



LAMBDA SCI-FI

DC Area Gaylaxians

PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044 - (202) 232-3141 - Issue #191 - Feb. 2006

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



February Sci Fi Channel Friday Night TV Parties

This month LSF will once again host viewing of new episodes of Stargate SG-1, Stargate Atlantis, and Battlestar Galactica. *Please note the we will be watching in Washington, DC for the first Friday and Wheaton, MD for the last three Fridays.* Here are the details:

When: Friday nights, February 3, 10, 17, and 24.

Time: Doors open at 7:30pm and the shows starts at 8:00pm.

What To Bring: Some snacks and non-alcoholic drink to share. \$5 if you want to order pizza.

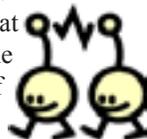
For the first Friday, February 3:

Where: The home of Peter and Rob: 1425 S Street NW, Washington, DC, in the 14th and U neighborhood, near Dupont Circle and Logan Circle.

Closest Metro Stops: U Street/African-American Civil War Memorial/Cardozo

Next LSF Meeting: Sunday, February 12

The next Lambda Sci-Fi meeting will be held at James Crutchfield's apartment (1414 17th Street, NW, #413) on Sunday, February 12. The business meeting will begin at 1:30pm; and the social meeting will begin at 2:00pm. Please bring some munchies or soft drinks, if you can. See you there!



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(Green Line) or Dupont Circle (Red Line).

Parking: Street parking is generally available, though it is harder to find the later it gets. On weekends, there are no residential parking restrictions.

Schedule:

Friday, February 3

8:00pm - SG-1 - Ethon
9:00pm - SG Atlantis - The Tower
10:00pm - BG - Scar

For more information or directions, please call Peter and Rob at: 202-483-6369 or send e-mail to Peter at:

PeterKnapp@wavelengthsonline.com
Directions can be found at:

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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 roundtable discussions of works by significant F&SF authors.

The LSF Book Discussion Group generally meets on the 4th Thursday of every month, starting at 7:00pm, at Peter & Rob's home: 1425 S Street, NW — for directions or more details, call 202-483-6369. The next meeting will be held on February 23. Here's the schedule for the next couple of meetings:

February 23 - *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, by C.S. Lewis, moderator: Peter.

March 23 - *The James Tiptree Award Anthology 1*; moderator: Carl.

April 27 - *Ruled Britannia*, by Harry Turtledove, moderator: Barrett.



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**LSF Meeting Minutes
January 8, 2006
by Scott**

Business Portion

LSF Officer Elections: There was a unanimous vote, including a set of absentee ballots, for all candidates running for office. The newly elected officers are Norman Gugliotta as Speaker, Peter Knapp as Membership Coordinator, Rob Gates as Treasurer and Scott Roberts as Secretary.

Rob offered two initiatives for consideration:

1. I propose that LSF spend, for 2006, the amounts necessary to maintain the website, the PO Box, the publishing of the newsletter, and current standard member services.

2. I propose that LSF designate up to the following amounts of money for 2006 for the specific purposes listed:

a) \$225 for a table at Pride Day. Information Only or "Sales" level to be determined by a straw poll of members present at the April meeting or who send absentee ballots prior to the April meeting.

b) \$100 towards a GLBT fandom suite at Worldcon 2006

c) \$75 towards a room party at another convention

d) These amounts are limits, rather than actual expenditures. Spending up to these amounts can be approved by a simple majority straw poll at any regular LSF monthly meeting and does not require a formal vote at a meeting with a quorum.

Both initiatives were both successfully passed.

Social Portion

Newly elected Speaker Norman opened up the social part of the meeting with a traditional name circle. It was mentioned

that the Lord of the Rings musical would be performing in Toronto this year at the same time that Gaylaxicon 2006 is underway – also in Toronto. Perhaps there could be an organized event at the con to see the musical. It was noted that Carl is entertaining the idea of LSF hosting the 2008 Gaylaxicon.

