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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 LGBT 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 7:00 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 August 23rd.

Here are the details on the next several book discussion meetings:
Aug. 23rd - *Teranesia*, by Greg Egan; moderator: Rob.
Sept. 28th - *Vellum*, by Hal Duncan; moderator: TBA (Krista).

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Info passed along in an e-mail from Kris Harter (Atlanta Outworlders), excerpted from a short article in *AfterEllen: News, Reviews & Commentary on Lesbian and Bisexual Woman in Entertainment and the Media* (www.afterellen.com) by Sarah Warn, Editor in Chief (July 13):

YOU WILL BE ASSIMILATED

Have you ever wanted to dress up like Seven of Nine? Discuss *Dune* with other fans? Debate whether what **Natalie Portman** did in *Star Wars* can truly be considered acting? Then have I



got the convention for you! Gaylaxicon 2007, the "annual international gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender & friends Science Fiction, Fantasy, Horror, and Gaming Convention" coming to Atlanta this fall.

OK, I really don't like the name, but I like the idea of an LGBT sci-fi conference. Yes, I'll admit it, I've got a little sci-fi geek in me — but c'mon, how does this not sound fun?

G'con 2007 will feature all the standard con fare: panels, dances, films, receptions, celebrities, a costume contest, etc. Plus, we'll be including all the things that have become a part of the Gaylaxicon tradition: the Chocolate Symposium, the SF Jeopardy! Game, the Ice Cream Social, and all the rest. We'll also have live music, a performance of The Rocky Horror Picture Show, and many other surprises!

Sci-fi movies and chocolate? Frak it, where do I sign up?! Λ Ψ Φ



Gaylaxicon 2008

"Twenty years of fun!"



For details, see the Con Calendar on page 6, or go to: www.gaylaxicon2008.org



August LSF Meeting

The next Lambda Sci-Fi meeting will be held on the **Sunday, August 12th**, 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!

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WHAT'S INSIDE?

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LSF July 8th Meeting Minutes

taken by Scott

LSF Business Meeting

The vote was taken on the **proposed LSF By-Laws amendment** (re: voting for changes to the by-laws). The proposal passed by the LSF members present as well as two proxy votes.

LSF Social Meeting

A number of first-timers attended the meeting (showing up from time to time), so there was a few name circles throughout the afternoon.

Carl ensured that everyone present knew that the DVDs, videos, and books piled up along the wall were for sale, with proceeds going toward funding of Gaylaxicon 1008.

Everyone who saw the recently released **Disney/Pixar Ratatouille** film loved it! [Ed. Note: And they all said they enjoyed the accompanying short feature — *Lifted* — even more!]

Michael attended this year's **Monster Bash** convention in Pittsburgh and provided numerous details about the con, including that there was a large gay presence. The actress who plays Elvira was there!

Carl described a soon-to-be-released book, *The World Without Us* by Alan Weisman. It describes what would happen if humanity were to disappear today. (For example, within days of our disappearance, the New York City underground pumps would fail and the subway tunnels would flood.)

The trailers for the new "Golden Compass" movie look promising.



The *Transformers* movie! Josh didn't feel violated; Krista was able to predict what regular-old vehicle would become what Transformer character.



(Fangirl much?) Everyone said that the movie was overloaded with product placements.

Josh mentioned seeing a **trailer for an unnamed JJ Abrams movie** that appears to have some kind of disaster happening in NYC. [Ed. Note: Here's the buzz from the web...]

The trailer begins with a group of twenty-somethings throwing a surprise going-away party at an apartment. The party is rudely interrupted by an explosion, and debris rains down on the partygoers, who run downstairs to see the head of the Statue of Liberty fall onto the streets below. There's a monstrous groan as the screen fades with little information about the movie, just a tentative release date: 1-18-08. The trailer is part of a viral marketing campaign, one that's working at a fever pitch throughout the blogosphere. Moviegoers flocked to the Web to piece together the puzzle. Digg.com and Ain't It Cool News were the first to provide any answers: The mastermind behind the movie, codenamed Cloverfield, is none other than Lost and Alias creator, J.J. Abrams.



