



Lambda Sci-Fi DC Area Gaylaxians



PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044



(202) 232-3141 - Issue #220 - July 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 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 July 24th.

Here are the details on the next several discussion meetings:

July 24th - *The Doll's House* (graphic novel; the 2nd "Sandman" collection), written by Neil Gaiman (various artists); moderator: Greg.

August 28th - *Undertow*, by Elizabeth Bear; moderator: Krista.

Sept. 25th - We're trying something new this month! *Howl's Moving Castle* (anime; directed by Miyazaki) - and/or, if you wish, the book by Diana Wynne Jones; moderator: Rob.

Oct. 23rd - *Vintage*, by Steve Berman; moderator: Bob A.

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Gaylaxicon 2008

"Twenty years of fun!"

October 10-13, 2008

Hyatt Regency - Bethesda, MD



Author Guest of Honor:
Geoff Ryman



Artist Guest of Honor:
Alicia Austin

See Con Calendar on page 6 for details.

July LSF Meeting

The next Lambda Sci-Fi meeting will be held on the **Sunday, July 13th**. The meeting will be held at James Crutchfield's apartment (1414 17th St. NW, #413), near Dupont Circle. The business meeting will begin (as usual) 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!

Gaming Party and Dinner Potluck July 19 (Saturday)



A laid-back social gathering, to hang out and play board and card games -- and video games if someone bring a PS3 or Wii.

Time: 1:00 PM - 11:00 PM

Where: Rob and Peter's Place - 1425 "S" Street, NW, Washington, DC, 20009-3819 (Directions at <http://lambdasf.org/lsf/club/PeterRob.html>)

What to Bring: Games (card, board, etc.) and snacks, dinner food, and/or (soft or otherwise) drinks to share.

If you have any questions, please call Peter or Rob at 202-483-6369 or send email to:

PeterKnapp@wavelengthsonline.com

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LSF Meeting Minutes (June 8, 2008)

taken by Scott

Business Meeting

DC Pride is next weekend! Peter offered to bring copies of the LSF membership form; Carl will bring book-marks; Rob will bring of the recommended reading list. On Saturday, June 14th, there will be dinner at 5:00 PM (meet first at Peter & Rob's place) and then a stroll over to view the Capital Pride Parade.

On Saturday, June 22nd, it's Baltimore Pride. It was generally decided that the people planning to help set up and man the LSF booth would gather around 9:00 AM and drive up to Baltimore. On Saturday, June 28th, the post-Pride video party will be held at Peter & Rob's place. (And they have air conditioning!) And on Saturday, July 19th, Peter and Rob will host an LSF gaming party at their place.

Rob briefly reviewed the upcoming LSF book discussion books: Octavia Butler's *Bloodchild and Other Stories* (June 26); Neil Gaiman's *The Doll's House* (a graphic novel; July 24); Elizabeth Bear's *Undertow* (Aug. 28).

Both Gaylaxicon 2008 and 2009 were promoted.

Social Meeting

Rob chortled that Season 4 of *Venture Brothers* is starting. Everyone loves the *Venture Brothers*! Rob also talked about the genre play *The Mystery of Irma Vep*. (For the clueless, "Irma Vep" is an anagram for vampire.)

It was announced that two genre movies are opening this week – *The Incredible Hulk* and *The Happening*. On the other hand, the Korean-made *Dragon Wars* movie was horrid. The new "Indiana Jones" movie generated lots of discussion, including the future of actor Shia LaBeouf, who emerged from obscure minor roles to "Indiana Jones" fame.

Wonder Woman actress Lynda Carter, a DC-area resident, recently dis-

covered a dead person in the Potomac River. (She didn't use her invisible robot canoe to tow the body to shore.)

Peter rattled off the names of many upcoming genre movies – *Batman/Dark Knight*, *Punisher: War Zone*, *Wolverine*, *Thor*, *Avengers: Captain America*.

Peter also reported that another season of *The Sarah Jane Chronicles* has started filming.

The club's *Dungeons & Dragons* devotees mentioned that Edition IV has just come out.

Battlestar Galactica has had commercials for video games and AARP. (What does that say about the demographics of the people who watch the show?)

