



# Lambda Sci-fi DC Area Gaylaxians

PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044

(202) 232-3141 - Issue #229 - April 2009

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 April 23rd.

Here are the details on the next couple of discussion meetings:

**April 23rd** - *Un Lun Dun*, by China Mieville; moderator: Brian.

**May 28th** - *Farthing*, by Jo Walton; moderator: Carl.

Λ Ψ Φ



## International Year of Astronomy



info passed along by Michael Cornett

2009 is the International Year of Astronomy, as declared by the United Nations, to observe the 400th anniversary of Galileo's observations. A consortium of businesses and nonprofits got together to create a low-cost but effective telescope, so that anyone with any interest could learn more and also so that telescopes could be donated to schools and educational organizations.

The result? The Galileoscope (<https://www.galileoscope.org/gs/>), a build-it-yourself telescope. Costs only \$15 but is powerful enough to make out the craters of the moon, the phases of Venus, four of Jupiter's moons, and the rings of Saturn. More info at the website, where you can order one or donate one.

Λ Ψ Φ



## LSF Gaming Party

**When:** Saturday, April 11th

**Time:** Noon to 10:30 PM

**Where:** Teresa's home at 7015 Sycamore Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912

Teresa is willing to pick you up at the Takoma Metro "Kiss and Ride" - "in the Old Gray Mare" (her station wagon) - if you make arrangements with her.

**What to Bring:** Games, munchies, and cash in case we call to have Chinese food or Pizza delivered. (Teresa says she has the following games: Monty Python Fluxx, Lunch Money, and Guillotine)

**Allergy alert:** Cats live here!

**For more information,** send e-mail to: [coda\\_red\\_tango@yahoo.com](mailto:coda_red_tango@yahoo.com)

or call: 301-270-6373

Λ Ψ Φ

Λ Ψ Φ



## April LSF Meeting



Λ Ψ Φ

The next LSF meeting will be held on the **Sunday, April 12th**. 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!



Λ Ψ Φ

Λ Ψ Φ

Λ Ψ Φ

Λ Ψ Φ

Λ Ψ Φ



## WHAT'S INSIDE?

Minutes of the LSF March Meeting (pg. 2); **New Movie Just Like Those 1950s Sci-Fi Ones** (pg. 2); *Anchorwick* (book review - pg. 3); *Budayeen Nights* (book review - pg. 5); **The Benefits of Being Evil** (book excerpt - pg. 5); **About Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians** (pg. 6); **Con Calendar** (pg. 6)

**Minutes of the LSF  
March Meeting**  
taken by Scott

**Business**

There was a call for a vote for LSF to pay for and participate in the June 2009 DC Pride festival. **The vote was unanimously in favor.**

**Social**

There was much discussion throughout the meeting about the *Watchmen* movie. Comments included: faithful to the graphic novel; the portrayal of Nixon and Kissinger was too *Dr. Strangelove*; if you didn't read the graphic novel, you would have been lost at times during the movie; Ozymandius and Hooded Justice's gayness was not portrayed.

Barrett attended one day at the recent Boskone convention while attending an ABA conference in Boston. He got to hear Jo Walton read poetry and to attend a panel about Jewish science fiction.

Free passes to a pre-release showing of *Knowing* (an upcoming movie starring Nicholas Cage) were distributed.

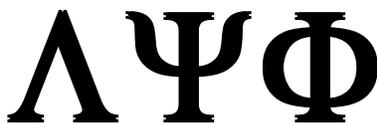
Peter and Rob have decided not to attend this year's WorldCon in Montreal and have announced that they are looking for anyone who might be interested in purchasing their memberships.

Theresa was eager to watch her just-purchased copy of the animated *Wonder Woman* DVD.

Rob recommended the paper-backswap.com website as a method for turning in unwanted paperbacks for credit toward used paperbacks from other people.

Carl just finished Mary Doria Russell's latest book, *Dreamers of the Day*. It's primarily a story about the evolving situation in the Middle East in 1921. It's also sort of genre-related, in that it becomes obvious that the main character is narrating the story from "beyond the grave."

The recent LSF gaming party was a smash! *Killer Bunnies* was popular with nearly everyone except Rob.



