



Lambda Sci-Fi DC Area Gaylaxians

PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044

(202) 232-3141 - Issue #215 - Feb. 2008

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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 February 28th.

Here are the details on the next several book discussion meetings:

Feb. 28th - *Rainbow's End*, by Vernor Vinge; moderator: Carl.

March 27th - *Hammerfall*, by C.J. Cherryh; moderator: Randy.

April 24th - *World War Z*, by Max Brooks; moderator: Krista. Λ Ψ Φ

February LSF Meeting

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



Come Play with Me! Game Party Announcement by Ro Kelson

How do you play a game you like and have no friends interested? Plan and host a game day with all your new Gay Sci-fi folks. Way back at the 1990 Gaylaxicon, I met this great woman name Sue. She invited me (and a group of others) to learn how to play this game called *XXXenophile*. I had never heard of the game before. I remember her teaching us to play the game, and some eight of us played until the wee dawn. I was hooked. Enter problem one: I moved a lot in the last eighteen years. Problem two: I'd forgotten how to play. What is a boy to do? Throw a Game Day for those who would enjoy a space set up to do so!

That is what I'm doing. You're invited to join me for an afternoon of fun and food. On February 23, 2008, from 1 PM to 8 PM. Please bring yourself, a food product to share, and your fav games to play. The address is 2223 Osborn Drive, Silver Spring, MD. If you have a question, contact Dakota at 240-314-9020 or rkelson@gmail.com Λ Ψ Φ

Minutes of the January LSF Meeting

taken by Carl
(Scott's at work)

There wasn't really any pressing "business" for the club, so we went right into the "social" portion of the meeting.

There will be an LSF outing this Friday night (Jan. 18) to see the new J.J. Abrams film *Cloverfield*.

James C. passed around copies of *Metro Weekly* and the *Blade's Out in DC*, both of which feature George Takei on the cover. And *Out in DC* also has a short article about Gaylaxicon 2008 (along with a picture of Author Guest of Honor, Geoff Ryman). It was noted that George Takei will be in the DC area this coming week; he will be the "guest narrator" for a concert entitled "Baltimore Symphony Orchestra: Sci-Fi Spectacular" at the Strathmore Music Center (North Bethesda, MD).

Upcoming meetings of the LSF Book Discussion Group will center around the following books: *Melusine*, by Sarah Monette (Jan. 24), *Rainbows End*, by Vernor Vinge (Feb. 28), and *Hammerfall*, by C.J. Cherryh (March 27).

Carl passed around the newest ALA catalog. He intends to buy "a whole bunch'a" the new Wonder Woman bookmarks to pass out at the LSF Pride Day table.

The new sci-fi series *Termina-*
(continued on page 2)

WHAT'S INSIDE?

Author Reading at March LSF Meeting (pg. 2); **F&SF Pulp Adventures Ride Again!** (book reviews - pg. 3); **The Door Through Space** (book review - pg. 4); **Maila Nurmi - "Vampira"** (obituary - pg. 5); **About Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians** (pg. 6); **Con Calendar** (pg. 6)

January LSF Minutes

continued from page 2

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tor: The Sarah Connor Chronicles will premiere tonight on the Fox Channel (with the second part tomorrow night).

Season 2 of *Torchwood* will premiere this Wednesday (in Britain) and will appear on BBC America in about a week and a half. This season will feature James Marsden (Spike, from *Buffy*) as a Jack-like time agent who has had a “history” with Capt. Jack. (Watch for the highly-anticipated “lip lock” scene!)

Season 3 of *Battlestar Galactica* will be coming out in DVD soon, but it won't include *Razor* (which has already appeared on its own DVD).

What's up with *Blood Ties*? Dorrie says she read a posting yesterday that said there might be a third season, due to fan response. And the last 2 episodes of Season 2 have only appeared on-line, via the Lifetime website.

The new season of *Kyle XY* starts tomorrow (Monday).