Alex promoted *Code Monkeys* Season 2. It was noted that there is a GLBT character.

It was reported that Peter forces Rob to watch *Squidbillies*.

Peter commented that the "Agatha Christie" episode of *Doctor Who* is excellent.

Mixed reviews for a new sci-fi show called *Charlie Jade*, about a private detective in a dystopian universe. Stylistically interesting, but is there a storyline? It is unclear.

The reviews for the *Strangers* horror movie are thankfully unforgiving.

LSF's kind host James offered some used genre paperbacks for sale!

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"Pathetic Earthlings! Hurling your bodies out into the void without the slightest inkling of who or what is out here! If you knew anything about the true nature of the universe, anything at all, you would have hidden from it in terror!"



-- Ming the Merciless --
Flash Gordon (1980)



News About Gaylaxicon 2009

passed along by Carl

OK, so they haven't exactly made their announcements with great fanfare or updated their Gaylaxicon website yet (www.gaylaxiconnetwork.org/gaylaxicon2009); but there is information now available about Gaylaxicon 2008. Here's the info I found on their yahoo group site:

Dates:

October 9 - 11, 2009

Site:

Doubletree Hotel Minneapolis-Park Place (Minneapolis, MN)

Guests of Honor:

Margaret Weis
(co-author of the original "Dragonlance" stories and collaborator with Tracy Hickman on several other F&SF series)
Andy Mangels
(author, journalist, editor)
Lawrence Schimel
(Lambda Literary Award-winning author)

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

Register on-line at:

<http://www.gaylaxicon2009.org>



Marriage Equality Comes to California

by George Takei
excerpted from a May 16, 2008
posting on
<http://www.georgetakei.com/>

Our California dream is reality. Brad Altman and I can now marry. We are overjoyed! At long last, the barrier to full marriage rights for same-sex couples has been torn down. We are equal with all citizens of our state!

The California Supreme Court has ruled that all Californians have a fundamental right to marry the person he or she loves. Brad and I have shared our lives together for over 21 years. We've worked in partnership; he manages the business side of my career and I do the performing. We've traveled the world together from Europe to Asia to Australia. We've shared the good times as well as struggled through the bad. He helped me care for my ailing mother who lived with us for the last years of her life. He is my love and I can't imagine life without him. Now, we can have the dignity, as well as all the responsibilities, of marriage. We embrace it all heartily.

The California Supreme Court further ruled that our Constitution provides for equal protection for all and that it cannot have marriage for one group and another form - domestic partnership - for another group. No more "separate but equal. No more second-class citizenship. Brad and I are going to be married as full citizens of our state.

As a Japanese American, I am keenly mindful of the subtle and not so subtle discrimination that the law can impose. During World War II, I grew up imprisoned behind the barbed wire fences of U.S. internment camps. Pearl Harbor had been bombed and Japanese Americans were rounded up and incarcerated simply because we happened to look like the people who bombed Pearl Harbor. Fear and war hysteria swept the nation. A Presidential Executive Order directed the internment of Japanese Americans as a matter of national security. Now, with the passage of time, we look back and see it as a shameful chapter of American history. President Gerald



George Takei and Brad Altman (photo by Tom Atwood)

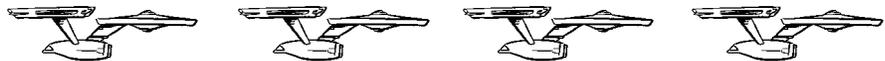
Ford rescinded the Executive Order that imprisoned us. President Ronald Reagan formally apologized for the unjust imprisonment. President George H.W. Bush signed the redress payment checks to the survivors. It was a tragic and dark taint on American history.

With time, I know the opposition to same sex marriage, too, will be seen as an antique and discreditable part of our history. As U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy remarked on

same sex marriage, "Times can blind us to certain truths and later generations can see that laws once thought necessary and proper, in fact, serve only to oppress."

For now, Brad and I are enjoying the delicious dilemma of deciding where, when, and how we will be married. Marriage equality took a long time, but, like fine wine, its bouquet is simply exquisite.

