

PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044 - (202) 232-3141 - Issue #167 - Feb. 2004

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



Bob Keeshan
1927 - 2004

I'm sure many of us have fond memories of him – in his guise of Captain Kangaroo – leading us on daily forays into a quasi-fantasy world where Bunny Rabbit and Mr. Moose were as real for us as the Captain and good old Mr. Greenjeans.

He did this for a very long time, too – leading generations of children into adulthood. Keeshan portrayed Captain Kangaroo on CBS from 1955 until 1985; and the show was reincarnated on PBS for six more years in the 1990's. For those of you old enough to remember, Keeshan portrayed yet another well-beloved TV character on an even earlier show – it was Keeshan under all that make-up, from 1947 to 1953, as the mute, horn-honking Clarabell the Clown on *The Howdy Doody Show*.

It is around such characters that dreams, as well as fond memories, gather. Thank you, Mr. Keeshan.

**Next LSF Meeting
- Feb. 8th -
NOTE: Location Change!!**

Due to a scheduling conflict, the February 8th LSF meeting will be moved to Peter and Rob's house: 1425 "S" St. NW. (For directions or more details, call 202-483-6369.)

The business meeting will begin at the usual time - 1:30 PM; and the social meeting will begin at 2:00 PM.

Please bring some munchies or soft drinks, if you can.

Also, since the April meeting falls on Easter (April 11th) and many LSFers will be in San Diego at Gaylaxicon, Peter says he is going to propose that we move the date of the April meeting to another weekend. If you're not going to be at the February meeting, but want to give Peter feedback on his proposal, proposal, he invites you contact him privately.

See you at the Feb. 8th meeting!

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April 8 - 11!!!

**Don't miss out on all the fun!!!
For more details, see the
Con Calendar on page 6,
or check out:
www.gaylaxicon.org/2004**

**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. The next meeting will be held on February 26th.

REMINDER: Now that renovations at Rob & Peter's house have been completed (Hooray!), the LSF Book Discussion Group is once again being held there: 1425 "S" St., NW -- for directions or more details, call 202-483-6369).

Here's the schedule for the next several months:

- **Feb. 26th** - *Women Writing Science Fiction as Men*, edited by Mike Resnick; moderator: Carl.
- **March 25th** - *Across the Nightingale Floor* by Lian Hearn; moderator: Greg.
- **April 22nd** - *Solitaire* by Kelley Eskridge; moderator: Krista.
- **May 20th** (NOTE: date change to 3rd Thursday, due to Memorial Day Weekend) - *Perdido Street Station* by China Mieville; moderator: Michael M.

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WHAT'S INSIDE? An LSF First! LSF at the Opera!! (pg. 2); LSF Meeting Minutes for January 11, 2004 (pg. 2); *A Shortcut in Time* (book review - pg. 3); A Cartoon by Chris Browning (pg. 3); *The Breed* (video review - pg. 4); Dr. Willis McNelly (obituary - pg. 5); Worldcons To Come (pg. 5); About Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians & Con Calendar (pg. 6)

An LSF First!
LSF at the Opera!!
from Mike C.

And now, for something completely different...

Join some LSFer's as we go to the opera!

The Maryland Opera Studio will be putting on a full production of Offenbach's immortal opera *Tales of Hoffman* (*Les Contes d'Hoffman*), at the Clarice Smith Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Maryland. *Tales of Hoffman* is based on three stories by the 19th century fantasy author E.T.A. Hoffmann, and involves such genre content as robots, ghosts, and a woman who steals souls.

The Maryland Opera Studio is the University of Maryland's program for students seeking a Master's in Opera Performance. Their productions are low-priced but are popular for the chance to see emerging talent in professional-quality productions.

So, on with the details:

WHEN:

Saturday, May 1st, 2004, 7:30pm (far in advance, I know, but it's good to get tickets early).

WHERE:

Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, University Blvd and Stadium Drive, College Park, MD. (A shuttle runs from the College Park Metro station.)