Norman asked that the meeting minutes reflect LSF's thanks to Julian for hosting a wonderful New Year's Eve video party at his Glover Park home. The recent King Kong movie outing was well attended. Michael didn't like the movie; Rob did. V for Vendetta, based upon the DC Vertigo comic, is coming out soon. About 10 people showed up this past Friday night at Peter & Rob's place for fresh episodes of Stargate and Battlestar Galactica. Barrett reminded that he needs about two week's advance notice for LSF event announcements for both the Blade and Metro Weekly.

Captain Jack gets his own spin-off series! Peter advised that the popular omnisexual character Captain Jack from the current Doctor Who series is

getting his own series called Torchwood, set in modern-day Cardiff. Also, Peter advised that DVD's of the Doctor Who Season 1 will be coming out on Valentine's Day [ed. They've been pushed back to July 4th.].



Peter passed along the current issue of Sigma, the newsletter of the Pittsburgh area Sci-Fi club called Parsec. Peter mentioned that anyone who wants to have a genre-themed event at his & Rob's home can contact them to further discuss the idea. Godzilla party anyone?

Rob made his last offer for Gaylaxicon 1999 and 2000 T-shirts. Leftover T-shirts will be donated to a local charity this week. Rob reminded about the upcoming titles for the LSF book club – for January, it's *Mysterious Skin* by Scott Heim; C.S Lewis' *Lion, Witch and the Wardrobe* for February; and the first James Tiptree award anthology for March.

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**February Sci Fi Channel
Friday Night TV Parties**

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<http://www.lambdasf.org/lmf/club/PeterRob.html>

For the last three Fridays, February 10, and 17, and 24:

Where: The home of Jonathan Manning: 10901 Amherst Ave., Apt. 121, Silver Spring, MD 20902.

Closest Metro Stop: Wheaton (Red Line). Walk East to Amherst Ave. Turn right and walk south two blocks to Wheaton Place apartments on your left.

Parking: Please park on Amherst Ave. Amherst runs North and South, parallel with Georgia Ave. in the Wheaton area.

Schedule:

Friday, February 10

8:00pm - SG-1 - Off the Grid
9:00pm - Atlantis - The Long Goodbye
10:00pm - BG - Sacrifice

Friday, February 17

8:00pm - SG-1 - The Scourge
9:00pm - Atlantis - Coup D'Etat
10:00pm - BG - The Captain's Hand

Friday, February 24

8:00pm - SG-1 - Arthur's Mantle
9:00pm - Atlantis - Michael
10:00pm - BG - Downloaded

For more information or directions, please call Jonathan at: 812-219-0449 or e-mail him at: MusicEcon@hotmail.com.

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Nathaniel Hawthorne: Haunting Tales **(Apple Classics/Scholastic Inc., 1998)**

Reviewed by Carl

If you were asked to list the earliest American F&SF authors, you'd probably come up with a list something like this: Edgar Allen Poe (1809-1949); H.P. Lovecraft (1890-1937); Edgar Rice Burroughs (1875-1950); Robert E. Howard (1906-1936). If you really thought about it, you might remember Washington Irving (1783-1859), author of such fantasy stories as "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." And, if you were paying attention to my reviews in this newsletter over the past few years, you'd know that Jack London (1876-1916) also wrote some really good F&SF stories and novels.

Ah, but would you include Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864) on your list? "Wait a minute!" you object. "Nathaniel Hawthorne? Isn't he that old New England dude who wrote *The House of the Seven Gables* and *The Scarlet Letter*? I was forced to read those in school and I know they're not F&SF!" You're absolutely right — those two novels aren't works of F&SF. But Hawthorne wrote a lot of short fiction, too, and some of it was definitely F&SF in nature. Case in point: the four stories collected in *Nathaniel Hawthorne: Haunting Tales*, a slim, little book I picked up from a used book dealer at a con last year.

