



Lambda Sci-Fi DC Area Gaylaxians

PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044

(202) 232-3141 - Issue #243 - June 2010

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



LSF Video/Gaming Party and DC Pride Parade Viewing (June 12)

It's a casual get-together for gaming and watching videos, including a viewing of the Capital Pride Parade.

Date: Saturday, June 12.

Time: Doors open at 2:00 PM; short LSF meeting begins at 2:30 PM; gaming/DVDs begin at approx. 3:00 PM (with a break to watch the Pride Parade and get dinner). Party will end about Midnight or so.

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

We'll walk down 14th Street NW to see the parade between "N" and "P" Streets NW.

What to Bring: (1) Bring science fiction, fantasy, and horror DVDs and Blu-rays to watch; (2) bring games to play; and (3) bring snacks and non-alcoholic drinks to share.

For more information, please send e-mail to Rob at:

RobGatesDC@gmail.com

or call Rob and Peter at 202-483-6369.

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Post-Pride Video/Potluck Party (June 19)

Come and celebrate Pride Day at a post-Pride video/potluck party with the folks at LSF!

What: A science fiction/fantasy/horror video and potluck party. Bring DVDs to view. We will watch the movies that receive the most votes.

When: Saturday, June 19

Time: 3:00 PM - 11:30 PM

Where: The home of Julian, 2462 Tunlaw Road NW, Washington, DC 20007-1839. Directions at: <http://lambdasf.org/lsf/club/Julian.html>

What to Bring: Bring science fiction, fantasy, and horror DVDs to watch and snacks, dinner food, and/or non-alcoholic drinks to share.

For more information: Please contact Peter at:

Peter.P.Knapp@gmail.com
or call him at 202-483-6369.

On the day of the party, call 202-306-1497.

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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 June 24th.

Here are the details on the next several discussion meetings:

June 24th - *Ooku*, Volume 1, by Fumi Yoshinaga; moderator: Greg. (NOTE: This is *manga*.)

July 22nd - *Stealing Fire*, by Jo Graham; moderator: Claire.

Aug. 26th - *The Windup Girl*, by Paolo Bacigalupi; moderator: Carl. Λ Ψ Φ

June LSF Meeting -- Different Time & Place!

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Saturday, June 12th**, in conjunction with a video/gaming party and Pride Day Parade outing. The meeting will be held at Rob & Peter's home (1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC) – see article on this page. A short business meeting will be held at about 2:30, immediately followed by the other festivities. Hope to see you there! **And come visit our table at DC Pride (June 13th).**

WHAT'S INSIDE? LSF May 9th Meeting Minutes (pg. 2); Archie Comics Introduces First Openly Gay Character (pg. 2); Frank Frazetta (obituary, pg. 3); *Red Inferno: 1945* (book review - pg. 3); *The Good, The Bad, The Weird* (film review - pg. 4); Review of *Clash of the Titans* (film review - pg. 4); About Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians and Con Calendar (pg. 6)

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LSF May 9th Meeting Minutes taken by Scott

Business meeting:

Carl announced that **Gaylaxicon 2011 in Atlanta** has been slightly rescheduled to May 13-15, 2011. He also reported that Minneapolis has submitted a bid for 2012.

At the June LSF meeting, Rob would like to see the club vote to allow the LSF membership directory to be distributed in electronic format. (There was a vote years ago to only permit the membership directory to be distributed in paper format.)

Social meeting:

Everyone enjoyed the **Iron Man 2** movie, especially the role played by Robert Downey Jr. as the arrogant Tony Stark. Plus, after the closing credits, there was a brief scene promoting what appears to be for an upcoming **Thor** movie.

Jim reported that he drove down to **Outlanticon** last weekend. There were fewer than 100 people in attendance. There was no real video programming, light programming, and heavy gaming. Author Lee Martindale moderated a fun panel on Joss Whedon and Buffy. In the con suite, an independent film entitled *No Exit* was shown, which he liked. The con sported a Match Game as well as a Project CosWay – as in costuming – that was patterned after Project Runway. The dealer's room was small. Next year Gaylaxicon in Atlanta will be using the same hotel, out in the suburbs.

Carl passed around a children's book about the **Prince of Persia** movie, plus some stills of a bare-chested Jake Gyllenhall, who had clearly worked out for the title role.

Jim said that **Toy Story 3** looked to be better than *Toy Story 1* or *2*.

Barrett passed around two recent **Cyber Cozen** newsletters from the Israeli sci-fi group.