HOW MUCH:

Tickets are \$20 each (a bargain for the opera!), and can be ordered by calling 301-405-ARTS or by visiting the center's box office in person.

The opera will be sung in French, with English surtitles. The Clarice Smith Center is casual, so you can leave your tuxedos and tiaras at home.

More info can be had at:

<http://www.claricesmithcenter.umd.edu>

Information about the Maryland Opera Studio can be found at:

<http://www.music.umd.edu/mos/>

If you're going to go, please let



me know by emailing me at:

Stenbock@aol.com

As we get closer to the date, I can organize a possible dinner before or after the performance.

Biographical note: Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann (1776-1822) was a German writer and composer who wrote several operas himself, including the successful *Undine*. He's known best these days as the author of a series of eerie and fantastic stories which he began to publish in 1814 until his death. Some of his most famous stories include the novel *The Devil's Elixir*, and the short stories "The Golden Pot," "The Sandman," "Mademoiselle de Scudery," "The Mines of Falun," "Automata," and "The King's Betrothed." His stories ranged from dark gothic horror to lighthearted fairy tales, and often were quite humorous. One story, "The Nutcracker and the Mouse King," inspired Tchaikovsky's enormously popular ballet *The Nutcracker*. Another ballet, *Coppelia*, is based on a Hoffmann story. His works influenced Poe and many other authors, although as an author he is somewhat neglected today. PDF versions of some of his stories can be found at:

<http://www.blackmask.com>

and at:

<http://www.horrormasters.com>

Synopses of Offenbach's opera can be found in many opera guidebooks in bookstores and your local library.

**LSF Meeting Minutes for
January 11, 2004**

minutes taken by Scott
(Scott's memory lapses filled in
by Carl & others)

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First came the Business Meeting. **Gaylaxicon 2004** will be held just a few months from now (April) in San Diego, CA. Many LSF members will be attending.

Rob advised that **LSF now accepts Pay Pal** for payment of membership dues.

Then came the Social Meeting.

Movie comments: *Bubba Ho-Tep*—Bruce Campbell is a hoot. The film is great as a comedy, yet poor as a genre film. *Peter Pan* has definite sensual undertones. The previews for *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow* look impressive. Should be a fun movie! The previews for *Lost Skeleton of Cadaver* look good. *The Devil's Backbone*, an eerie, moody Spanish film, should be available on video in America soon.

Other Meeting Banter: Carl reports that the new American Library Association catalog now offers posters and bookmarks of Orlando Bloom (Legolas, from the *Lord of the Rings* movies)—he's thinking of buying some to use as freebies at the LSF Pride Day table this year. Carl also noted that there is a "Theme Park of the Gods" in the Swiss Alps, which is an "inspired extension of the Von Daniken brand." How painful. [Ye Olde Ed. Note: Actually, I don't remember using the word "inspired."]

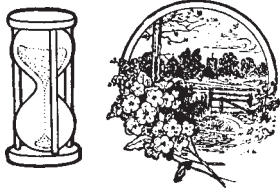
Michael C. enthusiastically promoted an **upcoming LSF outing** (May) to view the genre-related opera *Tales of Hoffman* (in French with English surtitles, based on the works of E.T.A. Hoffmann). Looks like an interesting, unique LSF outing! (For more details, see article on this page.)

A *Lord of the Rings* fan commented that Cassie Clair, author of "**The Secret Diaries**," has indicated that she will no longer be producing any more entries for the diaries.

(continued on page 4)

A Shortcut in Time
by Charles Dickinson

(Tor, 2003)
a review by Colleen R. Cahill



Time travel is the stuff of science fiction. Much of this genre has an engine that propels one back or forward in time to witness or change events. Charles Dickinson has taken a different tack in his latest fantasy *A Shortcut in Time*. When time travel is accidental, the issues and problems for those who make the journey are not the same as those who use a machine.