First there's "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment." This story tends more toward the "fantasy" end of the F&SF spectrum. It's also exactly the sort of story you'd expect to have seen on an episode of *The Twilight Zone* or *Night Gallery*. It seems that an associate of Dr. Heidegger has sent him some water from the actual Fountain of Youth; and old Dr. Heidegger — ever the eccentric experimenter — has decided to test its effects on four decrepit old reprobates of his acquaintance. So he explains his purposes, pours out four glasses of the elixir, and sits back to watch the results. (Certainly sounds like a *Twilight Zone* story, doesn't it?)

Next there's "The Birth-mark." This one tends more toward the science fiction side of things. (Granted, some of the "science" is kind of... um... "speculative" in nature.) A young "man of science—an eminent proficient in every branch of natural philosophy" has decided that he should be able to devise a means of eliminating a slight blemish on the cheek of his otherwise perfectly beautiful young wife. A mad scientist? Well, certainly an obsessed scientist — and the extent of his obsession, as well as the results thereof, makes "The Birth-mark" seem to me like another worthy candidate for a potential *Twilight Zone* or *Night Gallery* story.

Then there's "The Artist of the Beautiful." This one is definitely a science fiction story. A very talented (and — need I add? — very obsessed) young watchmaker has dedicated his life to bridging the gap between "inanimate" and "animate" by mechanical means. Yes, this is a 19th Century "robot story," part and parcel of the automaton-craze of the 18th and 19th Centuries — although Hawthorne's story approaches the subject from an angle you probably won't expect.

I'm not certain how to classify the fourth story in this collection: "The Minister's Black Veil." It's a very moody, Gothic piece — possibly it'd fit under the "speculative fiction" rubric? One day, without explanation, a village minister begins to wear a thick black veil that hides his face from everyone. Has he been horribly disfigured in some way? Is there some secret sin now blazoned on his face like a latter-day Mark of Cain? He won't even lift it briefly to show his fiancée when she threatens to leave him unless he tells her what's going on. As I said, a very moody, Gothic little story — and apparently based on an actual incident Hawthorne had read about.

LSF Meeting Minutes **January 8, 2006**

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And then it was time for the annual LSF Book Exchange! Here is who got what from whom:

Peter received *Doctor Who: Revolution Man* by Paul Leonard from Teresa.

Barrett received *The Sparrow* by Mary Doria Russell from Peter.

Carl received *The Martian Chronicles* by Ray Bradbury from LaVaughn.

James received *Inventing Memories* by Anne Harris from Rob.

Norman received *Ruled Britannia* and *In The Presence of Thine Enemies* both by Harry Turtledove from Barrett.

Teresa received *Smoke and Mirrors* by Tanya Huff from James.

Scott received *Ghost Writer* by John Harwood and *A Trip to the Stars* by Nicolas Christopher from Michael.

Michael received *Battle Royale* by Koshun Takami from Scott.

Rob received *TechWar* by William Shatner from Norman. (Norman swears that the book is *good!*)

LaVaughn received *The Vesuvius Club* by Mark Gatiss from Carl.



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OK, I confess: I'm a big Hawthorne fan. I really like his style, and I was very pleased to have run across this little book. On the other hand, I think anyone interested in the history of American F&SF would find these stories — as well as such other Hawthorne F&SF stories as "Rappaccini's Daughter" — well worth a read.

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Takeoff
by C.M. Kornbluth
(Pennant Books, 1953)
Reviewed by Carl



This is another one of those “little lost treasures” that I occasionally run across in the dealers’ rooms of SF conventions. *Takeoff* is another little gem of a novel (only 149 pages) written by a significant early SF author that not a lot of people talk about anymore.