Archie Comics Introduces First Openly Gay Character info passed along by Mike Penick

<http://www.comicsbeat.com/2010/04/22/archie-comics-introduces-first-openly-gay-character/>

Can a gay teen comically get in trouble with Mr. Weatherbee, humorously strive to win a burger-eating contest, make horrible puns, and have trouble deciding who to date? At Archie Comics, the answer is "yes," as they have introduced their first openly gay character, Kevin Keller. In the words of Archie Co-CEO Jon Goldwater, "The introduction of Kevin is just about keeping the world of Archie Comics current and inclusive. Archie's hometown of Riverdale has always been a safe world for everyone. It just makes sense to have an openly gay character in Archie comic books."

Kevin will appear in September's *Veronica* #202, in a story called "Isn't it Bromantic?" Kevin Keller is the new hunk in town, and Veronica just has to have him. After Kevin defeats Jughead



in a burger-eating contest at Pop's Chocklit Shoppe, she desperately latches onto him. Mayhem and hilarity ensue as Kevin desperately attempts to let Veronica down easy and her flirtations only become increasingly persistent.

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There was discussion about the trailer for **new JJ Abrams film** titled *Super 8*, coming out next summer. The plot, based on the trailer: a train transporting Area 51 stuff to Ohio collides with a truck along the way; there is an explosion; there is a pounding noise from within the train – like something is trying to get out. The film is about what happens to people who happen to be nearby and use their Super 8 cameras to take some photos of what is happening. JJ Abrams has confirmed that this film is not *Cloverfield 2*.

In Doctor Who land, Peter described the creepy relationship between the Doctor and the new companion – that he messed with her head and screwed her up! Amy Pond has nevertheless proven that she can come to the rescue on her own without being

dependent upon the Doctor.

Can't ABC shell out a little more money to make the CGI shots of the *V* ship interiors a little less horrible?

Jim commented that the **gay character on Caprica** – even though he's a hit man – promotes family values, advising his brother to adhere to their Tauran cultural and religious values.

It's reported that Roland Emmerich plans to make the special effects for *Foundation* similar to *Avatar*. But Asimov's *Foundation* is mostly talking heads, isn't it? What hot special effects would be needed for *Foundation*?

Rob briefly announced that the May book for the **book discussion group** is *Ash* by Malinda Lo. The discussion will be on Thursday, May 20th.

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Self-Portrait (1962)

Frank Frazetta (1928 - 2010)

Frank Frazetta, one of the greatest F&SF illustrators of the past half century, passed away on May 10th. Frazetta began working on comic books when he was 15: doing penciling, inking, and clean-up. By the mid-1940s, he was drawing comic books dealing with such diverse genres as Westerns, fantasy, mystery, funny animals, and historical drama. He worked for EC Comics, National Comics, and Avon Comics in the early 1950s. He did Buck Rogers covers for *Famous Funnies* and assisted Dan Barry on the daily



Frazetta's Conan

Flash Gordon comic strip. For 9 years, he worked with Al Capp on his comic strip *Li'l Abner*; and in the 1960s, he worked with Harvey Kurtzman to illustrate the bawdy *Little Annie Fanny* comic strip in *Playboy*. He also provided cover art (and the occasional illustrated story) for *Creepy*, *Eerie*, and *Vampirella* magazines and created paintings and illustrations for movie posters, calendars, and record and CD covers. He even worked with producer Ralph Bakshi on the animated feature *Fire and Ice* (1983).

But Frazetta is most famous for the paintings he created as cover art for such works as the Tarzan, Mars, and Venus novels of Edgar Rice Burroughs and the Conan stories of Robert E. Howard. He also did numerous pen-and-

ink illustrations for the title pages and interior art of these books. His style is instantly recognizable. And his work commands huge prices. In 2008, the cover illustration for the Edgar Rice Burroughs paperback *Escape on Venus* was sold at auction for \$251,000. In 2009, his painting for *Conan the Conqueror* – the first Conan painting he sold – was purchased by a private collector for \$1 million.

As of 2009, Frazetta lived on a 167-acre estate in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania, and a small museum (open to the public) is maintained on the estate. The death of Frazetta's wife (and business manager) Ellie apparently led to infighting over ownership of the collection – culminating in a supposed robbery attempt by Frank Jr. in December 2009. (As of April 2010, all the litigation was apparently resolved amicably, and the burglary charges against Frank Jr. were dropped at the request of the family.)

Frank Frazetta literally redefined the way we looked at the sub-genres of swords-and-sorcery fiction and heroic adventure fiction. When you conjure up images of such heroes as Tarzan, John Carter of Mars, or Conan the Barbarian, the odds are good that you're thinking of one of Frazetta's iconic cover illustrations.