Krista reported that Tim Pratt (author of *The Strange Adventures of Rangergirl*) has a new book coming out. Lynn Flewelling's fourth “Nightrunner” book, entitled *Shadows Return* (Bantam), is also coming out soon. Carl reported that he'd picked up a copy of Frank Frazetta's new book, *Rough Works*, and that it's just chock-full of studies, sketches, and preliminary designs for covers by the great artist (surprisingly small in size, costs \$19.95).

Peter passed around several items, including the latest edition of *SIGMA* (Pittsburgh sci-fi group newsletter). The rest of the items could be claimed by anyone who wanted them: *Dr. Who* “audio adventures” promo-CDs; a limited edition astronomy software CD; a Sci-Fi Channel Trivia Game CD; and miscellaneous comic books (from Scott, via Peter).

Peter commented that he really thinks the new film *I Am Legend* deserves a Hugo nomination. In related news (you know: “abandoned/ruined city” motif), Carl announced that The History Channel will soon air a program entitled *Life After People* (Jan. 21, 9 PM);

it seems to have some sort of tenuous relationship to the book *The World Without Us*, by Alan Weisman (which Carl reviewed in this newsletter a few months ago). Like Weisman's book, the program will apparently focus on what would happen to human artifacts (cities, etc.) if humanity “simply disappeared.”

Jim Williams talked about the new upcoming Pixar feature, *Wall-E*. He said it should be really good — possibly one of Pixar's best — and that the rough cut (seen by a friend of his) reportedly looks really good.

The upcoming *Incredible Hulk 2* will apparently feature Ed Norton as Banner. [Ed. Note: Quite a letdown from Eric Bana, says !!] Various other upcoming films were discussed, including (to everyone's amazement and chagrin) the fact that *The Day the Earth Stood Still* is apparently being remade!!?

Peter led a discussion of potential Hugo nominees for Best Dramatic Presentation, both Long Form and Short Form. He'd appreciate hearing from anyone who's got ideas/opinions on this matter.

And, finally, we got around to the annual LSF Book/Gift Exchange! (Teresa had been bouncing around impatiently throughout the meeting!) Here's who got what from whom:

Krista received Kurt Vonnegut's *The Sirens of Titan* from Levaughn.

Dorrie received Rob Thurman's *Nightlife* and *Moonshine* from James C.

Levaughn received *Tales of the Slayer*, Volume 3, from Dorrie.

Randy received Paul Malmont's *The Chinatown Dead* *Cloud Peril* and reprints of two *Shadow* stories from Carl.

Rob received Alan Moore & Kevin O'Neill's *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen: The Black Dossier* from Krista.

Robert received Walter Miller Jr.'s *A Canticle for Leibowitz* from Teresa.

Teresa received *Masterpieces in 3-D: M.C. Escher and the Art of Illusion* (including 3-D glasses!) from Robert.

(continued on page 5)

Author Reading at March LSF Meeting announced by Peter Knapp



Author Warren Rochelle will deliver a reading at the March 9th LSF meeting.

Warren Rochelle is an Associate Professor of English at the University of Mary Washington, Fredericksburg, Virginia. He has had his work published in several journals, including *Foundation* and *Extrapolation*. His critical work, *Communities of the Heart: The Rhetoric of Myth in the Fiction of Ursula K. Le Guin*, was published by Liverpool University Press in 2001. His creative works (short fiction and poetry) have appeared in *Forbidden Lines*, *Aboriginal Science Fiction*, *Beyond the Third Planet*, *Crucible*, and *Romance and Beyond*. He is also the author of two novels: *The Wild Boy* (2001) and *Harvest of Changelings* (2007).

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Gaylaxicon 2008



"Twenty
years
of
fun!"

See Con Calendar
on page 6 for details.



F&SF Pulp Adventures Ride Again!