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Robert Asprin
1946 - 2008

Robert Asprin, author (and co-author) of the *Myth Adventures* series, one of the *Thieves' World* originators, and author of a whole slew of other books, passed away May 22nd.

Asprin passed away quietly in his home in New Orleans, LA. He had been in good spirits and working on several new projects, and was set to be the Guest of Honor at a major science fiction convention that very weekend. He is survived by his mother, his sister, his daughter and his son, and his cat, Princess, not to mention countless friends and fans and numerous legendary fictional characters. He will be greatly missed.

“Still Life with Fascists”

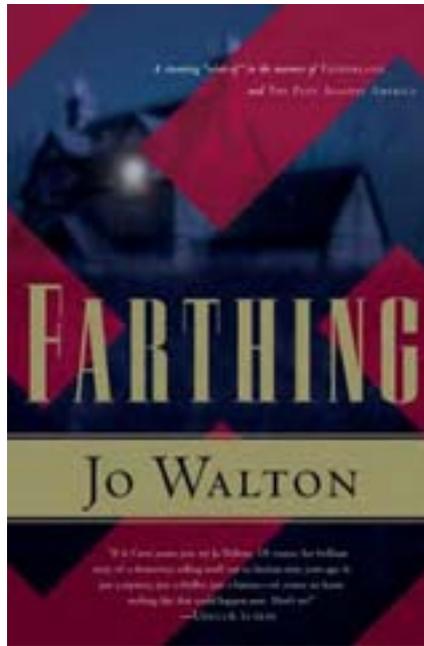
Two-Thirds of a Trilogy

reviewed by Carl

Prior to this, I hadn't read anything by Jo Walton. Now, however, I'm a BIG fan – on the strength of her two-thirds-finished “alternate history/mystery/thriller” series, fetchingly entitled “Still Life with Fascists.” Only the first two novels are out at the present time – *Farthing* (TOR, 2006) and *Ha'penny* (TOR, 2007) – but the third one, *Half a Crown* is due out later this year. And, frankly, I can hardly wait!

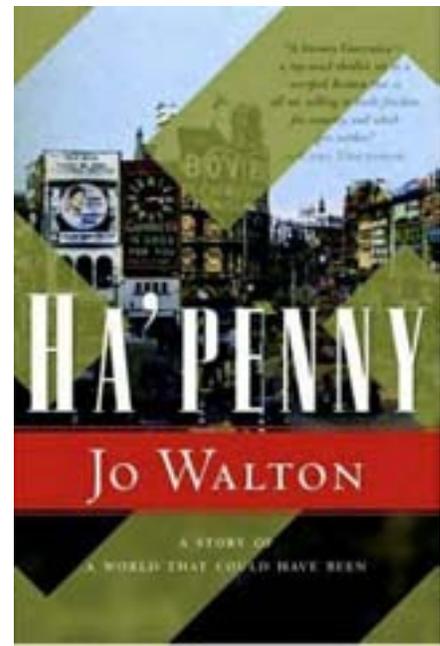
As for the “alternate history” angle, the divergence from our timeline occurred in 1941. Close on the heels of the aerial Battle of Britain and the outbreak of hostilities between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, Rudolf Hess brokered an armistice between Britain and Germany. Soon after came “Peace with Honor” – an Anglo-German peace treaty whereby Hitler agreed to forego his plans for the invasion of Britain and its Empire, and Britain agreed to let Hitler have whatever he wanted in the rest of Europe. It also left Germany free to concentrate on fighting its greatest enemy, the Soviet Union. (The United States – under the leadership of President Charles Lindbergh – had gone isolationist and refused to get involved in the European conflict.) Since that time, Britain has become increasingly reactionary (anti-organized labor, stricter laws against “terrorism” and “treason,” anti-immigration for European Jews, etc.), even though it has maintained its parliamentary system of government.