Red Inferno: 1945 by Robert Conroy (Ballantine, 2010) a short review by Carl

Robert Conroy is one of those alternate-history authors whose novels are all based on alternate *military* outcomes. I read his first novel (entitled *1901*) when it first came out in 1995. It's the story of the German Kaiser's invasion of the United States (specifically, New York City) when the U.S. refused to either sell or transfer to Germany any of America's new colonial possessions won as a result of the Spanish-American War. I *really* liked it.

Oddly enough, however, I haven't read any of his three following novels, two of which were nominated for Sidewise Awards: *1862* (in which Britain intervenes in the American Civil War – which actually almost happened as a result of the Trent Affair); *1942* (which follows what might have happened if Japanese Admiral Naguno had launched that third wave of attack against Pearl Harbor in 1941); and *1945* (in which a coup prevents Emperor Hirohito from surrendering in August 1945).

But, when I first heard about his latest novel – *Red Inferno: 1945* – I couldn't resist buying it as soon as it hit the stands and immediately reading it.

And I must say: "Wow!"

In April 1945, advance units of the U.S. Army had reached the Elbe River – only about 60 miles from Berlin – and there didn't seem to be anything to stop them from charging into the Nazi capital. General Simpson was making plans for his Ninth Army to cross the Elbe and attack Berlin by way of Potsdam. In our reality, Simpson's plans were never approved. But what if President Truman had given the "go ahead" to Simpson, in what he hoped would be a discreet but unmistakable warning to the Kremlin that the U.S. wasn't about to allow all of Germany to fall to the Russians? And

(continued on page 5)



The Good, The Bad, The Weird

a film review by Carl

No, you didn't mis-read it – that is, in fact, the title of the film I'll be talking about in this review. As you might guess from the title, the film was inspired by Sergio Leone's *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (1966). And, yes, this film is a "Western," too – but it's a Western with a difference! You see, *The Good, the Bad, the Weird* (aka *Joheunnom nabbeunnom isanghannom*) is an "oriental Western" by South Korean director Kim Ji-woon.

The setting for *The Good, the Bad, the Weird* isn't the American Wild West of the 1880s. Instead, the story takes place in the plains and deserts of Manchuria during the 1930s, the wild western reaches of the Japanese Empire on the Asian mainland (aka the puppet state of Manchukuo). The parallels to the American Wild West (at least as portrayed in the film) are pretty darn close, with "justice" coming from the barrel of a gun, with Manchurian *banditos* roving the countryside, with hard-hearted gang lords jockeying for power, and with units of the Japanese Imperial Army standing in for the *Federales*. Ah, *The Good, the Bad, the Weird* has it all: gunfights, train robberies, whorehouses, nights by the campfire, fisticuffs, horseback chases, and a bounty hunter - with motorcycles, machine guns, and a map to a buried Chinese treasure thrown in.

The plot of the film could easily

Review of Clash of the Titans

by Wess

Hi, all! A few of us went to see the *Clash* last night. I can say, without a lot of enthusiasm, it was good. I could say, with more enthusiasm, it was OK. Making a movie about mythological times is much like putting on a Shakespearean play. Everybody knows the plot and all the characters, and you have to find a way to make it fresh and interesting. The people also have to like the genre to fully enjoy it.

My biggest problem with it was the *faux* 3D. It was very distracting. It was off, not quite right. It made it confusing at times and seemed non-existent at others. If we had gone a couple of weeks sooner, we would have had more choices in theaters and formats, and we could have seen it in 2D. It would have been a much better movie.

The special effects were great! Now is the time to be making movies like this. Unlike in the days of old, our technology has caught up with our vision in movie-making. There was also an homage to Harry Hamlin's *Clash* when they found the little mechanical owl in storage.

serve as the basis for a classic John Ford Western. A laconic Korean bounty hunter (aka "the Good") is hunting down a very nasty Korean outlaw ("the Bad"). The outlaw's current caper is armed train robbery – his target is a map in the possession of a high-powered Japanese businessman on board. The map (written in Russian) is supposed to show the location of a fabulous treasure buried out in the Manchurian desert by imperial Chinese refugees after the fall of the Qing Dynasty; and "the Bad" has been hired by a nefarious crime lord (Manchurian or Chinese or Korean, I was never sure which) to steal the map. Meanwhile, "the Good" is lurking onboard, waiting for "the Bad" and his henchmen to strike. And a lone Korean gunman has also jumped aboard the train for a quick little old-fashioned hold-up. (He's "the Weird" – kind of a buffoonish cross between a stereotypical *bandito* and Jackie Chan.) In the bullet-riddled chaos that



Lastly, the actors. It was a great showcase for Sam Worthington. He did a good job, his legs look real good on this movie, and he got to fly through the sky on the backs of animals again. Liam Neeson did an adequate job, not much of a part, but looked ridiculous in that bright shiny silver frock. With a few well-placed feathers and a feather boa, he would have looked like something out of *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*.