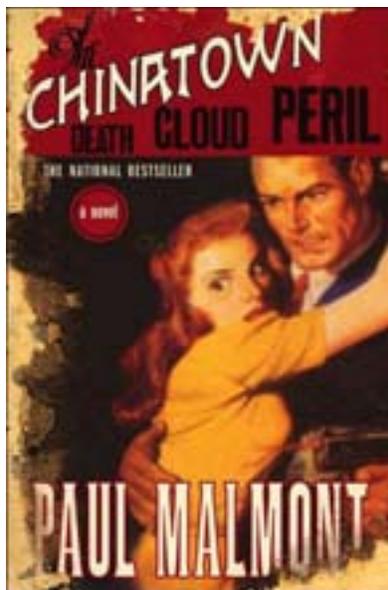
two review by Carl Cipra

The Chinatown Death Cloud Peril by Paul Malmont

(Simon & Schuster, 2006)

It all starts in 1937 in a bar in New York City, with an unfortunate chance encounter between the two greatest pulp writers of all time: Walter Gibson (aka Maxwell Grant, author of the “Shadow” stories) and Lester Dent (aka Kenneth Robeson, author of the “Doc Savage” stories). Tall tales are exchanged and old animosities flare up — with a “new kid on the block,” one Lafayette Ron Hubbard (aka “the Flash”), along to watch the fireworks. Soon after this acrimonious meeting, H.P. Lovecraft is murdered, although the official cause of death is listed as “cancer.” (But, as everyone is later surprised to learn, he’s not *really* “dead”...) And then off we go on a wild adventure up and down the East Coast, with escapes and rescues and cliffhangers and gunfights and a mysterious idol and an evil mastermind and car chases and skulking henchmen and damsels-in-distress and the living dead and Yellow Peril — in fact, everything you’d expect in a top-flight Pulp Era novel is expertly thrown into *The Chinatown Death Cloud Peril*. No, Maxwell and Dent may not be “the Shadow” and “Doc Savage,” but their skills and fortitude are certainly put to the test! (OK, Hubbard isn’t exactly shown in the best light — but even *he* really helps out when the going gets rough!)

And the “supporting cast” includes a veritable Pulp Era *Who’s Who*: Robert Heinlein, Orson Welles, Louis L’Amour, John Campbell, George Rozen (illustrator of the classic *Shadow Magazine* covers), and Chester Himes (African-American pulp writer, the author of *Cotton Comes to Harlem*). There are even brief appearances by Jerry Siegel and Joe Schuster (the creators of “Superman,” who hadn’t yet made their sale) and Joe Kavalier (Michael Chabon’s fictional character from *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay*, one of



the creators of *The Escapist*). Oh, and we can’t forget H.P. Lovecraft himself, who gets a chance to re-enact some of the more gruesome scenes from a couple of his own *Weird Tales* stories.

Besides being a pretty darn good re-creation of a Pulp Era story, *The Chinatown Death Cloud Peril* also does a fine job of giving the reader a good idea of what life was like for Pulp writers during the late 1930s. Yes, Malmont uses some creative license to help move the story along from time to time; but I’ve only heard about one outright factual glitch. (It was pointed out to me that *Amazing Stories* was not a Street & Smith publication and that Campbell did not edit it.) Even the book’s cover features a Pulp-style image by Jackie Seow: a clinging redhead, a stalwart hero, and a blazing gun. Ya gotta love it!

But, in case you didn’t catch the earlier hints, *Chinatown Death Cloud Peril* isn’t *just* a historical mystery featuring people and events from the late 1930s. No, siree! It also contains actual F&SF content! (But I won’t spoil the surprise — read it and find out what I mean!)

If you enjoyed *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay*, I think you’ll also get a kick out of *The Chinatown Death Cloud Peril*. I highly recommend this book; and I can hardly wait to see what Malmont does in his “upcoming novel, *The Wolves of Eden*.”

Shadows Bend

by David Barbour and Richard Raleigh
(ACE, 2006)

