* and *Vox Dei*)? Can the Doctor prevent an evil from beyond the stars from perverting the course of Earth's history forever as he races to save two worlds from annihilation?

Featuring dazzling video effects sequences, stereo sound and with an originally composed score, the Doctor returns to the New Theatre Royal in an enthralling new adventure you simply cannot afford to miss!

"My (non-fan) companion enjoyed the evening as much as I did, simply because *Vox Dei* was a great evening's entertainment. On the basis of



Editorial Faux Pas

Whoops! In my book review in last month's newsletter ("Puritans in the New World: F&SF-Style"), I erroneously stated that The Crucible was written by playwrightWalterMiller. Got my Miller's mixed up there! The Crucible was, of course written by Arthur Miller. (Walter Miller, Jr. was the author of the classic SF novel A Canticle for Leibowitz.) By way of explanation: at the time, I was reading Better to Have Loved, the new biography/ autobiography of SF author Judith Merril, and I was in the middle of reading the chapter about Merril's affair with Walter Miller. I guess Walter's name just got stuck in my mind. ΑΨΦ

November Minutes

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recently passed away.

A guest at the meeting announced the **opening of** *Washington Interns Gone Rad*. The LIRL is:

terns Gone Bad. The URL is:

www.washingtoninternsgonebad.com

Finally, in the *X-Men* comics, Professor Xavier has invited gay superhero Northstar to join the Academy to help with some of the students. Perhaps Professor Xavier has identified some young superheroes-to-be who are coming out...?

Th-th-th-that's all, Folks!

ΛΨΦ



Vox Dei, I'd certainly recommend that you try and catch Warsmith." (Doctor Who Magazine, July 2002)

Warsmith is an unofficial production by kind permission of the BBC. All profits will be donated to the Stubbington Ark:

www.stubbingtonark.org.uk

ΛΨΦ

Develop an interest in life as you see it; the people, things, literature, music — the world is so rich, simply throbbing with rich treasures, beautiful souls and interesting people. Forget yourself.

Henry Miller

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, December 8th**, 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

Z/M/Z

by Carl, Mike C., Peter, and Rob

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**KATSUCONNINE**. 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

Sept. 2-6, 2004 NOREASCON 4 (The 62nd World Science Fiction Convention). Hynes Convention Center & surrounding hotels (Boston, Mass.). Pro GoHs: Terry Pratchett & William Tenn. Attending membership: as of 8/1/02, \$140 for attending adults; will go up! (membership form on-line; registration also available on-line). Make checks payable to "Noreascon 4" and send to: Noreascon Four/MCFI, PO Box 1010, Framingham, MA 01701-1010.

For general questions: info@mcfi.org Website: www.noreascon.org