That's all for now. See you at the movies.

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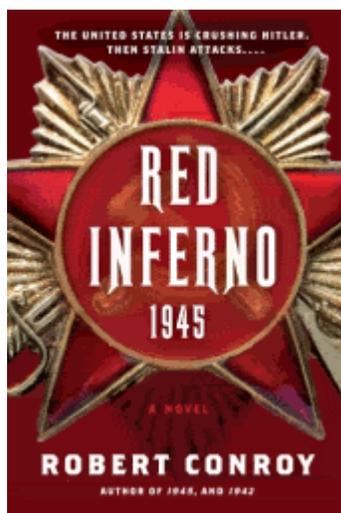
ensues, "the Weird" escapes with the map (mixed in with a bag full of other loot) – and the chase is on! Fights galore (fists, guns, knives, swords – you name it), bloody mayhem galore (ditto), dark secrets revealed, up hill and down dale, facing bloodthirsty gangsters in the Ghost Market (think of Mos Eisley spaceport without the starships), chased through the desert by marauding Manchurian barbarians – and all capped by a three-way gunfight that has to be seen to be believed. It's non-stop over-the-top action!

Director Kim Ji-woon apparently hired a rather prestigious cast for the film, too. A couple of Korean heartthrobs play two of the title roles. Jung Woo-sung is "the Good" – the stalwart, eagle-eyed bounty hunter, iconically-clad in a leather cowboy hat and full-length duster, wielding a rifle with deadly accuracy (even when swinging around

(continued on page 5)

Red Inferno: 1945

continued from page 3



what if the paranoid Joseph Stalin had viewed this American incursion as a threat to the Soviet Union and the expansion of the Communist Revolution? (And what if Stalin had also heard rumors of what was going on in Almagordo, New Mexico, and feared that the U.S. might decide to use its powerful “secret weapon” against their former Russian allies?) The result: the over-extended American armies are met by the Russian military juggernaut and forced back across the face of Germany. Meanwhile, the remnants of the American forces that had crossed the Elbe are surrounded in Potsdam, facing overwhelming odds.

Conroy does a really great job of examining the drama and the horrors of this alternate WWII scenario from several different angles. Yes, there are the obvious scenes in the halls of power: from the White House of Harry Truman (“an accidental president”), to the creepy offices from which the megalomaniacal Josef Stalin and his henchmen (such as Lavrentii Beria, chief of the dreaded NKVD) direct the Soviet onslaught, to the field headquarters of the contending warriors, General Eisenhower and Marshal Zhukov. But Conroy also gives his readers a look at the lives of the ordinary (and fictional) people who get caught up events. There’s Steve Burke, a former professor of Russian studies who now works as an advisor in the Pentagon – and his new girlfriend

The Good, The Bad, The Weird

continued from page 4

on ropes during the action sequence in the Ghost Market). The oh-so-delectable Lee Byung-hun is “the Bad” – blade-thin and fashionably clad in a dark pin-striped suit, with a spiky mop of black hair falling rakishly across one eye, oh-so-deadly with any one of a number of weapons. He’s sort of a cross between Spike Spiegel (of *Cowboy Bebop*) and Johnny Depp’s character from *Once Upon a Time in Mexico*. (And, thank you, thank you, Mr. Director, for that *totally* gratuitous scene of Mr. Lee clad only in black skivvies! Wow! What a body!) The real scene-stealer, however, is comic actor Song Kang-ho as “the Weird” – definitely not the leading-man-type, but he out-acts the other two actors twelve ways to Sunday. (Yes, Lee Byung-hun definitely gets to “eat up the scenery” from time to time as the quirky “Bad” – but it’s Song Kang-ho who had me smiling and laughing throughout the film.)

“Gee,” you say, “that certainly doesn’t sound like F&SF to me. Why are you reviewing it in the LSF newsletter?” I’m glad you asked. You see, as I watched it, I couldn’t help but make

Natalie, a Russian émigré who works for the State Department and gets caught up in the FBI’s “Commie” witch-hunt. There’s Jack Logan, an ex-sergeant from Michigan who survives the first Soviet onslaught only to be trapped in “Goddamn Potsdam” – and the brutalized German refugee Elizabeth Wolf, who hopes the U.S. forces in Potsdam will provide protection from Russian soldiers seeking to retaliate for previous German atrocities. And there’s Sergei Suslov, a Russian tank commander who rolls across Germany with an increasingly decimated and undersupplied Soviet army – and has a front-row seat to witness the horrors of the first nuclear bombs. And many more.