Alas, there was a discussion about the **Gummi Bears TV show**. A group of Gummi Bears created out of liquid – and they have individual names! Is nothing sacred? Argh! Indeed, some attendees were able to hum a few bars of the *Gummi Bears* theme song.



It was noted that the **Sci Fi Channel** has had some promotions for a *Flash Gordon* series. Some attendees also commenting on seeing the commercials for a new *Bionic Woman* series. The Sci Fi Channel's Season 2 of *Eureka* premieres this Tuesday.



From the LSF mailbox: some recent Sigma newsletters from the Pittsburgh sci fi group; info on the "The Force is With Us" display at Geppy's Entertainment Museum (Baltimore); info on the November 2007 World Fantasy Convention.

Patrick announced that Season 3 of **Venture Brothers** is now in production. Yeah!

Carl mentioned that Tanya Huff's third "Confederation" science fiction novel *The Heart of Valor* is now out on the stands.

Michael reported on his outing to "H" Street NE's **Palace of Wonders**. The shows included magicians, burlesque, dancing, and Scotty the Blue Bunny. (There was some mention of one female performer using chocolate sauce below the waist.)

The "**Harry Potter**" movie outing will be next Sunday (July 15). Get your tickets now!



Rob reminded everyone of the **LSF book discussion group's** next two books. For July, it's graphic novel *Top Ten: the 49'ers*. For August, it's Greg Egan's *Teranesia*.

When the meeting wrapped up, it morphed into a **post-meeting gaming event!**

Archaeology/Anthropology with an F&SF Flavor

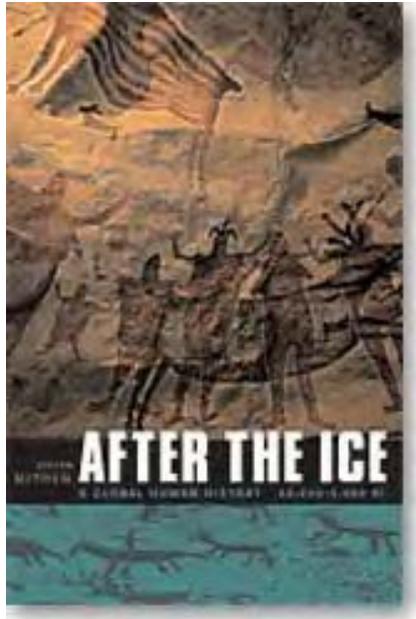
a book review by Carl Cipra

I know that sounds like a really silly title for a book review — especially a review of a well-researched, non-fiction work such as this — but I really can't think of a title more appropriate for a review of:

After the Ice:
A Global Human History,
20,000 - 5000 BC
by Steven Mithen
(Harvard Univ. Press, 2004)

Yes, *After the Ice* is intended as a “history of the world between 20,000 and 5000 BC” and is written for “those who like to think about the past and wish to know more about the origins of farming, towns, and civilisation.” Yes, it draws on “the latest research in archaeology, human genetics, and environmental science.” And I can't say as I recommend it to the casual reader — there are 60+ pages of explanatory notes and research citations at the back, along with a 36-page bibliography. But the *method* in which the author goes about reviewing 15,000 years of human prehistory is ingenious and *very* much in an “F&SF” style. And, at times, it's actually kind'a fun, as the author attempts — as a first-person observer — to portray possible answers to the following questions: “What was it like to live in prehistoric times? What was the day-to-day experience of those who lived through global warming, an agricultural revolution and the origin of civilisation?”