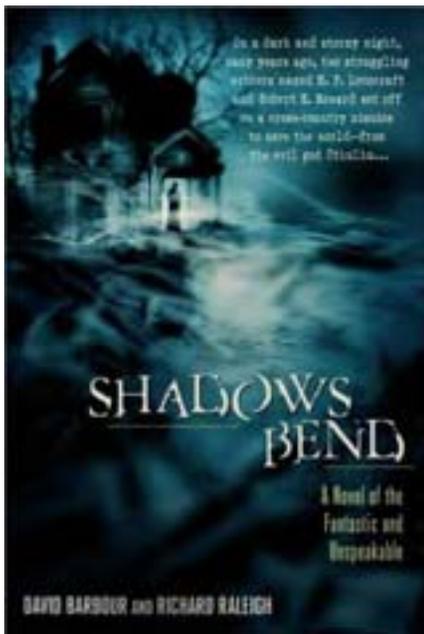
And then, fortuitously, I stumbled across *Shadows Bend*, a similarly-themed novel. This one also features H.P. Lovecraft — this time teamed up with his two fellow *Weird Tales* authors and correspondence buddies: Robert E. Howard and Clark Ashton Smith. But unlike *The Chinatown Death Cloud Peril*, this novel is *very* firmly situated in the world of Dark Fantasy.

The year is 1935 and the place is Cross Plains, Texas — and (unlike *our* version of reality), the Great Meeting between Lovecraft and Howard is about to occur. Another acquaintance of Lovecraft has passed him a strange Artifact; and it would appear that the Cthulhu Mythos isn’t simply a product of Lovecraft’s fertile imagination. Lovecraft is having strange (or, possibly, *stranger*), disturbing dreams — as well as visitations from “night ghaunts” right out of his childhood nightmares (shuggoths?). Terrified, he flees his New England home and heads to the wilds of Texas to see if his old buddy “Bob” Howard can help him out. “HP” finally convinces Howard to leave his dying mother’s bedside and drive them both to California, where he hopes to consult fellow author Clark Ashton Smith. It seems that Smith has stumbled across a copy of the (supposedly fictional) *Necronomicon* in a San Francisco antiquarian bookstore; and Lovecraft hopes that, between the three of them, they can solve the riddle of the mysterious Artifact. Along the way, they rescue Glory McKenna (a “soiled dove”) from two sinister Dark Men; and she becomes their companion in what turns out to be a race to save humanity from Cthulhu and his foul supernatural Servants. Over the course of the story, “HP,” “Bob,” and Glory encounter all kinds of Lovecraftian perils — up to and including a climactic battle with the Great Old One itself.

Besides being a supernatural thriller, *Shadows Bend* provides a fascinating look into the lives and characters of Lovecraft and Howard. (continued on page 4)

F&SF Pulp Adventures

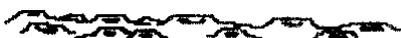
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ters of Lovecraft, Howard, and Smith; and it plausibly explores how they might have interacted if they'd ever actually met. Even their darker sides — such as Howard's and Lovecraft's gender and racial bigotry — are given a look-see. I must admit, however, that I was less-than-pleased with the dialogue written for Lovecraft. I found that his pedantic, stilted speech patterns grated on my nerves, to say the least. (Granted, Lovecraft wrote his *fiction* that way; but I've never read any of his letters, so I can't say whether or not he actually *talked* that way, too.) I was especially intrigued by the inclusion of the entirely-fictional Glory McKenna. She serves as an effective foil to the three Pulp writers; and she (as well as some Cthulhu-inspired nightmares) gives the reader a chance to explore the troubled sexual lives of Howard and Lovecraft.

I can't say as I liked *Shadows Bend* as much as I liked *The Chinatown Death Cloud Peril*; but I'm definitely glad I read it. And I definitely recommend it to anyone who's a fan of "the Three Musketeers of *Weird Tales*": H.P. Lovecraft, Robert E. Howard, and Clark Ashton Smith.

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The Door Through Space by Marion Zimmer Bradley

a re-issued classic
reviewed by Carl Cipra

Recently, between "weighty tomes," I was casting about for something simple and light to read; and I happened across a recent re-print of a very early work by Marion Zimmer Bradley: *The Door Through Space* (Cosmos Books, 2007). In fact, *The Door Through Space* was originally published in 1961, and it was MZB's *first* published novel! Cool! I've always enjoyed the earlier Bradley novels, and I'd been meaning to get around to this one sooner or later — so I bought it. And what a pleasant and fascinating little surprise it turned out to be!

First off, this really *isn't* a Darkover novel. (Which surprised the heck out of me — I'd always thought it *was*.) It's sort of a *quasi*-Darkover novel — or, as Elisabeth Waters calls it in her Introduction, "a proto-Darkover novel." And I can see that's going to require some explanation.

