



LAMBDA SCI-FI



DC Area Gaylaxians

PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044 - (202) 232-3141 - Issue #198 - Sept. 2006

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

September Doctor Who and Stargate Parties

by Peter Knapp



In September I'll be showing the Season 2 finale of *Doctor Who*, the last three episodes of *Stargate: SG-1* (Season 10), and the last three episodes of *Stargate: Atlantis* (Season 3). The *Doctor Who*/*Stargate* evening will start at 7:30 PM, and we'll order pizza if people want it. The *Stargate* evenings start an hour later at 8:30 PM, so we will not be ordering pizza. For details, please see the detailed schedule that follows.

When: Fridays, Sept. 1, 8, 15, and 22

Where: The Home of Peter and Rob - 1425 "S" Street, NW Washington, DC
For directions, see:
<http://www.lambdasf.org/lsf/club/PeterRob.html>

September LSF Meeting



The next Lambda Sci-Fi meeting will be held on the **Sunday, September 10th**, at James Crutchfield's apartment (1414 17th St., NW, #413). 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! **ΛΨΦ**

Detailed Schedule:

Friday, September 1:

Time: Doors open at 7:30 PM, shows start at 8:00 PM.

What to bring: Snack food or soft drinks and \$5 if you want to order pizza.

Schedule:

08:00 PM - *Doctor Who* - "Army of Ghosts" (Part 1 of 2)

09:00 PM - *Doctor Who* - "Doomsday" (Part 2 of 2)

Friday, September 8:

Time: Doors open at 8:30 PM, shows start at 9:00 PM.

What to bring: Snack food or soft drinks.

Schedule:

09:00 PM - *Stargate: SG-1* - "Memento Mori"

10:00 PM - *Stargate: Atlantis* - "McKay and Mrs. Miller"

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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 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, at Peter & Rob's home: 1425 "S" St., NW -- for directions or more details, call 202-483-6369. The next meeting will be held on September 28th. Here's the schedule for the next couple of meetings:

Sept. 28th - *Titan*, by John Varley; moderator: Peter.

Oct. 26th - *Smoke and Mirrors*, by Tanya Huff; moderator: Carl.

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WHAT'S INSIDE?

LSF Meeting Minutes - August 13 (pg. 2); Mythological Pets? (pg. 2); LSFer Quoted in *The Washington Post* (pg. 3); Gaylaxicon 2010 (pg. 3); Greek Mythology Revisited - Part 4 (Continued) - Pan in F&SF Film and YA/Children's Literature (pg. 4); About Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians & Con Calendar (pg. 6)

Dr. Who & Stargate Parties

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Friday, September 15:

Time: Doors open at 8:30 PM, shows start at 9:00 PM.

What to bring: Snack food or soft drinks.

Schedule:

09:00 PM - *Stargate: SG-1* - "Company of Thieves"

10:00 PM - *Stargate: Atlantis* - "Phantoms"

Friday, September 22:

Time: Doors open at 8:30 PM, shows start at 9:00 PM.

What to bring: Snack food or soft drinks.

Schedule:

09:00 PM - *Stargate: SG-1* - "The Quest",

Part 1

10:00 PM - *Stargate: Atlantis* - "The Return", Part 1

If you have any questions, please contact Peter at 202-283-6369, or: PeterKnapp@wavelengthsonline.com

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LSF Meeting

Minutes

(August 13)

minutes taken
by Scott



Business Meeting

The date for the Gaylaxicon 2007 con in Atlanta has been announced. See the back page of this newsletter for details.

The Gaylaxicon 2008 committee is presently working on hotel selection here in the DC area. The decision has not been finalized.

Social Meeting

A new person attended the meeting, so Norman initiated a name circle.

Carl said he thinks that M. Night Shyamalan's film *Lady in the Water* movie is rather quirky — only an old Chinese woman knows all the details about a certain myth that doesn't seem to have anything to do with China! Scott commented that the previews didn't really clue the viewer that it was a fantasy, but he enjoyed the movie nevertheless.

The new Sci-Fi Channel series *Eureka* received a round of favorable comments. "Funny and believable." The scary flick *Descent* was described as a chick movie. (Huh?)

The new Family Channel series *Three Moons Over Milford* has a sci-fi setting: "an all-new ABC Family Original Series. The new series about a Vermont town whose residents don't worry about

the future, because a comet could destroy life as we know it at any moment."