So, how does Mithen accomplish this? He sends back a time-traveler. But don't expect to read about someone jumping into a version of Mr. Peabody's Way-Back Machine and conducting man-in-the-cave interviews with our prehistoric forebears. No, indeed, Mithen's not-quite-disembodied time-traveler — whom he names John Lubbock — just sort of “strolls” through time and space in some never-explained manner and observes first-hand what's going on. (At one point, he even takes a 4000-year-long “nap” in Northern Australia



while exploring early Aborigine cultures.) Lubbock seems to be physically present during his journeys — enduring the smell of “farting goats” in one cave in the prehistoric Middle East and bumping his head on a low ceiling in another cave — as he eats, hunts, and fishes with prehistoric men, albeit unseen and unsensed by them. (Well, sometimes children and dogs seem to sense his presence.) Lubbock even makes the occasional “stroll forward” into the 20th Century to be in at the discovery of particularly significant finds, such as when he witnesses the original discoveries of artifacts from the North American “Folsom” and “Clovis” cultures.

But don't let that description of the author's *method* give you the wrong idea about the credibility of the book's *content*. All of the prehistoric scenarios or “re-creations” are based on extensive



Great Mother
(Catal Huyuk, ca. 7250 - 6700 BCE)

research — much of it based on groundbreaking research only completed within the last decade. (Remember those 60+ pages of explanatory notes and citations? Yes, even things like “farting goats” have an archaeological basis!)

The scope of this survey is truly monumental. First off, there's the time period: 20,000 BC to 5000 BC. And the book's section headings — Western Asia, Europe, The Americas, Greater Australia and East Asia, South Asia, Africa — let you know that Mithen is looking at humanity's progress throughout the *entire* world during that period. As hinted on the book's fly, Mithen takes the reader “from aboriginal hunting parties in Tasmania, to the corralling of wild sheep in the central Sahara, to the efforts of the Guilá Naquitz people in Oaxaca to combat drought with agricultural innovations.”



Clovis point

I *really* enjoyed reading *After the Ice*; and I highly recommend it to anyone else who's interested in the prehistoric human experience following the end of the last major Ice Age. Its F&SF angle just made it all that much more enjoyable to read.

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**It is good to
have an end
to journey
toward,
but it is
the journey
that matters
in the end.**

**-- Ursula K.
LeGuin**

**Land of Lost Monsters -
Man Against Beast:
The Prehistoric Battle
for the Planet
by Ted Oakes et al
(Hydra Publishing, 2003)
reviewed by Carl Cipra**

This book was originally published as a companion piece to the BBC mini-series of the same name that was shown on the Animal Planet Channel in 2003. It's actually also a pretty good companion piece for Steven Mithen's *After the Ice* (see review elsewhere in this issue). In fact, I read the two books just about the same time.

As with *After the Ice*, this book ranges around the entire world in its discussion; but it covers a much broader time period — from Paleolithic Ice Age Europe to the Pacific Islander experience as late as the 1600s. Also, the emphasis of *Land of Lost Monsters* is rather different. Instead of focusing on how human cultures adapted to the changing environment “after the Ice Ages,” *Land of Lost Monsters* “tells the greatest untold story of our species: how humans discovered each continent and met Earth's extraordinary megafauna — enormous lizards, horse-sized bears, terrible cats, colossal birds and lumbering plant-eaters.” It also seeks to answer the following questions: “Did we battle with megafauna for control of Earth, or did they disappear for other reasons? Why does one animal dominate our world today, and at what cost?” *Land of Lost Monsters* isn't anywhere near as scholarly in its format as *After the Ice* is. Although *Land of Lost Monsters* also provides a convenient summary of the latest scientific research and speculations about the prehistoric human experience, it's a more *popularized* view — no 60+ pages of footnotes or scientific citations; only a modest 14 titles of “Further Reading” are suggested. (Interestingly enough, one of them is *The Prehistory of the Mind* by Steven Mithen, author of *After the Ice*.)