The Door Through Space doesn't actually take place on Darkover. It takes place on Wolf, a planet circling the star Phi Coronis. (Darkover — for those of you "in the know" — is actually Cottman IV, the fourth planet circling the star Cottman.) Wolf and Darkover would seem, however, to be in the same universe — the planets Darkover (as a source for Earth-style horses) and Vainwal are both mentioned in passing in *The Door Through Space*. Simple, huh? So why the "proto-Darkover" appellation? Ah, well, that's where things get a bit more complicated...

You see, there are *lots* of similarities between Wolf and Darkover. Wolf circles a dim red star. Wolf is inhabited by a mix of humans and non-humans; the indigenous societies are pretty much low-tech, with a few of the inhabitants exhibiting psionic powers of one sort or another. Wolf has a Terran presence — a spaceport and a Trade City — under the direction of an official known as a Legate. That all sounds pretty familiar, doesn't it? Oh, but wait; there's



more. Try out a few of these terms, all of them referring to Wolf-ian things: Ghost Wind; Dry-towns (where women wear ceremonial chains); catmen and Ya-men; *Terranan* (local terminology for Terrans, *not* complimentary); a town named Ard-carran that has lots of brothels; and the concept of *kihar* ("face" or personal/social worth). Suddenly, Wolf is starting to sound a *lot* like Darkover, isn't it? But there's no matrix technology, no Towers, no *laran*, no Comyn — none of the standard trappings of a Darkover novel.

I think what we've got here is, as Elisabeth Waters says, "a proto-Darkover novel." MZB had published her first actual Darkover story about 3 years earlier ("The Planet Savers," in *Amazing Stories*, Dec. 1958). When MZB wrote *The Door Through Space* (published 1961), maybe the concept of Darkover hadn't really gelled yet — maybe MZB was still mulling over (in an authorial fashion) whether or not to return to Darkover for a longer stay. (*The Planet Savers* was re-issued in an ACE Double edition in 1962, along with another Darkover novel, *The Sword of Aldones*; and *The Bloody Sun* didn't come out until 1964.) And (in an authorially economic fashion) maybe MZB simply re-used some Darkover terms from *The Planet Savers* when she wrote *The Door Through Space*. Heck, for all I know, maybe MZB actually wrote *The Door Through Space* before she wrote any of her Darkover stories. (Does anyone out there know for sure?)

(continued on page 5)

Maila Nurmi ("Vampira") 1921 - 2007



[This info was passed along by Michael C. on Jan. 11th.] I just got word from a friend in LA that camp icon Maila Nurmi, aka Vampira, has passed away.

Finnish-born blonde knockout Maila Nurmi was a dancer and model who came up with her Vampira persona (based on Charles Addams's "Morticia Addams") for a Halloween costume contest. She won first place and also got a job offer to host schlocky horror movies on Hollywood's Channel 7. She became an instant hit and had fans worldwide; but by the late 1950s her fame fizzled. She appeared in a number of small roles in films, most famously Ed Wood's *Plan Nine from Outer Space*, but also in films like *The Beat Generation*, *Sex Kittens Go to College*, and *The Magic Sword*.

Nurmi retired from films to paint and design jewelry; she was also an animal-rights activist. She emerged from retirement for a comical cameo in the 1998 film *I Woke Up Early the Day I Died*, a film about a transvestite bank robber, that was based on an unproduced script by Ed Wood. (It also starred Billy Zane, Tippi Hedren, Ron Perlman, and Christina Ricci.) The only surviving footage of Nurmi in her Vampira character is what appears in *Plan Nine*; none of her TV work seems to have been preserved. She was also memorably portrayed by Lisa Marie in Tim Burton's 1994 film *Ed Wood*.

No details about her death have been made public as of yet, but she was 86 years old.

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January LSF Minutes

continued from page 2

Lex (substituting for Carl) received David Brin's latest "Uplift" trilogy (*Brightness Reef*, *Heaven's Reach*, *Infinity's Shore*) from Julian.

Peter received the DVD *Masters of Horror: Lucky McKee - Sick Girl* from Randy.

