



Lambda Sci-Fi DC Area Gaylaxians



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(202) 232-3141 - Issue #246 - September 2010

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TimeGate Another New Convention in Atlanta

info passed along by Carl
from Alan Siler's e-mail

Yes, indeedly, it looks like our Outworlder friends in "Hotlanta" are really kicking into high gear with conventions next year!

As you all know, they're hosting Gaylaxicon/Outlantacon (May 13-15, 2010). (I hope you're looking forward to it as much as I am!) And now it appears they'll be hosting *another* convention later that same month (May 27-29). It's called TimeGate: "The home of *Doctor Who* and *Stargate* Fandom in Atlanta! Plus a little bit of everything else!"

They've already announced a slew of guests—lots of them have relationships to either the *Dr. Who* or *Stargate* franchises. The "big name" so far is Sophie Aldred, who played "Ace," Companion to the 7th Doctor (Sylvester McCoy). They've also listed the talented F&SF author Melissa Scott as one of the guests. (I know she's authored a couple of *Star Trek* novels; I didn't know she's also written a novel related to *Stargate Atlantis*.)

There'll also be a masquerade, special screenings, "Stargate Jeopardy!", "The \$25,000 Pyramid of Mars," and lots of other fun!

For more details, check out their website: www.timegatecon.org

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Minutes of the August LSF Meeting taken by Scott

Business Meeting

Teresa will be hosting a gaming party at her place in Takoma Park, MD on Saturday, August 14.

Carl announced the upcoming LSF book club selection – *The Windup Girl* by Paolo Bacigalupi – to be discussed on Thursday, August 26, at Peter and Rob's place.

Social Meeting

David described a YouTube video about some participants at the recent ComicCon who staged an impromptu counter-protest – called "All Glory to Hypotoad" – to Westboro Baptist Church members.

Carl spoke favorably about Alistair Reynolds's *The Prefect*, which is classified as New Space Opera. He also said he enjoyed the feature films *Sorcerer's Apprentice* and *Despicable Me*.

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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 September 23rd.

Here are the details for the next several book discussions:

Sept. 23rd - *The Enchantment Emporium*, by Tanya Huff; moderator: Rob.

Oct. 28th - *Soulless*, by Gail Carriger; moderator: Adrienne.

Dec. 4th (combined Nov./Dec. meeting) - *Super Sad True Love Story*, by Gary Shteyngart; moderator: Peter

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September LSF Meeting

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, September 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!

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WHAT'S INSIDE?

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A Couple of “Blasts from the Past”

reviewed by Carl

You know, there were some pretty darn good works of children’s and/or YA (young adult) F&SF literature written in *The Good Olde Days*. Here are a couple of examples I’ve run across recently.

***Monsters of Old Los Angeles:
The Prehistoric Animals
of the La Brea Tar Pits*
by Charles M. Martin
(illustrated by Herb Rayburn)
(The Viking Press, 1950)**

It’s been a long search, but I was finally able to get my hands on a copy of this book! I first read *Monsters of Old Los Angeles* when I was a kid back in Chicago – it was one of those seminal influences that contributed to my life-long interest in prehistoric life. Several years ago, I decided to see if I could locate a copy – hampered by the fact that I could only remember what the book was *about* but couldn’t remember either the title or the author. Sigh. But – Eureka! – I managed to find it during an intensive google-search; and, thanks to Amazon.com, was able to purchase a used 1957 edition (good condition, ex-library). Needless to say, I was “giddy as a school-girl!” when it arrived in the mail; and I immediately sat down to read it. It quickly put to rest my fears that I would be disappointed, that this would be a case of faulty memory or of magnifying past pleasures through nostalgic “rose-colored glasses.” The thrill was still there!