Rob reviewed the upcoming titles in the LSF book discussion group: Charles Stross's *The Family Trade* (March); China Mieville's *Un Lun Dun* (April); and Walton's *Farthing* (May).

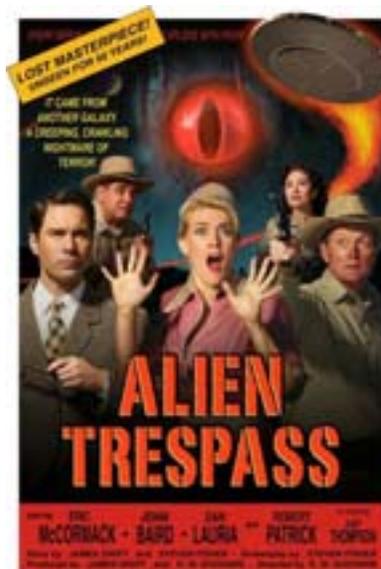
On Friday, March 20th, the final episode of *Battlestar Galactica* will air. Peter and Rob will be hosting a *BSG*-viewing get-together at their place on that day, with the doors opening at 6:30 PM. If you want join everyone is ordering some pizzas, please bring \$7.

Theresa announced that she intends to host a gaming party at her home on Saturday, April 11th.

Is *Life on Mars* a genre TV show? Premise: a guy from our time finds himself in the 1970's and doesn't know how he got there. Ahh, but the show has been canceled. Will the brief plotline be wrapped up?

There were some complaints about the new series, *The Doll House*: Where are the backstories of the characters?

Peter mentioned the upcoming *Sarah Jane Adventures* comic relief special – a fund-raiser for charity. Peter also mentioned the next *Dr. Who* special will air on Easter; it was filmed in Dubai.



**New Movie Just Like  
Those 1950s Sci-Fi Ones**

info passed along by  
Joe Rauscher

I attended a screening of *Alien Trespass* recently. And if you liked those 1950s sci-fi movies like *It Came From Outer Space*, *War of the Worlds*, and *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, you'll enjoy this one. It has the same cute, weird, hokey feel. But I would not recommend it for kids under 10.

I understand the movie will be showing nationwide early April.

Check out the movie's website:  
<http://www.alientrespass.com/>



**October 9 - 11, 2009**

**Location:**

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:**

\$70 until 10/01/2009  
\$80 at the door

**Visit their website at:** <http://www.gaylaxicon2009.org>

---

**Anchorwick**  
**by Jeffrey E. Barlough**  
**(Gresham & Doyle, 2008)**  
a short review by Carl

---

For a number of years now, Colleen Cahill and I have been reviewing – with delight, I might add – each new addition to Jeffrey Barlough’s “Western Lights” series: *Dark Sleeper* (2000); *The House in the High Wood* (2001); *Strange Cargo* (2004); and *Bertram of Butter Cross* (2007). This year it looks like I’ll be the first one to comment on Barlough’s latest novel, *Anchorwick*.

Just in case you’re new to the series, I’ll give you a little background. One notable aspect of this series is that it’s set in a rather unique alternate history. Apparently, medieval England settled North America during the Little Ice Age; and the settlers discovered there a continent filled with Ice Age megafauna: cave bears, giant ground sloths, saber-toothed tigers, mastodons, mammoths, and so on. Then, in 1839, the Great Sundering occurred. Barlough has never really explained “what happened,” but it would seem that something like a comet or meteor obliterated all of the Old World – and a new Ice Age set in. Apparently, the Rockies and the Sierra Nevada mountains shielded the Pacific coast of North America from the cataclysm, because all of Barlough’s novels take place in this coastal strip, wedged between the mountains and the sea (far western North America, from about Vancouver to about San Diego). As far as anyone knows, nothing beyond this coastal strip remains. Thus, Barlough has explained the title of his series (“Western Lights”) as follows: “...since that dread event the sole place on earth where the lights still shine at night is in the west.”