The “mystery” aspect of the series comes front-and-center in the first volume, *Farthing*. At first blush, it's one of those typical “English country house” murders, with a cast of socially-prominent, Upper Crust people gathering for the weekend and suddenly finding themselves embroiled in a case of murder. It's the summer of 1949, and “the Farthing Set” (the right-of-center political group that arranged the “Peace with Honor”) have gathered at Farthing House for a quiet get-together. But the “quiet” comes to a crashing end when



the body of Sir James Thirkie (slated for high office when the Farthing Set comes to power in the next election) is found brutally murdered in an upstairs bedroom. All signs point to an “inside job” – and the “ritualistic” nature of the murder seems to indicate that Jews (or possibly a conspiracy of Jews and Communists) are behind it. Because of the serious political ramifications of the murder, Inspector Peter Carmichael – with his trusty sidekick, Sergeant Royston – are sent from Scotland Yard to investigate. As his investigation proceeds, Carmichael gets the definite impression that he's *expected* to name one of the houseguests, David Kahn, as the culprit. David is the scion of a prominent Jewish banker/financier family from London. Some years ago, Lucy Eversley, daughter of one of the Farthing Set, had fallen in love with and married him – in defiance of the wishes of her domineering mother, Lady Eversley. But, despite a seemingly air-tight case against Kahn, Inspector Carmichael gets the definite impression that it's all a frame-up; and his investigation begins to turn up hints of a dark conspiracy that spreads far beyond the oh-so-proper Hampshire country estate – with ties to both London and Berlin.

The next book, *Ha'penny*, is rather more of a political-thriller than a mystery. It's a few weeks after the



events in *Farthing*; Mark Normanby, a member of the Farthing Set and a houseguest at the time of the Thirkie murder, has become Prime Minister. All London is shocked by an apparent act of ruthless terrorism – a famous and well-beloved stage actress and a young British naval officer are blown up in a suburban London flat. Who killed them? Jewish terrorists? Communist terrorists? IRA terrorists? And just why were these two people together in the first place?

Time to call in Inspector Carmichael and Sergeant Royston again. Meanwhile, in another part of town, runaway rich-girl Viola Lark is literally acting out her rebellious nature on the London stage; and she's just been given the title role in a cross-gender production of *Hamlet*. But the titillating nature of the production isn't what's really important. You see, *Der Fuhrer* is coming to London as part of an important cultural exchange program, and he'll be sitting in a special box on *Hamlet's* opening night – along with his right-hand man Heinrich Himmler and Prime Minister Normanby. It's a target the anti-Farthing Set underground (and their Irish and Communist allies) can't pass up; and they soon convince Viola to join in the conspiracy. Unfortunately, the ever-efficient Inspector Carmichael's investigation is beginning to establish

(continued on page 5)

“Still Life with Fascists”

continued from page 4

connections between the bombing/murder and Hitler’s upcoming visit. To quote The Bard: “The play’s the thing!” Will *Hamlet* have an explosive opening night?

This series has definite resonances to a number of other books I’ve read over the years. The most recent one is probably Ian MacLeod’s *The Summer Isles* (2005), included on the Short List for Best Novel in the 2006 Gaylactic Spectrum Awards. *The Summer Isles* also tells the story of Britain-gone-fascist; but I found it ever-so-much-more depressing than Walton’s books. (MacLeod’s main character’s dark plight reminded me of poor Winston Smith in Orwell’s *1984*.) And Walton’s mention of U.S. President Lindbergh (and his anti-Semitic views) echoes Philip Roth’s *The Plot Against America* (2004). There are also a couple of films that I was inescapably reminded of: *V for Vendetta* (2006; in which a latter-day Guy Fawkes takes on a fascist British government); and *Richard III* (1995; a re-imaging of the Shakespeare play, with Richard of Gloucester – as portrayed by Sir Ian McKellen – leading a fascist *putsch* in 1930s Britain). And then there’s Walton’s storyline about a police investigation revealing “the Great Terrible Secret” about a totalitarian regime. Well, *that* brings to mind a whole ‘nother set of really good “political thriller” novels, including: Robert Harris’s *Fatherland* (1992); Martin Cruz Smith’s *Gorky Park* (1981); and Brenden DuBois’s *Resurrection Day* (1999; subject of the LSF Book Discussion Group some years ago).

