



# Lambda Sci-Fi DC Area Gaylaxians



PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044



(202) 232-3141 - Issue #217 - April 2008

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



## 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 April 24th.

Here are the details on the next couple of book discussion meetings:  
**April 24th** - *World War Z*, by Max Brooks; moderator: Krista.  
**May 22nd** - *Tithe*, by Holly Black; moderator: Samantha. **Λ Ψ Φ**

## April LSF Meeting

The next LambdaSci-Fi meeting will be held on the **Sunday, April 13th**, 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. *There is a proposal to be voted on at the business meeting - see page 2 for details.*

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



## Event Preview: Indiana Jones Triple Feature



### LSF Video Potluck Party in May



announced by Peter



Hi! Just to let you know, Rob and I will be hosting an Indiana Jones Triple Feature LSF Video Potluck Party on Saturday, May 17, to celebrate the release of *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* on May 22.

Door open at 3:30 PM. The festivities will start 4:00 PM in the living room on the 50" plasma TV with a triple feature of: *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*.

People are encouraged to bring other movies to watch. The usual video party rules apply for anything shown in the guest room (DVDs - no VHS videos please) - the popular vote wins.

Please bring food or (non-alcoholic) drink to share. We'll take a break between *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* for dinner.



Here are specific details:

**What:** Indiana Jones Triple Feature LSF Video Potluck Party

**When:** Saturday, May 17

**Time:** Doors open at 3:30 PM; movies start at 4:00 PM; dinner around 6:00 PM

**Where:** The home of Rob and Peter: 1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC 20009

**Link to directions:**

<http://lambdasf.org/lsf/club/PeterRob.html>

**What to Bring:** DVDs (no VHS videos please), food or non-alcoholic drink to share

**More Information:** Call Peter and Rob at 202-483-6369, or e-mail Peter at:

[PeterKnapp@wavelengthsonline.com](mailto:PeterKnapp@wavelengthsonline.com)

**Λ Ψ Φ**



## Gaylaxicon 2008

"Twenty years of fun!"

October 10-13, 2008

Hyatt Regency - Bethesda, MD

See Con Calendar on page 6 for details.



## WHAT'S INSIDE?

March 9th LSF Meeting Minutes (pg. 2); Arthur C. Clarke (obituary - pg. 2); Gary Gyax (obituary - pg. 4); *Territory* (book review - pg. 5); About Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians (pg. 6); Con Calendar (pg. 6)

**March 9th LSF  
Meeting Minutes**  
taken by Scott

# ΛΨΦ

## Business Portion

There was a unanimous vote for **LSF to rent a table** at the Sunday (June 22, 2008) **Baltimore Pride** event.

**Carl made a proposal** for LSF to purchase for \$125 a full-page ad in the Gaylaxicon 2008 Program Book. The vote on this proposal will be held next month.

## Social Portion

Speaker Teresa initiated a name circle to greet both regular attendees and newcomers.

Those who attended the recent LSF *Jumper* movie outing indicated that the movie was fun, but certainly not great.

The passing of *Dungeons & Dragons* co-creator Gary Gygax was briefly mentioned. Rob described some of the new features of the new release of *D&D*.

Peter has pre-ordered the *Star Gate* DVD.

Carl mentioned that, when he saw the *Spiderwick Chronicles* movie, a number of parents had to take their small children out of the theater, probably because some of the scenes were too scary for small kids.

Rob said that an episode of *Star Trek: New Voyages* – now renamed

*Phase II* – is a Nebula finalist, which has raised some controversy within SFWA.

Barrett passed around recent issues of an Israeli F&SF newsletter, *Cyber Cozen* (in English and Hebrew) and a South Africa F&SF newsletter, *Probe*.

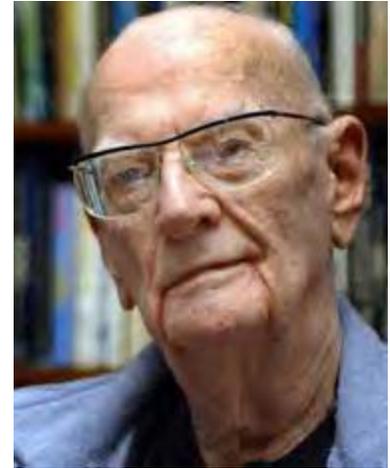
It was noted that Christopher Rice will be at Lambda Rising on March 27th.