The society of the Sundered World is still very recognizably Victorian – little changed since 1839, in fact. There are a few differences, of course: no guns or gunpowder exist, but prehistoric Ice Age animals do – and magic and the supernatural have a habit of popping up at the most inconvenient of times, disturbing everybody’s quiet and ordered Victorian lives. The tone and “voice” of the narrative in these novels (as well as the



character names, the dialects, and so on) are also very Victorian. If you’re a fan of Charles Dickens, I’m sure you’ll feel quite comfortable reading Barlough’s novels. In fact, I think both Colleen and I have commented on the fact that it’s

almost as if you’re reading Lovecraftian stories as penned by Charles Dickens. Personally, I have found all of Barlough’s novels to be delightfully dark Dickensian fantasies.

So this is the setting to which Barlough returns in *Anchorwick*. For the first time, however, he has also returned to some of the locations and characters that have appeared in one of his earlier novels. This story opens in the great northern city of Salthead and the well-respected University of Salthead located therein. It is here that we encounter Titus Tiggs and Daniel Dampe, undergraduates attending Antrobus College – two young scholars whose older, wiser, and more distinguished selves are featured as major characters in Barlough’s first novel, *Dark Sleeper*. In this novel, however, Tiggs and Dampe are just beginning their careers in their chosen professions: metaphysical philosophy and medicine, respectively. And what an adventure to start them on their way!

Strange things are happening within the ivied walls of dear old Antrobus College! It all started two years previously, when well-respected Professor Haygarth mysteriously disappeared while in the midst of a series of metaphysical investigations. Now, strange graffiti are appearing in the most unlikely and inaccessible places around the college. Maybe the graffiti is the work of mischievous students – but, then again, maybe not. Meanwhile, young Eugene Stanley – who is helping his uncle, Professor Greenshields, in the completion of a massive tome about ancient Greek history – has become obsessed with the possible connection between Prof. Haygarth’s disappearance and the cryptic graffiti. By accident, he discovers a mysterious oil lamp that seems to attract ghosts when it’s lit – and there’s that massive old wooden floor clock (with no internal mechanism!) that the Professor had borrowed from an impoverished country squire. How do these two items fit into the equation? And what about all those mysterious lights and voices emanating from Dr. Woolwine’s laboratory late at night? Adventures abound – from the streets of

(continued on page 4)

## Anchorwick

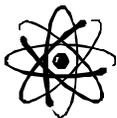
continued from page 3



Salthed to the wilds of Ruffolk in the east (beyond which lie the great wastelands) – and even into some sort of mysterious Shadow World! Spirits, spiritualists, a heretic saint, ancient druid-like mages, and slaving monsters from Beyond the Pale! How can young Mr. Stanley and his friends cope with ‘em all?

I found *Anchorwick* to be a delightful read. I enjoyed Barlough’s style and characterizations; I got a kick out of his Dickensian use of dialect and his depiction of Victorian university life; and I loved once again exploring new aspects of the Sundered World. When I checked out Barlough’s website ([www.westernlightsbooks.com](http://www.westernlightsbooks.com)), I was delighted to learn that Gresham & Doyle Publishers have acquired the rights to the next book in this series, *A Tangle in Slops*. Oh boy; oh boy; oh boy!!

Λ Ψ Φ



If A is success in life,  
then A equals  
X plus Y plus Z.  
Work is X; Y is play;  
and Z is keeping  
your mouth shut.

-- Albert Einstein --

quoted in *Who Said That?*  
selected and compiled by Renie Gee  
(David & Charles, 2004)

## The Benefits of Being Evil

Being evil is more than a job, it’s a lifestyle. By embracing the dark forces, otherwise ordinary men, women, and even children and pets can gain power and wealth beyond their wildest dreams. Perhaps the single greatest benefit of a career in evil is equal access to executive level positions. Black, white, or green; male, female, or alien life form; spikes, scales, or brain in a jar – nothing prevents a devotee of darkness from rising to the top of the quagmire of destruction.



In the end, the most important part of being evil is feeling good about your bad self. Only then will you walk down the street with pride, smiling broadly as small children in your path abandon their favorite playthings and flee as though approached by a swarm of locusts.

Although it’s possible to be evil in any vocation, certain careers practically force you to exploit your dark side. Your best bets:

- Night manager of a deserted ware-house.
- Mad scientist.
- Shape-shifter.
- Voodoo princess.
- Slave driver.
- Orc, ogre, or zombie.
- Telemarketer.