Julian received copies of several Spectrum nominees (*Spin Control*, *Carnival*, *Broken Wings*, *Sword of the Guardian*) from Rob.

James C. received Pullman's complete "Dark Materials" series (*The Golden Compass*, *The Subtle Knife*, *The Amber Spyglass*) from Peter.

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The Door Through Space

continued from page 4

Whatever the provenance, *The Door Through Space* is classic MZB, and it sure as heck reads like a Darkover novel! Race Cargill was once the best agent of the Terran Secret Service on the planet Wolf. His extensive undercover field work made him the expert on Wolf society and customs; he had all but "gone native." Then, years ago, Cargill was horribly scarred in a blood feud with Rakhal, his "native half brother" and his brother-in-law; and Cargill has been unable to go out beyond the borders of the Terran enclave since then. (The inevitable resumption of the blood feud with Rakhal can only end in the death of one of them — and Cargill's sister would suffer either way.) But now anti-Terran sentiment is rising on Wolf. Followers of the vile Toad God are somehow involved, as is a mysterious figure known only as "the Toymaker" who seems to have access to some very advanced technology. And rumor has it that Rakhal is also mixed up in the efforts to wrest control of Wolf from the Terranans. Once again, Race Cargill must disguise himself as a Dry-towner and venture out among the exotic inhabitants of Wolf. Can he avoid his duel-to-the-death with Rakhal long enough to foil the anti-Terran forces and discover the source of their mysterious "teleportation" devices?

The Door Through Space is part of the F&SF sub-genre known as "planetary romances" — other examples of which include Leigh Brackett's "Mars" stories (such as "Citadel of Lost Ships"), C.L. Moore's "Northwest of Earth" stories (such as "Shambleau"), and L. Sprague de Camp's "Viagens Interplanetarias" novels (such as *The Hand of Zei*). And, like the others of its ilk, *The Door Through Space* provides its readers with adventure and romance in an exotic setting — sort of like taking a story by H. Rider Haggard or Talbot Mundy or Harold Lamb and plopping it down on another world. I found *The Door Through Space* to be a quick read, an easy read, a fun read! And if you enjoy classic MZB too, then I highly recommend it to you!

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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 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

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. Membership: were \$175 thru 05/31/2007 (has gone UP since then!). 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**. Hyatt Regency - Bethesda (Bethesda, MD). Guest of Honor: Geoff Ryman. Artist Guest of Honor: Alicia Austin. Download PDF membership form from the website. Membership: \$65 from 01/01/2008; \$70 after 09/30/2008. Make checks payable to "Gaylaxicon 2008" & send to: Gaylaxicon 2008, c/o Lambda Sci-Fi, PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044-0656. Membership can also be purchased on-line via PayPal. Information at: www.gaylaxicon2008.org

October 17-19, 2008 **CAPCLAVE 2008**. Rockville Hilton (Rockville, MD). Writer GoH: James Morrow; Critic GoH: Michael Dirda. Membership: \$35 through the end of 2007 (will go up after that). Download the form from their website, with check payable to "Capclave 2008," and send to: Capclave 2008, c/o Barry Newton, PO Box 53, Ashton, MD 20861. (On-line payment options also available.) Online at: www.capclave.org

???? **PHILCON 2008**. ("Philcon 2008 has come unstuck in Time and Space!") Membership: \$40 as of 11/19/07; \$45 as of 6/1/08; \$50 as of 10/1/08; \$60 at the door (where/whenever *that's*!). Make checks payable to "Philcon 2008" and send to: Philcon Registration, PO Box 8303, 30th Street Station, Philadelphia, PA 19101-8303. (Online registration is also available.) More details as they become available. Website: www.philcon.org

October 2009 **GAYLAXICON 2009**. (Minneapolis, MN). Details to be announced as they are available. Membership: \$60 until 09/01/2009; then \$70 until 10/01/2009; \$80 at the door. Make checks payable to "Gaylaxicon 2009" and send to: Gaylaxicon 2009, P.O. Box 2412, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402
Website: www.gaylacticnetwork.org/gaylaxicon2009