Peter mentioned that both *Battlestar Galactica* and *Doctor Who* will begin their new seasons in April.

Carl listed the upcoming LSF book club books – *Hammerfall* by C.J. Cherryh (March), *World War Z* by Max Brooks (April), and *Tithe* by Holly Black (May).

Then **guest author Warren Rochelle** read from his newest book, *Harvest of Changelings*, which came out last May. Warren read aloud part of the book's Prologue and part of a chapter. The plot centers upon a group of youths who discover their faerie heritage and learn how to use their faerie powers. Warren said that he is currently on sabbatical and writing a sequel. He said that *Harvest of Changelings* should not be considered YA literature because of some of the content. Warren's other books include the *Wild Boy* and *Communities of the Heart*.

ΛΨΦ



**Arthur C. Clarke**  
1917 – 2008

As Rob said in his e-mail: "Arthur C. Clarke has passed away. One of the brightest lights in the field is dim."

Clarke had been confined to a wheelchair for several years, with complications stemming from a youthful bout with polio, and he had suffered from back trouble recently. He died early March 13th at a hospital in Colombo, Sri Lanka, where he had lived since the 1956.

In a videotaped 90th birthday message to fans, Clarke said he still hoped to see some sign of intelligent life beyond Earth, more work on alternatives to fossil fuels, and "closer to home," an end to the 25-year civil war in Sri Lanka between the government and ethnic Tamil separatists.

Clarke was, of course, one of the most eminent SF writers of the 20th Century. In 1937 (a year after he moved to London to take a civil service job), he began writing his first science fiction novel, a story of the far, far future that was later published as *Against the Fall of Night* (1953). During his long career, he wrote almost 100 novels and collections of short stories, as well as more than 30 nonfiction works. His best-known works, such as *2001: A Space Odyssey* (the novel-

(continued on page 3)

## Signs It's Time to Hang Up Your Cape

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

Retirement is not something that springs on you. It creeps up slowly. Here are a few warning signs that it's time to hang up your cape:

- (1) You've traded in your supermobile for a golf cart.
- (2) Your favorite gadget is your electric toothbrush.
- (3) You begin every other sentence with, "Nowadays..."
- (4) You don't fight crime after 7:30 in the evening.
- (5) Your new easy chair has more options than your supermobile.
- (6) Your sidekick is dating someone half their age, and isn't breaking any laws.
- (7) The candles on your birthday cake generate more heat than your thermo vision.
- (8) You enjoy cutting coupons more than the crime rate.
- (9) Whenever you hit the streets you take an umbrella and a sweater.
- (10) You used to stick to walls – now you're glued to the television.



## Clarke Obituary

continued from page 2

ization, 1968) or *Childhood's End* (1953) combined the hard science he learned studying physics and mathematics with insights into how future discoveries would change humanity. Clarke and director Stanley Kubrick shared an Academy Award nomination (for best adapted screenplay) for *2001, A Space Odyssey* (1968). The film grew out of Clarke's 1951 short story, "The Sentinel" (*10 Story Fantasy Magazine*, 1951) about an alien transmitter left on the moon that ceases broadcasting when humans arrive. His works have been translated into some 40 languages, and worldwide sales have been estimated at more than \$25 million.

As a Royal Air Force officer during World War II, Clarke took part in the early development of radar. In 1945, in a paper written for the radio journal *Wireless World*, he suggested that artificial satellites hovering in geosynchronous orbit above Earth could be used to relay telecommunications signals across the globe. Thus, Clarke is widely credited with introducing the idea of the communications satellite, the first of which were launched in the early 1960s. (He never patented the idea, prompting a 1965 essay of his entitled "A Short Pre-History of Comsats, or How I Lost a Billion Dollars in My Spare Time.")

In 1956, Clarke settled permanently in Colombo, the capital of what was then Ceylon. With a business partner, he established a guided diving service for tourists and wrote about his diving experiences in a number of books, beginning with *The Coast of Coral* (1956). In 1962, Clarke suffered a severe attack of poliomyelitis. He apparently recovered completely; but in 1984 he developed post-polio syndrome, a progressive condition characterized by muscle weakness and extreme fatigue. He spent the last years of his life in a wheelchair. Clarke stayed in touch with the rest of the world through an ever-expanding collection of up-to-date computers and communications accessories.