“OK,” I hear you say. “So it’s about the Ice Age animals living near the La Brea Tar Pits. So what? Where’s the F&SF angle?” Fair question. As with a lot of vintage children’s literature, this story is told through the eyes of two animals – specifically two raccoons named Racky and Ricky. Hey, hold off on the gag reflex! This isn’t a case of talking animals – it’s not a prehistoric version of *Lady and the Tramp* or *Babe!* It’s more along the lines of Terhune’s *Lad: a Dog* (1919) or London’s *The Call of the Wild* (1903) and *White Fang* (1906),

in which the thoughts of animals are anthropomorphized just enough to let the reader know what they might be experiencing. And, when you think about it, Martin chose pretty wisely when he made raccoons the protagonists of his book. After all, raccoons are pretty smart little critters – certainly smart enough that, even though they were definitely part of the Pleistocene fauna in the Rancho La Brea area, they generally avoided getting trapped in the tar pits.

The story centers on Racky, a solitary raccoon who has wandered down into the comfortable Southern California area ahead of the advancing northern ice sheets. Through the eyes of this small-but-intelligent omnivore, the reader is given a front-row seat for viewing “Nature, red in tooth and claw” (Tennyson, *In Memoriam A.H.H.*, 1850). The “supporting cast” features all sorts of well-known extinct Ice Age creatures – Imperial mammoths, mastodons, giant ground sloths, dire wolves, American camels, giant short-faced bears, American lions, the Western horse, and saber-tooth cats – as well as more familiar modern animals – foxes, coyotes, owls, eagles, vultures, turkeys, ducks, American bison, and so on. But no humans; they wouldn’t arrive on the scene for some time yet. Carnivores stalk – and kill – their prey; scavengers do their thing, too. It’s actually surprising how graphic the descriptions are at times. (Keep in mind that “cute baby animals” are often prime targets for predators.) There are even scenes of sweet little Racky killing and eating field mice and small birds!

There are, of course, frequent descriptions of how the La Brea Tar Pits came to be so jam-packed full of animal bones. For instance, Chapter 11 (“The Greatest Tragedy”) recounts how a herd of Imperial mammoths blunder into the tar pits – as well as the feeding frenzy that follows.

In case you’re interested, there’s even a love story and a happy ending of sorts. Racky eventually runs into Ricky, a lone female raccoon. He rescues her from a coyote attack – babies ensue. And, as our story ends, our happy little prehistoric family wanders off to safer surroundings in the Westwood/

UCLA area.

It’s been about five decades since I first read this book, and I still enjoyed re-reading it! I was kind’a surprised to see the rather sophisticated vocabulary level used by the author – along with footnotes for all the genus/species designations – and (as I said earlier) the descriptions of “life along the food chain” don’t exactly pull any punches. And Herb Rayburn’s illustrations – including both chapter headings and full-page B&W pictures – are as wonderful as I remembered! This book still appeals to my never-ending fascination with prehistoric life. (Now if you’ll pardon me, I’ll just do my little “happy dance”!)

***Twilight Land*
by Howard Pyle
(illustrated by Howard Pyle)
(Random House, 2010)**

The other YA book I’d like to talk about comes from a rather earlier period. (Yes, from even *before* my childhood, you smart-aleck!) I ran across this one while on a recent business trip to Denver – which included (of course) the requisite pilgrimage to The Tattered Cover bookstore.

Twilight Land is a reprint from Random House, part of its Looking Glass Library series, which “offers up yesterday’s finest children’s books.” The blurb on the back cover says: “Each book [in the series] is among the best of its kind, written with skill and imaginative truth by authors who turned stories for children into great works of literature.” And – guess what? – they ain’t kiddin’!

Twilight Land was originally published in 1894, written and illustrated by the one and only Howard Pyle (1853 - 1911). Pyle was a famous American writer and illustrator, noted primarily for his books for younger audiences, such as: *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood* (1833); *Otto of the Silver Hand* (1888); *Men of Iron* (1891 – basis for the 1954 film *The Black Shield of Falworth*); and several volumes of Arthurian legends. He also illustrated historical and adventure stories for magazines such as *Harper’s Weekly*. His lavishly-

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“Blasts from the Past”

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illustrated *Howard Pyle's Book of Pirates* (posthumously published in 1921) contains many of the most famous (and iconic) pirate illustrations of all time. Artists N.C. Wyeth and Maxfield Parrish were a couple of Pyle's more famous students.