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



Power and wealth are not the only benefits. Servants of darkness, despite the secondary role that name implies, also enjoy deliciously unrestricted creative freedom. Evil knows no boundaries. If you can dream an evil plot, you can do it – and become a ray of darkness in an otherwise unbearably sunny day.

Evil careers offer extensive supernatural benefits, too. Many evil-doers develop the ability to manifest themselves wherever and whenever they choose. For those who excel, there is even the possibility of immortality.



**Budayeen Nights**  
by George Alec Effinger  
(Golden Gryphon Press)  
a short review by Carl

Return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear – the 1980’s – when vast herds of cyberpunks roamed the plains of western North America. Well, OK, not quite... That’s just my silly way of letting you know about the availability of a collection of cyberpunk-related short stories by one of my favorite authors.

Back in said 1980’s, the SF movement known as “cyberpunk” was “the New Big Thing.” Cyberpunk stories combined advanced science (particularly in the field of information technology) and cybernetic modifications with a degree of social disruption and/or radical change in the social order. It contained echoes of *film noir* (*The Maltese Falcon*, *The Big Sleep*, etc.) and the related genre of detective fiction (Raymond Chandler, Dashiell Hammet, etc.). Its protagonists tended to be members of the counter-culture or the street-culture. William Gibson, Bruce Sterling, Pat Cadigan, Rudy Rucker, and John Shirley were some of the leading cyberpunk authors – as well as one of my personal favorites: George Alec Effinger (1947-2002).

Effinger’s oh-so-fascinating (and entertaining) contribution to cyberpunk came in the form of three novels, collectively known as the “Marid Audran” novels: *When Gravity Fails* (1987), *A Fire in the Sun* (1989), *The Exile Kiss* (1991). These three books follow the very cyberpunkish adventures of Marid Audran, a drug-using, brain-implant-enhanced, part-Arab-part-Berber-part-French ne’er-do-well living in an unnamed city somewhere in the Middle East during the late 22nd Century. Much of the action takes place in and around “the Budayeen,” a walled quarter of the city filled with bars, coffeehouses, sex shops, and street-level cyber-merchants. (Actually, the Budayeen is a thinly-veiled version of the New Orleans French Quarter, where Effinger lived for a number of years.) I raced through these novels with avid delight when they first came out in mass-market



paperback format many, many years ago.

Imagine my delight, therefore, when the Science Fiction Book Club recently offered *Budayeen Nights*, a collection of Budayeen-related Effinger short fiction! (I figure they decided to offer it as a companion piece to their omnibus volume containing all three “Marid Audran” novels: *The Audran Sequence*.) Yes, indeed, Marid Audran is featured in about half of the stories in *Budayeen Nights*; but, as the title implies, the main “character” linking each of these stories is the Budayeen itself. And what a delight these stories are!

I really enjoyed all four of the Marid-based stories. “Marid Changes His Mind” is the story that became the first two chapters of *A Fire in the Sun* – Marid decides to hunt down his mother and see what he can learn about his past from her. “Marid Throws a Party” was meant to be the opening two chapters of the unfinished fourth “Marid Audran” novel (*Word of Night*). It’s a pity that Effinger never got any further than this opening section. This time, Marid is plotting to get back at a small-time crook who cheated him out of some money, when his patron (big-time crime-lord Friedlander Bey) announces that he’s arranged for Marid to get a set of new, upgraded brain implants. “Marid and the Trail of Blood” is a science-fictional vampire story, in which Marid tries to track down a vampire-killer before she takes

out any more of his friends. In “The World as We Know It,” we get to see a much-older Marid, who’s hiding out from his numerous enemies after his patron Friedlander Bey has been defeated by a rival crime-lord – but Marid has still “got what it takes” as he’s contracted to solve an unusual crime in a “consensual reality” facility.