Clarke was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1998. His influence on public attitudes toward space was acknowledged by American astronauts and Russian cosmonauts, by scientists like astronomer Carl Sagan, and by movie and television producers. Gene Roddenberry credited Clarke's writings with giving him the courage to pursue his *Star Trek* project in the face of indifference and ridicule from television executives.

Clarke was famous for formulating the following "laws of prediction:"  
– "When a distinguished but elderly scientist states that something is possible, he is almost certainly right. When he states that something is impossible, he is very probably wrong." ("Hazards of Prophecy: The Failure of Imagination," *Profiles of the Future*, 1962)

– "The only way of discovering the limits of the possible is to venture a little way past them into the impossible." (same source)

– "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." (*Profiles of the Future*, 1973 revision)

– "For every expert there is an equal and opposite expert." (*Profiles of the Future*, 1999 revision)

Although many of Clarke's stories featured gay or bisexual characters, Clarke never publicly admitted his own sexual preferences. (For example, when journalists asked him outright if he was gay, he responded: "No, merely mildly cheerful.") This made it possible for "official" obituaries – such as for CNN or *The Times* – to ignore any mention of sexuality whatsoever.

Clarke was briefly married in 1953 to Marilyn Mayfield, an American

diving enthusiast; they separated after a few months and were divorced in 1964. One of Clarke's closest relationships was supposedly with Leslie Ekanayake, a male fellow-diver in Sri Lanka, who died in a motorcycle accident in 1977. In addition to numerous young "man servants," Clarke shared his Colombo home with Leslie's brother Hector (his partner in the diving business), Hector's wife Valerie and their three daughters.

It's interesting to note that on March 16th, Sri Lankan authorities announced that just before his death Clarke had been cleared of 1998 pedophile allegations against him. Said the chief of the National Child Protection Authority, Jagath Wellawatte: "We had no case against Clarke and no one had come forward to say they were abused by him." And NCPA investigator W.T.D. Wijesena said: "We have not had any formal complaint or testimony from anyone saying they were abused by Sir Arthur. We cannot go on the basis of rumours."

Obituary researchers had resurrected the decade-old scandal: In 1998, the Sri Lankan Presidential Task Force on the Prevention of Child Abuse (predecessor of the NCPA) had initiated an investigation into Clarke's conduct with the help of Interpol. Police had spent two and a half hours recording a statement from Clarke in 1998, but no charges were brought against him. Clarke vehemently denied the allegations; he even threatened to sue the British newspaper that had made the charges following a "sting operation" by two undercover reporters. He said at the time that he was "disturbed to discover that there has been a long-standing conspiracy here in Sri Lanka to discredit him...involving activists associated with child welfare organizations." The accusations surfaced while Britain's Prince Charles was visiting Colombo in 1996 and was due to confer a knighthood on Clarke. The investiture was eventually held two years later.

Λ Ψ Φ



**Gary Gygax**  
1938 - 2008

Gary Gygax, co-creator of the fantasy game *Dungeons & Dragons* and one of the men who helped start the role-playing game phenomenon, died on March 4th at his home in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. He was 69. Gygax had been suffering from health problems for several years, including an abdominal aneurysm. He is survived by his wife and six children.



Gygax and Dave Arneson developed *Dungeons & Dragons* in 1974, using medieval characters and mythical creatures. The game became a hit and was eventually turned into video games, books, and movies. *D&D* also spawned a wealth of similar RPG games and later inspired a whole genre of computer games.

Ernest Gary Gygax grew up in Chicago, and his family moved to Lake Geneva at the age of 8. Gygax's father was a Swiss immigrant who played violin in the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, read fantasy books to his only son, and hooked him on the genre. Gygax dropped out of high school but took anthropology classes at the University of Chicago for a while. He was working as an insurance underwriter in the 1960s, when he began playing war-themed board games. But Gygax wanted to create a game that involved more fantasy. To free up time to work on that, he

left the insurance business and became a shoe repairman.