In *Twilight Land*, Pyle retells 16 fairy tales from around the world. Although none of them are specifically identified as to source, it's fairly clear – both from internal evidence in the stories and from the fictional narrators of each tale – that there are stories from medieval and baroque Europe, India, China, and the Islamic world.

The set-up is fairly quick and easy. An unidentified narrator falls asleep and finds himself (herself?) in *Twilight Land*, “a wonderful, wonderful place where no sun shines to scorch your back as you jog along the way, where no rain falls to make the road muddy and hard to travel, where no wind blows the dust into your eyes or the chill into your marrow.” The narrator drifts along until he/she reaches the Inn of the Sign of Mother Goose. Inside, in a warm and cozy fireside room, a group of famous legendary characters are sitting around quaffing ale and swapping stories “filled with princes and demons, genies and sorceresses—and all the characters that converge in the age-old battle between good and evil.” Among this happy (and slightly tipsy) company are St. George, Aladdin, Ali Baba, Fortunatus, Jack-the-Giant-Killer, Dr. Faustus, Bidpai (a legendary Hindu storyteller), Cinderella, “the Tailor who killed seven flies at a blow,” “the Lad who fiddled for the Devil in the bramble-bush,” and many others.

Pyle's language and style in telling these stories are an absolute delight. In fact, I found myself reading parts of the book aloud, just so I could enjoy his rhythm and the combination of his words.

Here's how the story “Ill-Luck and the Fiddler” begins: “Once upon a time St. Nicholas came down into the world to take a peep at the old place and see how things looked in the spring-time.”



Or consider the following paragraph from the beginning of the tale “Where to Lay the Blame”:

There was once upon a time a fisherman who had fished all day long and had caught not so much as a sprat. So at night there he sat by the fire, rubbing his knees and warming his shins, and waiting for supper that his wife was cooking for him, and his hunger was as sharp as vinegar, and his temper hot enough to fry fat.

And how about the following passage, the lead-in to one of my favorites, “Empty Bottles”?

In the old, old days when men were wiser than they are in these times, there lived a great philosopher and magician, by name Nicholas Flamel. Not only did he know all the actual sciences, but the black arts as well, and magic, and what not. He conjured demons so that when a body passed the house of a moonlight night a body might see imps, great and small, little and big, sitting on the chimney stacks and the ridge-pole, clattering their heels on the tiles and chatting together.

Then – whoosh! – off you go on a magical adventure, knowing full well that there'll be a moral in there somewhere, usually in praise of honesty, loyalty, kindness, or wisdom (as opposed to mere knowledge). Along the way there are princesses to rescue or to win (“the most beautiful that ever was seen”), genies either evil or beneficent to command (“with eyes that shone like fire”), splendid castles and palaces to visit (“a palace of marble and gold and carmine and ultramarine”), and strange lands to explore (such as “the city of the queen of the Black Isles”).

And if that's not enough to delight you, then consider this: *Twilight Land* includes many of Pyle's line drawings from the original 1894 publication. It's a treat for the eye from one of the greatest of the classic illustrators. How could I resist?

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August LSF Minutes

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There wasn't much general enthusiasm for the movie *Inception*.

Teresa reported that Joss Whedon will be directing the *Avengers* movie, starring Chris Evans, Jeremy Renner, Scarlett Johansson, Mark Ruffalo, Robert Downey Jr., and Samuel L. Jackson. But the character of the Wasp will not be present.

Wonder Woman actress Linda Carter will be the grand marshal for the October AIDS walk. Will she be wearing the new Wonder Woman costume with the ski pants? Or will she be flying overhead in the invisible robot plane?