C.M. (Cyril) Kornbluth (1923-1958) was one of that pack of early authors who in the 1930s formed The Futurians, a NYC-based SF fanclub. (Other members included such luminaries as Don Wolheim, Fred Pohl, Isaac Asimov, James Blish, Hannes Bok, Damon Knight, and Judith Merril.) Under his own name and several pen-names, Kornbluth wrote dozens and dozens of well-regarded short stories and several novels. He also co-authored several well-known novels with fellow Futurians Fred Pohl (including *The Space Merchants*, 1953) and Judith Merril (*Gunner Cade*, 1953, under the joint pen-name Cyril Judd).

According to the Author’s Note at the beginning of *Takeoff*: “This story takes place in the near future.” But I guess we can now consider it to have been “the near future that never was.” It was to have been a future when the rocket-science of the WWII era would springboard humanity into space in single-stage rockets almost a decade before the Cold War (and the Soviet Union’s *Sputnik*) fueled the Space Race — a future in which Earth-orbit space stations were generally ignored in favor of heading *directly* into space, the moon was intended to be *permanently* occupied, and atomic power was considered safe enough (both politically and practically) to serve as a power source for spacecraft. It is in *this* never-never “near future” that Kornbluth’s *Takeoff* occurs.

Dr. Mike Novak is a loyal — but disgruntled — employee of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission. He’s an expert in the field of refractory ceramics,

but he’s been so severely (deliberately?) mis-managed that he finally gets fed up and quits the AEC. His services are promptly sought by the American Society for Space Flight — a group of amateur rocket enthusiasts, college-age science students, and a loose assortment of engineering mavericks and physics misfits. ASSF is, however, willing to pay Novak handsomely in return for his services in designing and building certain important internal structures for the full-scale prototype rocket they’re building “for study purposes only” in the California desert just outside Barstow. And, say what you will about them, the folks at ASSF seem to have scraped together enough funding to have almost completed their “non-functional prototype” far ahead of any similar program sponsored by either the U.S. military or various other civilian Federal agencies.

Suffice it to say that Novak quickly joins up with ASSF, delighted to at last be using his skills on such a worthy project. Soon, however, doubts begin to creep in. Where is this organization getting its money? And how come ASSF is having him design parts that — in his expert opinion — can only be used in atomic-powered engines? How does a non-Government-sponsored organization expect to obtain fissionable materials? Is ASSF’s “non-working prototype” really being built “for study purposes only” — or is someone planning to use it to beat the U.S. to the moon, establish a missile base, and take over the military “high ground.”? Is ASSF, in fact, being used as a front by some Foreign Power? Soon after Novak shares his suspicions with an AEC Security agent, the ASSF project manager is found shot to death — and Novak is asked to replace him as head of the rocket project. Will he also be next on somebody’s “hit parade”?

Yes, *Takeoff* is a product of the Cold War era — as opposed to being a specifically post-WWII story like its near-contemporary, Heinlein’s *Rocket Ship Galileo*. Unlike Heinlein, Kornbluth doesn’t worry about Nazi sleeper cells attempting to steal a rocket and resurrect the Third Reich on the Moon; Kornbluth instead raises the spectre of espionage from a new source, “the Russkies.” He provides a taste of things to come, specifically of the Space Race that would follow the Soviet Union’s successful 1957 launch of *Sputnik*, a race fueled by American fears of the possibility of a Russian missile base on the Moon.

Kornbluth’s *Takeoff* is also part of a long, continuing tradition of stories based on the theme “the independents get to space.” Some of the other novels in this tradition are: Robert Heinlein’s *Rocket Ship Galileo* (1947); Daniel Graham Jr.’s *The Gatekeepers* (1995); Michael Flynn’s *Firestar* (1996); and John Varley’s *Red Thunder* (2003). All such novels tell stories of how good ol’ American know-how, drive, independent spirit, and private enterprise get us into space faster and more efficiently than Government-sponsored programs, which are portrayed as being hampered by bureaucracy, administrative red-tape, and good ol’ American politics. (Come to think of it, you can probably include Jules Verne’s *From the Earth to the Moon* [1865] in this tradition as well, with its “Baltimore Gun Club” funding the Moon-shot project.) Kornbluth’s novel is rather unique, however, in that it includes a thinly-disguised nod to SF Fandom via his portrayal of the young, dedicated, hard-working — and, in other respects, very “fannish” — staff of the American Society for Space Flight. (His portrayal of one of their general membership meetings is an absolute hoot-and-a-half!) In fact, I can only think of one other SF novel that