In addition to all his *D&D* gamework, Gygax was a prolific fantasy writer. He wrote dozens of fantasy books, including the "Greyhawk" and "Dangerous Journeys" series of novels.

Gygax always enjoyed hearing from *D&D*'s legion of devoted fans, many of whom would stop by the family's Lake Geneva home (about 55 miles southwest of Milwaukee). Despite his declining health, Gygax hosted weekly games of *Dungeons & Dragons* as recently as January of this year. "It really meant a lot to him to hear from people from over the years about how he helped them become a doctor, a lawyer, a policeman, what he gave them," said Gygax's wife Gail.

Λ Ψ Φ

## Getting Started with the Forces of Darkness

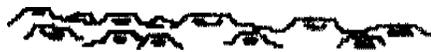
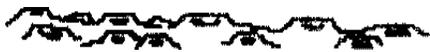
excerpted from *How to Be a Villain*, by Neil Zawacki  
(Chronicle Books, 2003)

Congratulations on your decision to join the forces of darkness... Evil can always use another talented agent to lend a hand in the name of mayhem. The sooner you get started, the sooner you can enjoy the fruits of limitless power, revel in unbridled greed and debauchery, and begin the construction of the enormous and needlessly complex weapons of destruction in your basement.

Whether you practice evil in the privacy of your own home or set your goals at nothing less than international domination, you'll find plenty of valuable tips in this guide. Whatever your background or experience, rest assured

there's an aspect of evil that's right for you. If you don't find your niche immediately, don't despair. This handy guide is designed to help you discover and nurture the darkness within for a lifetime of heedless villainy. No matter how well adjusted you may appear to friends and family, you are the only one who can truly know your evil potential.

**TIP:** If you find that you still lack confidence, try this exercise. Stand in front of a mirror with the lights turned off. Stare at your ghostly visage and say with confidence, "I'm bad. I'm really, really bad."



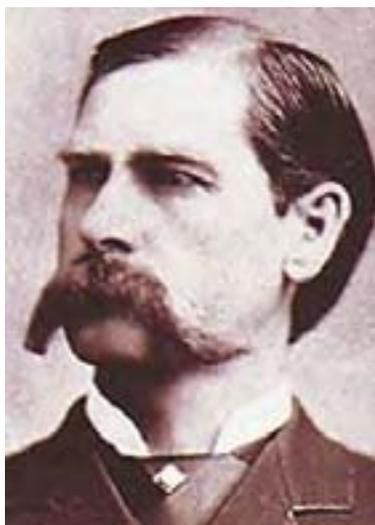
**Territory**  
**by Emma Bull**  
 (Tor, 2007)  
 a short review by Carl Cipra

I think it's been quite a while since I've read anything by Emma Bull. The last (and perhaps the only) Bull book I can remember having read is *War for the Oaks* (1987). To my knowledge, *War* was one of the very first of the "urban fantasy" novels, and I quite enjoyed its uniqueness. Well, I think Bull has done it again with *Territory* — another really unique fantasy novel, as well as another *really* good read.

The time: 1881. The place: Tombstone, Arizona Territory. Yes, *that* Tombstone, as in the Earps, the Clantons, and the OK Corral — *but*, the famous gunfight hasn't happened yet. This novel purports to be "the story *leading up to that story*."

Into town rides one Jesse Fox, an itinerant cowpoke/gunslinger/pro prospector/whatever. Jesse also happens to have an innate talent for magic — at least, that's what his San Francisco friend, Chow Lung (physician *and* magician), says — but he's been suppressing this unwanted "talent" for quite some time now because of a very unsettling family history. So, as I say, Fox rides into Tombstone one day, only to discover that his Chinese friend Chow Lung is already there and has set up shop in Tombstone's Chinatown. Chow Lung insists he has "drawn" Fox to him out of magical necessity, due to some sort of supernatural "nexus" that Fox is rapidly approaching. Jesse, on the other hand, insists he's just wandered into town figuring to maybe get into the silver-prospecting business.