Josh Winkler is a struggling artist in Euclid Heights, Illinois, who has a fairly good life. While artistic success evades him, he has a solid marriage to Flo, a local doctor who supports both her husband and their daughter, Penny. Josh and Flo grew up in Euclid Heights and are tied not just by marriage, but by an event in their childhood: both their brothers were caught in an attack that killed Flo's brother and left Josh's brother severely brain damaged. The Winklers are normal people, but with a twist in their past. This is much like the town, which has angled walking paths that are relics from the town's first mayor. One stormy night, Josh discovers that if the right combination of emotion, weather, and direction come together on these paths, he can travel back in time. Granted, his first trip is only fifteen minutes, but this only accentuates his oddness when the word leaks out to the town. And, being a small town, everyone knows. More complications arise with the appearance of a young girl who tells Josh she is from 1908.

A Shortcut in Time is a work with lots of atmosphere. Dickinson captures the essence of a small town and combines it with a feeling that you get in some *Twilight Zone* episodes. Under the veneer of normalcy is the feeling that something is not quite as it should be.

A CARTOON BY CHRIS BROWNING



“Whoa, I guess you could say this is the best of both worlds....”

Josh comes to hate his discovery because of its cost in human anguish — not just for the young woman from the past, but for his own daughter, who goes back to the influenza epidemic of 1918 and refuses to leave. The price of moving through time and the effects of changing events and people's paths give this book an eerie and unpredictable ending.

Many will find this book hard to pigeon-hole. While it has time travel as an element, some would find it closer to a mainstream novel, with its emphasis on characters and their relationship to each other. Josh never tries to find out how or why the shortcuts allow people to travel in time; he is too busy just trying to keep his life together. This book reminds me of the works of Jonathan Lethem, as both authors set their plots in our world with elements of the unusual. Dickinson is also a writer who is a wordsmith, crafting language to create a flow that adds to the feeling within this good read.

This work has been a sleeper. It is worth seeking out; and, for those on a budget, the trade paperback will be released in January. If you want a fantasy that has atmosphere, entertainment, and reality with an edge, try *A Shortcut in Time*.

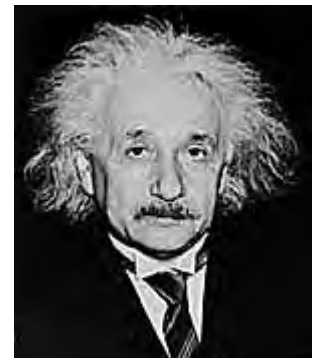
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July 1-4, 2005

It's only a little more than a year away! Don't miss out on all the fun!!!



For more details, see the Con Calendar on page 6, or check out: www.gaylaxicon.org/2005



I've never committed my phone number to memory. I'm saving that storage space for more important information. Besides, it's in my phone book.

— Albert Einstein —

The Breed
video review by
James R. Crutchfield

The Breed, which stars former “Highlander” Adrian Paul, could be described as a case of “out of the caskets and into the streets,” as we see vampires and humans trying to co-exist in a parallel world. It was so simple in the old days — we knew that all vampires were dangerous killers and to be avoided at all cost. However, in recent years, things have changed — some books, TV shows, and movies feature vampires who have renounced their past ways and started coming out to a few friends, or to the world at large, and trying to live in the human world. This video has a dark, cold feel to it; and some of the vampires bring to mind the image of *Nosferatu* and *Shadow of the Vampire*.