As you'd also expect, *Land of Lost Monsters* is a very *pretty* book. It's filled with full-color pictures, many (if not all) excerpted from the Animal Planet



**Cave man vs. cave bear
(illustration from the book)**

mini-series. And many of these pictures are CG images of the megafauna (“megafauna” = “large animals”) encountered by prehistoric humans: the rhinoceros-sized marsupial *Diprotodon* (Australia); the 18-foot-long, Komodo-dragon-like *Megalania* (also from Australia); the powerful European cave lion; the woolly mammoth; the American scimitar cat (a different creature from the more well-known sabre-toothed tiger); and so on.

The short final chapter (“Conclusion”) provides a fascinating look at the possible forces that led to the extinction of most of the world's megafauna — concentrating on three major possible candidates: disease, climate change, or human overkill. (An earlier chapter — “Africa” — discussed possible reasons why so many types of megafauna have survived there.)

Land of Lost Monsters is an enjoyable book. It's got a hefty little price (\$24.95) — surprisingly over twice the cost of the mini-series DVD (1 hour & 40 minutes; \$9.95), which is still available through the Discovery Store. ΛΨΦ



**Neanderthal Man
illustration by Charles R. Knight
(1874 - 1953)**

**Comic Book Resources
on Gay Comics**

info passed along by Mike Penick

For those who are interested, Comic Book Resources is doing a lengthy series on “Homosexuality in Comics.” The first installment is available at:

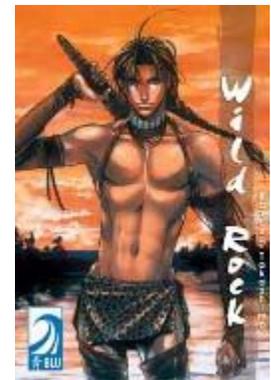
<http://www.comicbookresources.com/news/newsitem.cgi?id=11165>

[Ed. Note: Here's an excerpt from the first installment.]

CBR News spoke with nine comics industry professionals about the portrayal of GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transsexual) characters and themes in comics, past and present. Parts I and II will introduce the nine participants. Part I features Marc Andreyko, Lillian Diaz-Przbyl, Devin Grayson, Terrance Griep and Mark Millar, and Part II introduces Allan Heinberg, Scott Lobdell, Alan Moore and Greg Rucka. In addition to biographical materials, each introductory segment will also include the participants' musings on their own comics work that features GLBT characters and themes.

Parts III and IV will be the article proper, in which the participants address a wide range of topics. In part III, the participants discuss the Comics Code, the stigma of comics as a children's medium, whether homosexuality is a lifestyle choice or a genetic predisposition, and the tendency for fictional GLBT characters to be defined by their sexuality. The topics for Part IV include the “gay retcon,” the participants' picks for well-informed portrayals of GLBT characters in comics, and the state of the union of homosexuality in comics.

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**example of
yaoi art**



Kerwin Matthews
1926 - 2007

Kerwin Matthews, handsome, swashbuckling star of several 1950s genre movies, passed away in San Francisco on July 5th. He was 81.

Although not widely reported, Matthews was indeed gay. He is survived by his partner of 46 years, Tom Nicoll.

Matthews is probably most famous for playing Sinbad in *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad* (1958), which featured stop-motion animated monsters created by Ray Harryhausen and a thrilling score by Bernard Herrmann. Matthews battled a giant cyclops, a dragon, and an animated skeleton (an amazing triumph for special effects at the time). He went on to appear in a number of other fantasy films, including *Jack the Giant Killer* and Harryhausen's

The Three Worlds of Gulliver. He also appeared in a number of other low-budget F&SF films such as *Battle Beneath the Earth* (1967), *Octaman* (1971), *Maniac* (1963), and *The Boy Who Cried Werewolf* (1973).

After college, Matthews spent several years teaching English and then moved to Hollywood. While appearing at the Pasadena Playhouse, he was spotted by an agent, who arranged for Matthews to meet the head of Columbia Pictures. He made his screen debut in the thriller *Five Against the House* (1955), as one of five students who plan a casino robbery for fun and are then persuaded to carry it out. His performance in *Five Against the House* won him the title role in *The Garment Jungle* (1957), as a young man who returns from the Korean War to find himself in conflict with his father, who is paying a crime syndicate to quash unionism in the garment industry. After that came the WWII picture *Tarawa Beachhead* (1958). And after that came *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad*.