The other stories, as I’ve said, all deal with things that happen in and around the Budayeen. In “Schrödinger’s Kitten,” a young Middle Eastern girl has visions of the multiple futures that stem from her rape in a Budayeen alley. “Slow, Slow Burn” – another favorite – gives us a chance to look into the lifestyle of Honey Pilar, the internationally-acclaimed sex-moddy star who’s mentioned from time to time in various other Effinger stories. (This is an exploration of Effinger’s theories about the close relationship between technology and pornography.) “King of the Cyber Rifles” follows a day in the life of the poor, lowly, technology-enhanced soldier. (And *this* story explores Effinger’s ideas about the incorporation of personality-transfer technology into the military arena.) “The Plastic Pasha” is only a fragment – a project Effinger began shortly before his death, which was to tell the story of Marid’s kid brother as he becomes the ruler of Algeria. And then there’s “The City in the Sand.” This story first appeared in the April 1973 issue of *Fantasy and Science Fiction*; in it you can see how Effinger had begun to develop all the concepts and characters that would make up the later “Marid Audran” novels and Budayeen stories.

If you’re a cyberpunk fan – or, more especially, a fan of Effinger’s “Marid Audran” novels – then *Budayeen Nights* is definitely for you! (It’s not exclusively a Science Fiction Book Club offering. It’s also available through Amazon.com – I think in a trade paperback edition from Golden Gryphon Press. But if you want it in hardback for your collection, I think SFBC is the way to go.)



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 12th**, 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



April 17-18, 2009 **GAME CON**. The Clarion Hotel (Aberdeen, MD). Board games, card games, dealers, local artists, local bands. Membership: \$20 for the entire weekend. To pre-register or get your questions answered, contact Kat Brannon (443-299-7784) or on-line at: [Kat\\_of\\_sorrow@yahoo.com](mailto:Kat_of_sorrow@yahoo.com)

April 24-26, 2009 **RAVENCON 2009**. Crowne Plaza Richmond West (Richmond, VA). Author Guest of Honor: Jack McDevitt. Membership: \$35 until 4/17/2009; \$40 at the door. Make checks payable to "Ravencon 2009" and send to: RavenCon, 4303 1 Elk Place, Chantilly, VA 20152 Info on-line at: [www.ravencon.com](http://www.ravencon.com)

May 1-4, 2009 **COSTUME-CON 27**. Crowne Plaza Baltimore North (Timonium, MD). Theme: "Vampires, Villains & Vixens." Membership: \$90 until 4/1/2009; \$100 after 4/1/2009 and at the door. Make checks payable to "Costume-Con 27" and send to: Costume-Con 27, PO Box 207, Beallsville, PA 15313. "Open to all who love costume in all its forms." Info on-line at: [castleb@pulsenet.com](mailto:castleb@pulsenet.com) or [www.costume-con.com](http://www.costume-con.com)

May 22-25, 2009 **BALTICON 43**. Marriott's Hunt Valley Inn (Hunt Valley, MD). GoH: Charles Stross; Artist GoH: Kurt Miller; 2009 Comoton Crook Award Winner TBA. Membership: \$53 until April 30; \$60 as of May 1 and at the door. Make checks payable to: "Balticon 43" and send to: Balticon 43 Registration, PO Box 686, Baltimore, MD 21203-0686. E-mail: [balticoninfo@balticon.org](mailto:balticoninfo@balticon.org) or [registration@balticon.org](mailto:registration@balticon.org) Website: [www.balticon.org](http://www.balticon.org)

July 10-12, 2009 **SHORE LEAVE 31**. Marriott's Hunt Valley Inn (Hunt Valley, MD). Guests: TBA. Membership: \$70 for the weekend; daily rates available. (Deadline for pre-registration: 6/15/2009.) Make checks payable to "Shore Leave" and send to: Shore Leave 31, PO Box 6809, Towson, MD 21285-6809. E-mail: [information@shore-leave.com](mailto:information@shore-leave.com) Website: <http://www.shore-leave.com>

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

October 16-18, 2009 **CAPCLAVE 2009**. Hilton Washington DC/Rockville (Rockville, MD). GoHs: Harry Turtledove (author), Sheila Williams (*Asimov's* editor). Membership: \$45 until July 1; \$55 from July 1 to Oct. 1; \$60 at the door. Make checks payable to "Capclave 2009" and send to: Capclave 2009 Registration, c/o Barry Newton, PO Box 53, Ashton, MD 20861 Website: [www.capclave.org](http://www.capclave.org)