The basic plot has vampire-cop Adrian Paul working with an FBI agent (who is not happy about it) to track down



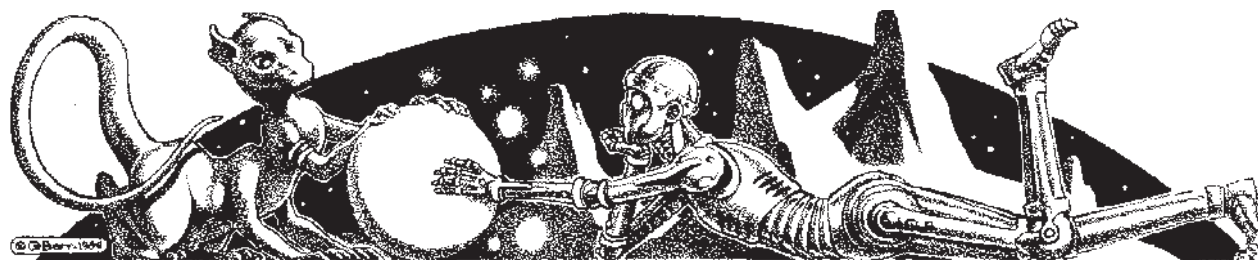
a renegade vampire and try to stop additional killings. It is a world where vampires have come out to the government, and the government is working on how to bring them out into the general human world. The plot is complicated, and it keeps you guessing as to who are the good vampires and humans and who are the bad vampires and humans. There are vampires who do not trust the government; they want to take steps

against humans to protect themselves. Another group of vampires is not comfortable with coming out; they want to leave the country and go somewhere else, where they can go back to their more closeted lifestyle.

It is some of the actions of this second group of vampires that result in one of the most dramatic, emotional scenes in the movie. There are scenes that bring the Nazis to mind, and others that remind you of the world of Big Brother.

The Breed could best be described as a “B” movie — and a good reason for Adrian Paul to quickly get back into TV. There is the feeling that the writers and director had good intentions but got lost in the making of the movie. Still, there were those scenes that left me with a haunted feeling and cause me to encourage others to see the movie — even if they fast-forward through some of it.

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LSF Meeting Minutes
continued from page 2

Rob reminded everyone about the **upcoming LSF book discussions**: Chris Moriarty’s *Spin State* (January); *Women Who Write Science Fiction As Men*, edited by Mike Resnick (February); and *Across the Nightingale Floor* by Liam Hearn (March).

Then came the annual **LSF Blind Book Exchange**. Everyone at the meeting got to participate in this year’s blind book exchange — especially since James contributed a couple of extra prezzies to the pile so that a couple of newcomers could join in. Here is a list of who got what from whom:

— Arne received four Anne McCaffrey books from James C.

— Peter received A. Merritt’s *The Face in the Abyss* and a Supernatural Omnibus (introduction by Montague Summers) from Mike C.

— Mike P. received George R.R. Martin’s *A Game of Thrones* from Barrett.

— Julian got Karl Edward Wagner’s *Gods in Darkness* (a collection of “Kane” stories) from Carl.

— Krista received Salman Rushdie’s *Haroun: A Series of Short Stories* from Randy.

— Ron got Lisa Goldstein’s *Labyrinths* and Nicola Griffith’s *Slow River* from Krista.

— Rob got *Yuletide’s Universe* (a collection of SF Christmas stories) from James C.

— Michael C. received David Webber’s *Echoes of Honor* from Tim.

— Will got a *Lord of the Rings* soundtrack from Michael M.

— Randy received *Colony Fleet* by Susan Matthews from Jim C.

— Tim received Thorne Smith’s *Topper* from Ron.

— Scott got *Defender* by C.J. Cherryh from Julian.

— Carl received a DVD of the film *The Breed* from James C.

— Barrett received James Morrow’s *Only Begotten Daughter* from Scott.

— Michael M. also received George R.R. Martin’s *A Game of Thrones*, this one from Mike P.

(We all got a chuckle about the two copies of *A Game of Thrones* presented as gifts today!)