This month's LSF book discussion group will feature China Mieville's *Iron Council*, which Carl advised is categorized as part of the new sci-fi sub-genre known as "the New Weird" — not quite science fiction and not quite fantasy, but a combination of both.

Michael chatted about new romantic fantasies that incorporate vampires, werewolves, and polyamory. Can "standard" romance writers survive?

Jim generally enjoyed Pixar's *Cars* film. He said that the plot is less satisfactory than *The Incredibles* or *Finding Nemo*, but that it is a good homage to the Route 66 culture. And everyone loved the tractor tipping! There was some chat about *Ratatouille*, the next Pixar feature about a rat who lives in a Parisian restaurant.

Yes, Michael informed us, there is a calendar of hunky male morticians — www.menofmortuaries.com

Other news: The *Nightwatch* book has been translated into English. Nicole Kidman is slated to star in the movie based on Phillip Pullman's *Golden Compass*. Wayne noted that Heath Ledger will apparently be starring as the Joker in an upcoming Batman movie. Jim mentioned that Michael Straczynski (of *Babylon 5* fame) once wanted to do a "reboot" of the original *Star Trek* series in a five-year story arc. Arthur C. Clarke has beaten the child molestation charges in Sri Lanka.

That's it for this meeting!

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Mythological Pets?

info passed along by Kendall
http://www.economist.com/science/displaystory.cfm?story_id=6740040
excerpted from "Here Be Dragons"
The Economist (03/30/2006)

Paolo Fril, chairman and chief scientific officer of GeneDupe, based in San Melito, California, is a man with a dream... [Dr. Fril] plans a range of entirely new animals — or, rather, of really quite old animals, with the twist that even when they did exist, it was only in the imagination...

Their secret is a new field, which they call "virtual cell biology." ...Virtual cell biology aspires to make a software model of a cell that is accurate in every biochemical detail... Armed with their virtual cell, GeneDupe's scientists can customize the result so that it belongs to a particular species, by loading it with a virtual copy of that animal's genome. Then, if the cell is also loaded with the right virtual molecules, it will behave like a fertilized egg and start dividing and developing — first into an embryo, and ultimately into an adult... Because this "growth" is going on in a

computer, it happens fast. Passing from egg to adult in one of GeneDupe's enormous Mythmaker computers takes less than a minute.

Each computer starts with a search image (dragon, unicorn, gryphon, etc), and the genome of the real animal most closely resembling it (a lizard for the dragon, a horse for the unicorn and, most taxingly, the spliced genomes of a lion and an eagle for the gryphon). The virtual genomes of these real animals are then tweaked by random electronic mutations. When they have matured,

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Greek Mythology Revisited
Part 4 (continued)
Pan in F&SF Film and
YA/Children's Literature
by Carl Cipra

Last month, in this fourth part of a continuing series, I began the discussion of the pastoral goat-god Pan and his appearances in F&SF literature — and I started with a classic piece of Lovecraftian “cosmic horror” literature, Arthur Machen’s *The Great God Pan* (1894). Now I think it’s time to continue with some of Pan’s less malevolent appearances.



The Piper, by Kelly Freas
(*Weird Tales*, 1950)

The Circus of Dr. Lao, a novel by Charles Finney (1935)

The 7 Faces of Dr. Lao, MGM film (1964); directed by George Pal; screenplay by Charles Beaumont

It never ceases to amaze me just how different the “film version” of a book can be (even when Disney Studios *aren't* involved). There are quite a few similarities between Finney’s book and the MGM film — but the overall tone is rather different. In both cases, the inscrutable Chinese sage, Dr. Lao, shows up in the Old West town of Abalone, Arizona with his circus of curious delights and supernatural/mythological wonders. But the book is rather darker than the film — the film is rather more upbeat, with fortuitous transformations of character in store for the less-than-

wonderful citizens of Abalone. (Oh, and Finney’s book doesn’t rely on actor Tony Randall to play all the roles!)

As for Pan... Well, to begin with, Pan (so named) does *not* appear in Finney’s novel. Yes, Agnes Birdsong (the prudish schoolteacher) is seduced by a satyr; but it’s never even suggested that the seducer is the Goat God himself.

In the film, however, the seduction of schoolteacher Angela Benedict (portrayed by Barbara Eden) is perpetrated by none other than “Pan, the God of Joy” (as so advertised on the marquee for his enclosure). When Angela first enters Pan’s tent, Pan is portrayed by the ubiquitous Tony Randall; but as he goes into his erotic, whirling dance of seduction, Pan transforms himself into the appearance of Angela’s handsome (albeit rejected) suitor Ed Cunningham (portrayed by John Ericson). To my mind, Ericson (with that wicked glint in his eye as he offers her a grape) provides a rather more plausible seduction than Randall’s more caprine features could!