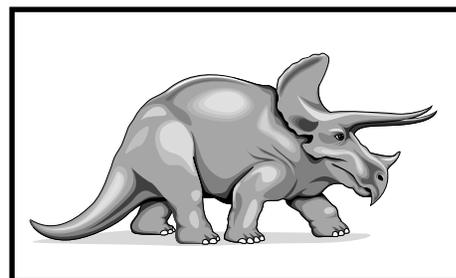
I found *Red Inferno: 1945* to be a really great read – often disturbing, often thought-provoking – but a really great read. It was also a real eye-opener



comparisons with such sci-fi features as *Cowboy Bebop* (and related Japanese *animé*); *Firefly* (Joss Whedon’s “space Western” TV series); post-apocalyptic films like *Mad Max*, *Tank Girl*, and *A Boy and His Dog*; and (to a certain extent) the various “Indiana Jones” films. *The Good, the Bad, the Weird* has a certain similar “sci-fi flavor” to it. With just a dash of Robert Rodriguez’s *Once Upon a Time in Mexico* thrown in for good measure. (That’s my story, and I’m stickin’ to it!)

The Good, the Bad, the Weird premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in 2008; and it’s now being released here in the U.S.A. (dialog in Korean, Japanese, and Mandarin – with English subtitles). I saw it at the E Street Cinema here in DC – and, yes indeed, I certainly intend to get myself a copy on DVD! **Λ Ψ Φ**

for me to run across the term “displaced persons” toward the end of the novel. As a child of Eastern European descent, born just five years after the end of the War, I’d heard this term used any number of times by older family members – usually shortened to the letters “DP”. (For example: “How did you get your clothes so messy? You look like a little DP!”) Conroy’s novel gave me some chilling insights into just what my grandparents and parents were talking about. **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. But the next Lambda Sci-Fi meeting will be held on **Saturday, June 12th**, at Peter & Rob's home (1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC), in conjunction with a video/gaming party. A short business meeting will begin at 2:30 PM; and the other festivities will begin at 3:00 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



July 8-11, 2010 **READERCON 32**. Burlington Marriott (Burlington, MA). Guests of Honor: Nalo Hopkinson & Charles Stross. "The conference on imaginative literature." Membership: \$55 thru 6/19. Make checks payable to "Readercon" and send to: Readercon, PO Box 65, Watertown, MA 02472 Website: www.readercon.org

August 5-8, 2010 **ReCONSTRUCTION** (NASFiC 2010). Raleigh Convention Center; Raleigh Marriott City Center; Sheraton Raleigh Hotel (Raleigh, NC). GoH: Eric Flint; AGoH: Brad Foster. Membership: currently \$95 (will go up!). Make checks payable to "ReConStructure" and send to: ReConStructure, PO Box 31706, Raleigh, NC 27622 Website: www.reconstructionsf.org

October 22-24, 2010 **CAPCLAVE 2010**. Hilton Hotel & Executive Meeting Center (Rockville, MD). Guests of Honor: Connie Willis, Ann Vandermeer, Jeff Vandermeer. Membership: \$45 until 6/30; \$55 from 7/1 to 9/30; \$60 from 10/1 to 10/17. Make checks payable to "Capclave 2010" and send to: Capclave 2010, PO Box 53, Ashton, MD 20861. On-line registration also available. Website: www.capclave.org For information: info@capclave.org

Nov. 26-28, 2010 **DARKOVER GRAND COUNCIL 33**. A very gay-friendly convention. Crowne Plaza Baltimore (Timonium, MD). Guest of Honor: Elizabeth Bear; Special Guest: Katherine Kurtz; Musical GoH: Clam Chowder. Membership: \$45 until 11/1; \$50 thereafter. Make checks payable to "Armida Council" and send to: Armida Council, PO Box 7203, Silver Spring, MD 20907 Website: www.darkovercon.org

May 13-15, 2011 **GAYLAXICON 2011** (held in conjunction with OutlantaCon 2011). Holiday Inn Select Chamblee-Dunwoody (Dunwoody, GA). Guest: Melissa Carter. More information as it becomes available. Website: www.outlantacon.org

Aug. 17-21, 2011 **RENOVATION** (69th World Science Fiction Convention). Reno-Sparks Convention Center (Reno, Nevada). Guests of Honor: Ellen Asher, Charles N. Brown, Tim Powers, Boris Vallejo. Membership: \$140 until 4.30/2010. Website: www.renovationsf.org Membership queries: memberships@renovationsf.org