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Dr. Willis McNelly
(1921 - 2003)

In the most recent edition of *Titan* magazine (an alumnus pub from my alma mater, Cal State Fullerton) I learned that one of my college professors, Dr. Willis McNelly, had passed away last April. Why announce this here? Well, Dr. McNelly wasn't just a professor of English and a internationally-recognized authority on the works of Geoffrey Chaucer and William Shakespeare — he also conducted a well-respected seminar-style course in Science Fiction! OK, I'm quite certain his passing hasn't caused "a major disturbance in the Force" — he wasn't one of the late great Giants of the genre. He was, however, well-connected in the science fiction community. Through his close friendships with various SF authors — Frank Herbert, Ray Bradbury, Harry Harrison, Isaac Asimov, Harlan Ellison, Philip K. Dick, James Blish, Robert Heinlein, and others — Dr. McNelly orchestrated the creation of Cal State Fullerton's incredible science fiction collection. (For some decades now, the SF Section of the Special Collections Library at Cal State Fullerton has been a West Coast depository for SFWA.) He and Dr. Jane Hippolito (another Cal State Fullerton English prof) co-edited *Mars, We Love You*, an anthology of science fiction short stories about the Red Planet; and

McNelly was the editor of the successful (and much-sought-after) *Dune Encyclopedia*. Dr. McNelly is also widely credited as being responsible for bringing works of speculative fiction into academic recognition in the classroom.

On a more personal level, I found Dr. McNelly to be a great teacher. It was in his class that I was exposed to such wonderful works as Alfred Bester's *The Demolished Man* and Ursula K. LeGuin's *Left Hand of Darkness*. (At the opening session, he asked: "How many of you have read *1984* or *The War of the Worlds* or *Brave New World*?" Lots of hands went up. "See?" he said. "That's why we're *not* going to read those books in this class.") Instead of term papers and such, he had us write journals about our thoughts on the various science fiction works we'd be reading that semester — both the required "core" works and any other F&SF works we happened to choose to read. (And, as I discovered, he wasn't above sharing student journal entries with the authors. Imagine getting a short "thank you" note from an author whose work you'd commented on!) He also surprised the heck out of us all when he unexpectedly brought Frank Herbert and Harry Harrison to class one day to talk to us about their works and the science fiction genre. (That's when I learned — from Herbert's own mouth — the scandalous origin of Princess Irulan's name. Hint: it's an anagram.)

Yes, I'd been hooked on F&SF long before I attended that seminar; but Dr. Willis McNelly led me to a deeper appreciation of the genre and introduced me to works and authors I might not have otherwise read. He was a good man and a good teacher.

--- Carl Cipra

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In the case of good books, the point is not to see how many of them you can get through, but rather how many can get through to you.

-- Mortimer Jerome Adler --

[quote taken from *The Most Brilliant Thoughts of All Time (In Two Lines or Less)*, edited by John M. Shanahan (Cliff Street Books, 1999)]

Worldcons To Come



Sept. 2-6, 2004

NOREASCON 4 (62nd World Science Fiction Convention), Hynes Convention Center, Sheraton Marriott Hotel, Marriott Hotel Copley Place (Boston, MA). Pro Guests of Honor: Terry Pratchett, William Tenn. Membership: \$180 thru 7/1/04 (will go UP!). Make checks payable to "Noreascon 4" and send to: Noreascon 4, PO Box 1010, Framingham, MA 01701

Website: www.noreascon.org

Info: info@noreascon.org



Scottish Exhibition and Conference Center, Glasgow Moat House, City Inn Glasgow, Quality (Central) Hotel (Glasgow, Scotland, UK). Guests of Honor: Greg Pickersgill, Christopher Priest, Robert Sheckley, Jane Yolen. Membership: US \$155 (as of 12/1/03 - will go up!). Make checks payable to "Interaction" and send to: Interaction, PO Box 58009, Louisville, KY 40268-0009