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My Hugo Best Dramatic Presentation Nominations

by Peter

Members of the World Science Fiction Convention (the current and the previous Worldcons) have the right to vote on the Hugo awards (<http://www.laconiv.org/2006/hugos/hugos.htm>). The first step is send nominations for up to five works in each category that you want to nominate. The nominations that get the most votes are put on the final ballot that will be released in April. Members then get to vote for the nominees on the final ballot. Winners will be announced at a ceremony at this year's Worldcon, L.A.con IV (<http://www.laconiv.org/2006/main/top.htm>).

As I'm a media fan, I make nominations for the two Best Dramatic Presentation awards; one for works greater than 90 minutes and one for works less than or equal to 90 minutes. Here are my nominations.

Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form (greater than 90 minutes):

1. *Batman Begins*
2. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*
3. *Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*
4. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*
5. *Serenity*

I think these movies are all strong contenders for a Hugo. While I haven't decided which of these five I would vote for, I've seen *Harry Potter* twice in the theater (the second time on an IMAX screen!), so that may be indicative of how I'll vote.

Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form (less than or equal to 90 minutes):

1. *Corpse Bride*
2. "Father's Day" - *Doctor Who* TV Series
3. "The Empty Child" & "The Doctor Dances" - *Doctor Who* TV Series
4. "Bad Wolf" & "The Parting of the Ways" - *Doctor Who* TV Series
5. *Wallace & Gromit in The Curse of the Were-Rabbit*

Anyone who knows me, knows I'm cuckoo for *Doctor Who*. So no one should be surprised I'm nominating a few episodes of *Doctor Who* for a Hugo. Personally, I'd like "The Empty Child" & "The Doctor Dances" to win.

The show has a few strikes against it though. It was not shown in the U.S. during 2005. And it will be competing against a little show (that was shown in the U.S.) called *Battlestar Galactica*. I think *Battlestar Galactica* is an excellent show. I just like *Doctor Who* better.

I didn't nominate any episodes of the first half of *Battlestar Galactica*'s season two for two reasons. No episode stood out for me as a stand alone independent story. They all blended together into an incredible whole. Second, I want *Doctor Who* to win.

There are ten other genre movies I saw last year that didn't make it onto my ballot. Some of them were a piece of *mierde* like *War of the Worlds* and some were quite good, like *Sin City*. But alas, I could only nominate five works in each category.

1. *Aeon Flux*
2. *Brothers Grimm*
3. *Call of Cthulhu*
4. *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*
5. *Fantastic Four*
6. *King Kong*
7. *Sin City*
8. *The Skeleton Key*
9. *Star Wars: Episode III - Revenge of the Sith*
10. *War of the Worlds*

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Takeoff

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deals with the "fans in space" concept: *Fallen Angels* (2002), by Larry Niven, Jerry Pournelle, and Michael Flynn.

And *Takeoff* and the other novels in this tradition aren't just idle literary exercises, of course — they have a certain resonance and relevance to the current situation. Face it, humans haven't set foot on the Moon since 1972 (Apollo 17 Mission), the U.S. space shuttle fleet is aging and badly in need of repair, and there's no sign that NASA will have a viable replacement system available any time soon. In contrast, there was that highly successful (and severely down-played) experimental SSTO (single-stage-to-orbit) program, DC-X (the "Delta Clipper," 1993 - 1995), as well as the ongoing efforts of the X Prize Foundation (founded in 1994 to inspire "private, entrepreneurial advancements in space travel"). Is it any wonder that works of SF like C.M. Kornbluth's fascinating *Takeoff* continue to interest us?