So, with all that in mind, what makes Walton’s “Still Life with Fascists” so distinctive? OK, how about the fact that there’s significant positive LGBT content? And I’m not just basing this on all the allusions to “Athenians” (homosexuals) and “Macedonians” (bisexuals) among the British upper classes and theatre folks – yes, that’s all there (and handled very well, I might add); but that’s not all there is. You see, Inspector Peter Carmichael – the main character who ties all three novels together – is a gay man. Carmichael’s lifestyle and per-



sonal history don’t receive all that much emphasis in the first novel (*Farthing*); but his gay-ness comes front-and-center in the second novel (*Ha’Penny*). He’s truly a tragic-heroic figure, a man who finds that he must “walk carefully” among powerful adversaries and choose between several bad alternatives in order to do the best he can. (I’d almost consider him a bodhisattva figure – but I can’t explain why without giving away too much of the plot.) I can hardly wait to see what challenges he’ll face in the upcoming third novel, *Half a Crown!*

In addition, I think *Ha’Penny* is even better-written than *Farthing* – I think Walton may have found her “voice” more effectively in this second novel. This gives me even *more* reason to look forward to the next book in the “Still Life with Fascists” series.

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All that we are is the result of what we have thought: It is founded on our thoughts and is made up of our thoughts.

- Dhammapada -

excerpted from
*Moving Forward, Keeping Still:
The Gateway to Eastern Wisdom*
(MJF Books, 1997)

Have You Bought Your Gaylaxicon 2008 T-Shirt?



The Gaylaxicon 2008 T-shirt is now available for purchase. It features artwork by our artist guest of honor, Alicia Austin.

Orders can be placed through PayPal. You will then be able to pick up your T-shirt at the registration desk during Gaylaxicon 2008. T-shirts cost \$15 each. They are available in sizes Small through 5XL. Small through 3XL T-shirts are light blue in color; 4XL and 5XL T-shirts are white.

To order, go to the Gaylaxicon 2008 T-shirt web page:

<http://www.gaylaxicon2008.org/tshirt.html>

Select the T-shirt size you want and click the “Add to Cart” button. On the PayPal Shopping Cart, you can update the quantity if you want to order multiple T-shirts of the same size. If you want to order *different* sized T-shirts, add the first T-shirt to your shopping cart, click on the “Continue Shopping” button to return to the page, and choose the next size of T-shirt.

Note: You can order your T-shirt and purchase your Gaylaxicon 2008 membership in the same order. After adding your T-shirt, click the “Continue Shopping” button, and visit the Registration page to add your convention membership to your order. 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, July 13th**, at James Crutchfield's apartment (1414 17th St. NW, #413), near Dupont Circle. 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: \$200 (more at the door?). 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: \$50 until Sept. 30; \$60 after Oct. 1. 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

Nov. 21-23, 2008 **PHILCON 2008**. Crowne Plaza Hotel (Cherry Hill, NJ). Principal Speaker: Tim Powers; Artist GoH: John Picacio. Membership: \$45 thru 9/30; \$50 thru 10/31; \$60 at the door. 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.) Website: www.philcon.org/2008

Feb. 13-15, 2009 **KATSUCON 15**. Hyatt Regency Crystal City (Crystal City, VA). Washington's Premiere Japanese Animation and Manga Festival. Membership: \$35 until June 30; \$40 until Sept. 30; \$45 until Dec. 31, 2008; \$50 at the door. Make checks payable to "Katsucon Entertainment" and send to: Katsucon Entertainment Inc., PO Box 3354, Crofton, MD 21114 Website: www.katsucon.org

Feb. 13-15, 2009 **FARPOINT 2009**. Crowne Plaza Baltimore North (Timonium, MD). Guests: Harve Bennett, Marc Okrand, Peter David, and more. Membership: \$60 pre-registration; daily rates available at the door. Make checks payable to "Farpoint 2009" and send to: Farpoint Enterprises, Inc., 11708 Troy Ct., Waldorf, MD 20601. You can also register online. Website: www.farpointcon.com E-mail: trekcontact@comcast.net

October 9-11, 2009 **GAYLAXICON 2009**. Doubletree Hotel Minneapolis - Park Place (Minneapolis, MN). GoHs: Margaret Weis, Andy Mangels, Lawrence Schimel. 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 Register on-line at: <http://www.gaylaxicon2009.org>