Website:

www.interaction.worldcon.org.uk

Info:

info@interaction.worldcon.org.uk



Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim Hilton, Anaheim Marriott (Anaheim, CA). Author Guest of Honor: Connie Willis; Artist Guest of Honor: James Gurney; Fan Guest of Honor: Howard DeVore; Special Guest: Frankie Thomas ("Tom Corbett, Space Cadet"). Membership: \$125 thru 9/12/04 (will go UP after that!). Make checks payable to "L.A.CONIV" and send to: L.A.CONIV, PO Box 8442, Van Nuys, CA 91409-8442
Website: WWW.LACONIV.ORG
Info at: INFO@LACONIV.ORG

**** 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 \$10, for which you will receive an e-mailed this monthly newsletter and a membership directory. (Hard copies of the newsletter cost an additional \$15 per year.) 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, February 8th**, at Peter & Rob's home: 1425 "S" St. NW (between the DuPont Circle and "U" St./Cardozo Metro stations) - 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, Peter, and Rob



April 8 - 11, 2004 **GAYLAXICON 2004 - SANDIEGO**. The annual national GLBT science-fiction/fantasy/horror/comics/gaming convention. Red Lion Hanalei Hotel (San Diego, CA). Author Guest of Honor: David Gerrold; Artist Guest of Honor: Joe Phillips. Membership: \$50 until 2/29/2004; and \$60 at the door. Make checks payable to "Gaylaxicon 2004 - San Diego" and send to: Gaylaxicon 2004 - San Diego, 1010 University Ave., PMB #946, San Diego, CA, 92103-3395. Membership forms available on-line.

Information at: www.gaylaxicon.org/2004

E-mail: Gaylaxicon2004@aol.com

May 28-31, 2004 **BALTICON 38**. Wyndham Baltimore Inner Harbor (Baltimore). Guest of Honor: Lois McMaster Bujold; Artist Guest of Honor: David Seeley; 2003 Compton Crook Award Winner: Patricia Bray. Membership: \$42 until 2/28/04; \$47 from 3/1 thru 4/30/04; \$52 thereafter & at the door. Make checks payable to "Balticon 38" and send to: Balticon 38, PO Box 686, Baltimore, MD 21203-0686

Website: www.balticon.org

E-mail: balticoninfo@balticon.org

July 9-11, 2004 **SHORE LEAVE 26**. Marriott's Hunt Valley Inn (Hunt Valley, MD). Guest include: Cirroc ("Jake Sisko") Lofton, Thom ("Hawk") Christopher, Brian ("Lt. Klag") Thompson. Membership: \$50 (higher at the door). Make checks payable to "Shore Leave" (and enclosed 2 SASE's) and send to: Shore Leave 26, PO Box 6809, Towson, MD 21285-6809

Email: information@shore-leave.com

Website: www.shore-leave.com

December 10-12, 2004 **PHILCON 2004**. Marriott City Center Philadelphia (Phila., PA). Principal Speaker: Brian Aldiss; Artist GoH: TBA; Special Guests: Kevin J. Anderson & Rebecca Moesta, Tom Purdom. Membership: \$40 "until at least 3/31/04." Make checks payable to "Philadelphia Science Fiction Society" and send to: Philcon 2004 Registration, PO Box 3, Oreland, PA 19075

Website: www.philcon.org

Email: info@philcon.org

July 1-4, 2005 **GAYLAXICON 2005**. Hyatt Regency Cambridge (Boston, MA). Membership: currently \$40 (will go up!). Make checks payable to "Gaylaxicon 2005" and send to: Gaylaxicon 2005, PO Box 1059, Boston, MA 02103. (More information as it becomes available.)

Website: www.gaylaxicon.org

Sept. 3-6, 2005 **CASCADIA CON (NASFiC 2005)**. SeaTac Airport Hilton (Seattle, WA). Author GoH: Fred Saberhagen; Artist GoH: Liz Danforth; Editor GoH: Toni Weisskopf. Membership: \$75 until 4/30/04 (will go up after that). Make checks payable to "Seattle NASFiC" and send to: Seattle NASFiC, Box 1066, Seattle, WA 98111. URL: www.CascadiaCon.org