Fox meets Mildred Benjamin, a young widow who makes a living as the typesetter for the *Tombstone Nugget* (one of the local newspapers). She's also secretly writing tales of Western romance and derring-do for publication in the Eastern "dime novel" industry. Fox naturally also meets the rest of the traditional Tombstone *dramatis personae*: Doc Holliday, Sheriff Johnny Behan, and the rest. (If you're at all

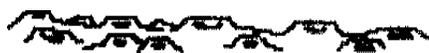


**Wyatt Earp**

familiar with *any* film version of Wyatt Earp's adventures — such as *Tombstone*, *Hour of the Gun*, *The Gunfight at the O.K. Corral*, etc. — then you've got a pretty good idea who they all are.)

And then there's Wyatt Earp. Seems as how Wyatt is also a magician — a *very powerful* magician — and he's staked out Tombstone and its silver lode as his own personal fief. Right from the outset, he pretty much leaves Jesse Fox with only three choices: (1) ally himself with Wyatt (*i.e.* serve Wyatt) and help him strengthen his hold over Tombstone; (2) leave town fast; or (3) die. You see, Wyatt already has a major magical rival, the equally deadly Johnny Ringo; and Wyatt doesn't want anyone else causing him additional problems. (Note: In "our world," Ringo was one of the gunslingers in the Clanton-McLaury gang.)

Tensions grow ever higher as a botched stagecoach hold-up seems to implicate Wyatt's brother Virgil. (Well, to be fair, Virgil Earp *did* try to rob the stage — it's just that he wasn't bright enough to effectively cover up the fact.) And the body count begins (including Fox's friend Chow Lung), with some of the corpses bearing unmistakable (and grisly) signs of magical intent. Jesse Fox is caught in the middle. Can he continue to suppress his magical talents, with his own life and that of Mildred Benjamin on the line?



**Johnny Ringo**

Historical fiction (and pretty darn *accurate* historical fiction, at that) with a dark fantasy edge. Like I said: pretty unique, isn't it?

On top of that, however, Ms. Bull has devised what I think is one of the truly unique "magic systems" in F&SF literature. I've added it to my own list of (now) "top three" — joining the "puppet/marionette magic" in Laurie Marks' *Dancing Jack* (1993) and the "floral magic" in Melissa Scott & Lisa Barnett's *Point of Dreams* (2001). The magical power used by Jesse, his friend Chow Lung, Wyatt Earp, and Johnny Ringo seems to be based on some weird combination of *feng shui*, "ley lines," and (for lack of a better term) *mana* (the Polynesian concept the impersonal force that resides in people and inanimate objects). They are able to draw upon (to various degrees) the power inherent to the land itself (the minerals, the water table, etc.); and they are also able to "draw upon" the vital forces in other people in order to bolster their own personal magical abilities. (Wyatt Earp, for instance, has been draining the life out of Doc Holliday for years — which puts an interesting spin on Holliday's supposed tuberculosis.) Well done!

I can't say as I've seen very much "hoopla" being raised about this book. I personally think Emma Bull's *Territory* is one of the better F&SF novels out there — certainly one of the more imaginative — and I highly recommend it.

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, April 13th**, 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

April 25-27, 2008 **RAVENCON 2008**. Crowne Plaza Richmond West (Richmond, VA). Author GoH: C.S. Friedman. Artist GoH: Stephen Hickman. Download membership form from website. Membership: \$35 until 4/18/2008; \$40 at the door. Make checks payable to "Ravencon" and send to: Ravencon, 43031 Elk Place, Chantilly, VA 20152 Website: [www.ravencon.com](http://www.ravencon.com)

May 23-26, 2008 **BALTICON 42**. Baltimore Marriott Hunt Valley Inn (Hunt Valley, MD). GoH: Connie Willis; Artist GoH: June Palencar. Membership: \$51 to 3/31; \$59 thereafter & at door. Make checks payable to "Balticon 42" and send to: Balticon 42, PO Box 686, Baltimore, MD 21203-0686 (On-line registration also available.) Website: [www.balticon.org](http://www.balticon.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. Membership: ~~were~~ \$175 thru 05/31/2007 (has gone UP since then!). Make checks payable to "Dvention 3" and send to: Dvention 3, PO Box 1349, Denver, CO 80201  
Website: <http://dvention.org> Information at: [info@dvention.org](mailto:info@dvention.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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.gaylacticnetwork.org/gaylaxicon2009)