Pan only appears in one other scene during the film (the parade just before the “Destruction of Woldercan” vignette), and he doesn’t speak either time (except for a goat-like “baaa!” at the end of the scene with Angela). Pan’s seduction of Angela is thus one of gesture and movement, accompanied by the frenzied music he plays upon his Pan-pipes. Referring back to Greek myth, it was said that Pan was able to play a “seductive melody upon his syrinx” (*The Cult of Pan in Ancient Greece*, by Philippe Borgeaud; Univ. of Chicago Press, 1988). Pan’s pipes were called “syrinx” after the unfortunate nymph who was transformed into a stand of hollow reeds to escape Pan’s amorous clutches. (Pan fashioned those reeds into a set of shepherd’s pipes.)

As with everyone else of consequence in Abalone, Angela learns a lesson about herself from Dr. Lao and his Circus. Her run-in with Pan has made it quite obvious to her that she really *does* have the hots for Ed Cunningham. By film’s end, the attractive young couple have, indeed, become an item. Thank you, Pan, for (figuratively) loosening the stays on her corset.

This, by the way, is one of the few cases where I recommend the film rather than the book it is based on.

The Great God Pan, by Donna Jo Napoli (Wendy Lamb Books, 2003)

As I’ve said in a number of other book reviews, I’m a big fan of well-written YA (“young adult”) literature. Napoli’s book is another example of why this is.

Napoli features the Goat God in a mythological “misunderstood-teen, ugly-duckling” story. Her novel begins with Pan as a “young” god — indeed, myths describe him as sort of a “third generation” deity: the son of Hermes (himself the son of Zeus) and the mortal princess Dryope. She clearly portrays Pan’s difficult psychological position. She seems to say: “Imagine, if you will, his position in the cosmic scheme of things — neither fish nor fowl, never truly fitting in with Gods, mortals, or animals.” Pan was, after all, the son of the beautiful Hermes — but he was condemned (in fact, cursed) to spend life as a mixture of goat and man, never able to transform completely into one or the other (despite his godly powers), the only God whose appearance is not that of an ideal human and who is unable to even disguise or manifest himself in that manner.



Pan and a Goat
(Roman statuette)

Napoli also frequently offers alternative interpretations to commonly accepted myths about Pan. As she correctly points out in her Afterword:

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Pan in F&SF

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“Classical myths have many variations from one telling to another.” Greco-Roman paganism, after all, was not a “religion of the Book” (such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). A lot of local myths/legends/traditions got mixed into the whole. Pagan artists and writers often added their own individual interpretive flourishes when dealing with mythological subjects, and this was accepted as long as they seemed to stay “true” to the basic images and concepts of their mythology. Napoli has followed their lead – for example, in her version of the myth of Pan and the nymph Syrinx. Greek myth tells us that Pan chased Syrinx, and it’s presumed that he had lusty thoughts in mind at the time. Napoli, however, changes the incident into a tragic misunderstanding, with significant consequences for both Syrinx (who was turned into a bunch of river reeds) and Pan himself.

Napoli definitely sticks to one aspect of Pan’s myth, his reputation as being *duseros* (*dus-eros*, “unlucky in love”). In fact, I think that’s the framing theme for the entire story, especially (and ultimately) through his tragic love for Iphigenia – yes, Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon of Myceanae, who was fated to be sacrificed by her father at Aulis so that the Greek fleet could successfully sail off to the Trojan War (as related in the play *Iphigenia in Aulis*, by Euripides).

And it is to this tragic event that Napoli has – very masterfully, in my opinion – linked the most bothersome of the legends surrounding the Goat God: his death. If you believe the Greek historian Plutarch (“The Obsolescence of Oracle,” *Moralia*, Book 5:17), Pan is the only Greek god who has died. During the reign of Tiberius (A.D. 14-37), the news of Pan’s death came to one Thamus, a sailor on his way to Italy by way of the island of Paxi. A divine voice hailed him across the salt water, “Thamus, are you there? When you reach Palodes, take care to proclaim that the great god Pan is dead.” (Which Thamus did – but it’s interesting to note

that when Pausanias toured Greece about a century after Plutarch, he found Pan’s shrines, sacred caves, and sacred mountains still very much frequented.) Napoli’s version of the events at Aulis is both tragic and moving. Kudos, Ms. Napoli!