Seventh Voyage was Ray Harryhausen's first color feature film, and it was hailed as one of the best fantasy films since *King Kong*. It was one of the top money-makers of 1958, and it made another \$6 million when re-released in 1968. In preparation for his groundbreaking duel with the skeleton, Matthews practiced with Olympic fencing master Enzo Musomeci-Greco.

After a couple of other non-genre roles, Matthews returned to fantasy and Ray Harryhausen in *The Three*



Matthews as Sinbad

Worlds of Gulliver (1960). In 1960, he also made a less-successful adventure-fantasy in Italy: *Saffo, venere di Lesbo*. (The film was known as *The Warrior Empress* in its English-language release; and it featured Tina Louise – of *Gilli-gan's Island* fame – as Sappho.)

It was right about this time (1961) that Matthews met Tom Nicoll, a British display manager who was to remain Matthews's partner for the next 46 years.

His last feature film was the horror spoof *Nightmare in Blood* (1976), in which a horror star attending a convention turns out to be a real vampire.

In 1978, Matthews retired from acting and moved to San Francisco, where he became an antique dealer. Commenting on his career, Matthews has said: "I have absolutely no regrets about my acting career. On balance, I think it was certainly worthwhile for me to have temporarily left the real world and become an actor."

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Telling your parents you are a superhero is not an experience people take lightly — whether you are on the giving or the receiving end of this bombshell. There's never a right time or easy way to break the most difficult news they are likely to hear. For this reason, some superheroes choose to keep their identity secret from everyone.

excerpted from
The Superhero Handbook by Michael Powell
(Sterling Publishing, 2005)

****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, August 12th**, 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



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 31/2007NASFiC, 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). Publisher GoH: Steph Pagel; Author GoH: TBA. Membership: \$50 thru Labor Day, 2007; \$60 after that; memberships available online via PayPal. Website: <http://gaylaxicon2007.org/>

October 12 - 14, 2007 **CAPCLAVE 007** ("Dodo Noir, Neo-Pulp"). Hilton Silver Spring (Silver Spring, MD). Author GoH Jeffrey Ford; Editor GoH: Ellen Datlow. Membership: \$40 thru 6/30/07; \$50 from 7/1 to 9/30/07. Make checks payable to "Capclave 2007" and send to: Capclave 2007 c/o Barry Newton, PO Box 153, Sandy Spring, MD 20860-0153. Website: <http://www.capclave.org>

Nov. 23-26, 2007 **DARKOVER GRAND COUNCIL MEETING**. Holiday Inn Select Baltimore-North (Timonium, MD). "Avery GLBT-friendly con." Guest of Honor: Esther Friesner; Artist GoH: TBA; Special Guest: Katherine Kurtz. Membership: \$45 until 11/1/2007; \$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: jaille@darkovercon.com

Nov. 16-18, 2007 **PHILCON 2007**. Sheraton Philadelphia Center City Hotel (Phila., PA). Principal Speaker: Eric Flint; Artist GoH: Sue Dawe; Costuming Special Guest: Kevin Roche. Membership: \$45 until 10/31/2007; \$50 after that & at the door. Download PDF membership from their website. Website: WWW.PHILCON.ORG e-mail: registration2007@philcon.org

August 6-10, 2008 **DENVENTION 3 (The 66th WorldCon)**. Colorado Convention Center & nearby hotels (Denver, CO). Guest of Honor: Lois McMaster Bujold; Artist GoH: Rick Sternback. \$130 thru 05/31/2007 (will go UP after that!). Make checks payable to "Denvention 3" and send to: Denvention 3, PO Box 1349, Denver, CO 80201 Website: <http://denvention.org> Information at: info@denvention.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. Artist Guest of Honor: Alicia Austin. Information at: www.gaylaxicon2008.org