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RIP Vincent Schiavelli

Adapted from the
Washington Post Obituary

Vincent Schiavelli, the droopy-eyed character actor who appeared in about 150 film and television productions, died of lung cancer December 26 at his home in Polizzi Generosa, Sicily. He was 57.

The New York-born Schiavelli, whose gloomy look made him perfect to play creepy or eccentric characters, appeared as John O'Connor in *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Across the 8th Dimension*, the subway ghost in *Ghost*, the organ grinder in *Batman Returns*, Vinovich in *Lord of Illusions*, and Dr. Kaufman in *Tomorrow Never Dies*.

His extensive TV work included *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and *The X-Files*.

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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 \$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 the Sunday, **February 12**, at James Crutchfield's apartment: 1414 17th Street, NW, #413 (near Dupont Circle) - 1:30pm for business meeting; 2:00pm 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



May 26-29, 2006 **BALTICON 40**. Marriott's Hunt Valle Inn (Hunt Valley, MD). Guest of Honor: Neil Gaiman; Artist GoH: Lorraine a'Malena; Special GoH: Gene Wolfe. Membership: \$43 thru Feb. 28, 2006; \$55 after Apr. 30 & at the door (registration form available on-line). Website: WWW.BALTICON.ORG E-mail: balticoninfo@balticon.org

June 16-18, 2006 **GAYLAXICON 2006**. Best Western Primrose Hotel (Toronto, Ontario, Canada). Guests of Honour: Richard Arnold; Michael Rowe. Membership (currently): US \$40/CAN \$50 (registration form available on-line). Website: <http://gaylaxicon.gaylacticnetwork.org/2006/>

July 7-9, 2006 **SHORE LEAVE 28**. Marriott's Hunt Valley Inn (Hunt Valley, MD). "Guests will be announced as soon as they are confirmed." Membership: \$55 until 6/15/2006 (higher at the door). Make checks payable to "Shore Leave" (and enclose two SASE's) and send to: Shore Leave 28, PO Box 6809, Towson, MD 21285-6809. Website: www.shore-leave.com E-mail: information@shore-leave.com

Aug. 23-27, 2006 **L.A. CON IV (64th World Science Fiction Convention)**. (Los Angeles, CA). Author GoH: Connie Willis; Artist GoH: James Gurney; Special Guest: Frankie Thomas (*Tom Corbett, Space Cadet*). Membership: currently \$150 thru 09/15/05 ("will go up after that"). Make checks payable to "L.A. Con IV" and send to: L.A. Con IV, c/o S.C.I.F.I., Inc., PO Box 8442, Van Nuys, CA 91409 Website: www.laconiv.com For more info: info@laconiv.org

Oct. 20-22, 2006 **CAPCLAVE 2006**. Hilton Washington/Silver Spring (Silver Spring, MD). More information as it becomes available. Membership: \$30 thru 5/31/2006; \$40 from 6/1/2006 thru 9/30/2006; \$50 at the door. Make checks payable to "Capclave 2006" and send to: Capclave 2006, 7113 Wayne Dr., Annandale, VA 22003-1734 Website: www.capclave.org E-mail: info@capclave.org

Aug. 2-5, 2007 **ARCHON 31 (2007 NASFiC)**. (St. Louis, MO). Featured Guest: Barbara Hambly; Artist GoH: Darryl K. Sweet; Media GoH: Mira "Delenn" Furlan. Membership: \$45 (currently). Make checks payable to "Archon 31" and send to: Archon 31/2007 NASFiC, PO Box 8387, St. Louis, MO 63132-8387. Website: <http://www.archonstl.org/31/>

October 4-7, 2007 **GAYLAXICON 2007**. (Atlanta, GA). Their bid was just accepted this year at Gaylaxicon 2005. More details as they become available.