**Pan Playing the Syrinx
by Arnold Boecklin (1827-1901)**

The Wind in the Willows, by Kenneth Grahame (1908)

Yes, Pan does, in fact, appear in Grahame’s *The Wind in the Willows* – in Chapter 7, “The Piper at the Gates of Dawn.” (Don’t look for him in Disney’s wonderful 1949 animated version, however.) Grahame’s depiction of Pan incorporates virtually all the various aspects of the Goat God (except for his sexual connections, that is). Rather than tell you about it, however, I’ll let the book speak for itself:

Then suddenly the Mole felt a great Awe fall upon him, an awe that turned his muscles to water, bowed his head, and rooted his feet to the ground. It was no panic terror—indeed he felt wonderfully at peace and happy—but it was an awe that smote and held him and, without seeing, he knew it could only mean that some August Presence was very, very near. ... and then, in that utter clearness of the imminent dawn, while Nature, flushed with fullness of incredible colour, seemed to hold her

breath for the event, he looked in the very eyes of the Friend and Helper; saw the backward sweep of the curled horns, gleaming in the growing daylight; saw the stern, hooked nose between the kindly eyes that were looking down on them humorously, while the bearded mouth broke into a half-smile at the corners; saw the rippling muscles on the arm that lay across the broad chest, the long supple hand still holding the pan-pipes only just fallen away from the parted lips; saw the splendid curves of the shaggy limbs disposed in majestic ease on the sward; saw, last of all, nestling between his very hooves, sleeping soundly in entire peace and contentment, the little, round, podgy, childish form of the baby otter. All this he saw, for one moment breathless and intense, vivid on the morning sky; and still, as he looked, he lived; and still, as he lived, he wondered. “Rat!” he found breath to whisper, shaking. “Are you afraid?” “Afraid?” murmured the Rat, his eyes shining with unutterable love. “Afraid! Of Him? O, never, never! And yet—and yet—O, Mole, I am afraid!” Then the two animals, crouching to the earth, bowed their heads and did worship.

I think that kind of says it all, doesn’t it? And I also think it’s a good place to end this examination of “Pan in F&SF.” We’re back where we began, in the English forests where Arthur Machen also set his *Great God Pan*, in the awesome presence of the horned, goat-footed Lord of Nature. **Λ Ψ Φ**



**** 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, September 10th**, at James Crutchfield's apartment (1414 17th St., NW, #413). 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. 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

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

Nov. 17-19, 2006 **PHILCON 2006**. Sheraton Philadelphia Center City Hotel (Phila., PA). More information as it becomes available. Membership: adults \$50 at the door. Website: WWW.PHILCON.ORG e-mail: INFO2006@PHILCON.ORG

Nov. 24-26, 2006 **DARKOVER GRAND COUNCIL MEETING XXIX**. Holiday Inn Timonium (Timonium, MD). "Avery GLBT-friendly con." Guest of Honor: Jacqueline Carey; Artist GoH: TBA; Special Guest: Katherine Kurtz. Membership: \$45 until 11/1/2006; \$50 thereafter & at the door. Make checks payable to "Armida Council" and send to: Armida Council, PO Box 7203, Silver Spring, MD 20907

Website: www.darkovercon.com

Info at: members@darkovercon.com

Feb. 16-18, 2007 **FARPOINT 2007**. Marriott's Hunt Valley Inn (Hunt Valley, MD). Special Guest: Summer Glau ("River Tam" from *Firefly/Serenity*). Other Guests: Marc Okrand (Creator of Klingon language); Peter David (author). Membership: \$55 (weekend, pre-registered); daily rates available. Make checks payable to "Farpoint Enterprises" and send to: Farpoint Enterprises, Inc., 11708 Troy Ct., Waldorf, MD 20601

Website: www.farpointcon.com

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 5-8, 2007 **GAYLAXICON 2007**. Sheraton Midtown Atlanta at Colony Square (Atlanta, GA). Full membership information will be provided as soon as possible, including purchasing memberships online via PayPal. Guest of Honor details are being worked out with the various parties, and announcements will be made as soon as possible.

Website: <http://2007.atlantagallifreyans.org/>



October 10-13, 2008 **GAYLAXICON 2008**. Hotel: to be announced (Washington DC area). Membership: \$50 at present (will go up). Guest of Honor: Geoff Ryman. Information at: gaylaxicon2008.org