There was some *Doctor Who* chatter – Rory killed off his already-mostly-dead girlfriend. Rory transformed from plastic to a robot. Riversong, who is the Doctor's “future past wife,” is rather cool.

Eureka is having a fun crossover with *Warehouse 13* this season.

Ken enjoyed watching *KickAss*, the kid-superhero movie

David described playing the *Dream World* MMOR strategy game.

There was a universal thumbs-down for *The Gates*, the TV series about vampires & such in a gated community. *Zzzzz*.

It was noted that *World War Z* is being made into a movie. Can't wait to see the celebrity-zombie segment!

Did you know that *V* is based upon Sinclair Lewis' *It Can't Happen Here*, published in 1935? Now you know. [Editor's note: Actually, I don't think you do, because I don't think that's what Ken said.] Substitute fascists for aliens and you are there.

The new *Nanny McPhee* movie looks cute.

Carl raved about a new ALA bookmark with this text: “Think For Yourself and Let Others Do The Same.”

Filmmaker John Waters will be doing stand-up at Christmastime at the Birchmere.

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**** INFORMATION ABOUT LAMBDA SCI-FI: DC AREA GAYLAXIANS ****

Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians (LSF) is an organization for gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered (GLBT) people, and their friends who are interested in science fiction, fantasy, horror and related genres in all forms (SF/F/H). LSF's primary goals are to have fun, to provide a community, and to:

- promote SF/F/H, with particular attention to materials of interest to GLBT people and their friends;
- provide forums for GLBT people and their friends to share their interest in SF/F/H;
- promote the presence of GLBT elements within SF/F/H and within fandom; and
- promote SF/F/H within the GLBT community.

Annual membership fees are \$10, for which you will receive an e-mailed this monthly newsletter and a membership directory. (Hard copies of the newsletter cost an additional \$15 per year.) Newsletter submissions are always welcome.

Meetings are usually held on the second Sunday of each month at a private residence. The next Lambda Sci-Fi meeting will be held on **Sunday, September 12th**, 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. 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

October 22-24, 2010 **CAPCLAVE 2010**. Hilton Hotel & Executive Meeting Center (Rockville, MD). Guests of Honor: Connie Willis, Ann Vandermeer, Jeff Vandermeer. Membership: \$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**. *Avery*gay-friendly convention. Crowne Plaza Baltimore (Timonium, MD). Guest of Honor: Elizabeth Bear; Special Guest: Katherine Kurtz; Musical GoH: Clam Chowder. Membership: \$45 until Nov. 1st: \$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

Feb. 18-20, 2011 **FARPOINT 2011**. Crowne Plaza Baltimore (Timonium, MD). Guests: John ("Dr. Phlox," *Enterprise*) Billingsley, Bonita ("Gen. Diane Beckman," *Chuck*) Friedricy, more TBA. Pre-registration for weekend: \$80 (daily rates available). Make checks payable to "Farpoint Enterprises" and send to: Farpoint Enterprises, Inc., 11708 Troy Ct., Waldorf, MD 20601

Website: www.farpointcon.com

E-mail: trekcontact@comcast.net

May 27-29, 2011 **TIMEGATE** ("The Home of Doctor Who and Stargate Fandom in Atlanta!"). Holiday Inn Select (Atlanta, GA). Guests Sophie Aldred ("Ace," from the era of the 7th Doctor); Ben Aaronovitch (Dr. Who script writer); Melissa Scott (author); and more. Membership: \$25 thru Dragoncon (Sept. 3-6, 2010); \$35 after Dragoncon to 5/1/2011; \$45 at the door. Make checks payable to "TimeGate" and send to: TimeGate, PO Box 500565, Atlanta, GA 31150. Or purchase membership on-line at: www.timegatecon.org/memb/htm

Website: www.timegatecon.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: currently \$160 (will go up!).

Website: www.renovationsf.org

Membership queries: memberships@renovationsf.org

