



lambda Sci-fi DC Area Gaylaxians

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Annual LSF Book (et al) Exchange at Jan. 8th Meeting

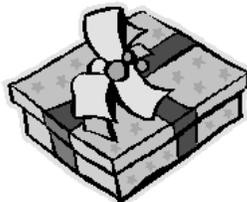
As promised in last month's newsletter, here's a short reminder about Lambda Sci-Fi's *twenty-second* annual book (et al) exchange, which will occur at the upcoming Jan. 8th meeting! All LSF members — and visitors, guests, attendees, etc. — are invited to participate in this “blind exchange.”

In case you've never participated in one of these before (or in case you've forgotten), here's how it works:

(1) Go out and purchase a copy of your “favorite” science fiction, fantasy, or horror book. (NOTE: Over the years, LSF has expanded the concept of “book” to include comics, videotapes, “books on tape,” etc. If you want — or if you're feeling particularly wealthy — you can even make it *several* favorite books or whatever.)

(2) Insert a piece of paper (or a bookmark) with your name on it. (That's so whoever eventually ends up with the item will know who it's from and will get to know a little more about you — at least to know what one of your “favorites” is.)

(3) Wrap up the exchange item, but don't put any identifying marks or



anything on the wrapped package to say who it's from. (That's to make sure it's a “blind” exchange — *i.e.* no one is supposed to know who it's from at first. And, by the way, all of that leftover Holiday wrapping paper should come in handy here!)

(4) At the meeting, add your wrapped exchange item to the pile with all the others; and you'll be assigned a number. (Only one exchange item — *i.e.* one package — per person, please!)

(5) When your number is called, you pick one of the packages from the pile. (And when you open it up, you'll find out who it's from.) See how easy?

I can hardly wait to see what shows up *this* year!

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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 usually 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 **January 26th**.

Here are the details for the next several book discussions:

Jan. 26 - *Kushiel's Dart*, by Jacqueline Carey; moderator: Alex.

Feb. 23 - *Bob the Book*, by David Pratt; moderator: Rob.

March 22 - *Glasshouse*, by Charles Stross; moderator: John.

April 26 - *Order 66*, by Karen Traviss; moderator: Alex.

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January LSF Meeting

*** Location Change! *** and *** Election Notice!***

The next LSF meeting will be held on Sunday, **January 8th**. The meeting will be held at **Peter and Rob's home, 1425 “S” Street NW, Washington, DC**. The business meeting will begin at 1:30 PM; and the social meeting will begin at 2:00 PM. NOTE: The business meeting will include election of officers; and the social meeting will include the Annual Book Exchange. Also, please also bring some munchies or soft drinks, if you can. See you there!

WHAT'S INSIDE?

Minutes of the December LSF Meeting (pg. 2); Anne McCaffrey (obituary - pg. 2); *Steam-Powered: Lesbian Steampunk Stories* (book review - pg. 3); About Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians (pg. 4); Con Calendar (pg. 4)

**Minutes of the
December LSF Meeting**
taken (sort of) by Carl



NOTE: Since Scott was in exile (on business) in the Midwest, Carl valiantly attempted to take minutes of the meeting (with varying success).

Business Meeting

Very early on in the meeting, Teresa decided that it seemed to be “Bait Teresa Day.” [Ed. Note: Well, she was being “belligerent.”]

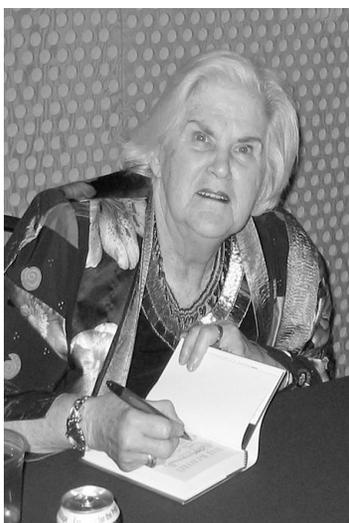
It was agreed to hold off on Election of LSF Officers until the January meeting, which will probably be more well-attended. As a reminder, the January LSF meeting will also feature the annual “book/etc. exchange” (see details on page 1 of this newsletter).

Two upcoming events were announced: (1) Julian has decided to host a **Christmas Party** at his home in Georgetown; he will post details on-line at the LSF Discussion List. (The event will start at 3 PM; and Julian says he’ll offer roast beef – or, as Rob quipped in a Seuss-like manner, “roast beast”.) (2) Peter & Rob will host the **LSF New Year’s Eve Party** on Dec. 31st (details available on-line, and were announced in the December newsletter).

Social Meeting

Carl announced that he has ordered the new Lovecraftian *Whisperer in Darkness* video (created by the HP Lovecraft Historical Society). The website indicates that it should be sent in time for Christmas – which means that Carl plans to bring it to the New Year’s Eve video party.

Rob reminded everyone that the 2011 Spectrum Award for Best Novel (and the associated Short List of Novels) was announced at Darkovercon (Thanksgiving weekend). The winner was *Under the Poppy* by Kathe Koja. (For more details, refer to the Spectrum Award website – www.spectrumawards.org – or the article in the December LSF newsletter.) Rob also reviewed the upcoming selections



**Anne McCaffrey
1926 – 2011**

Fans across the world were saddened to learn that Anne McCaffrey had passed away on November 21st. On Pern (did it but exist), flags would undoubtedly have flown at half-mast over all the Weyrs, and Dragonriders would have bowed their heads in silent homage. In our world, a solemn memorial service was organized for her at Darkovercon (Thanksgiving weekend).

McCaffrey wrote an incredible number of books and short stories in the course of her 35-year writing career. She is, of course, most famous for the two dozen novels and novellas of her “Dragonriders of Pern” series; but her personal favorite was reputedly her novel *The Ship Who Sang* (1969, part of the “Brain & Brawn Ships” series).

McCaffrey was the first woman to receive a Hugo Award and also the first woman to receive a Nebula Award. John Campbell published her first Pern story – “Weyr Search” – in *Analog* in 1967. In 1968, it won the

for the LSF Book Discussion Group: *Kushiel’s Dart* (Jan.), *Bob the Book* (Feb.), *Glasshouse* (March), *Order 66* (April).

Julian sadly announced that the big Barnes & Noble Bookstore in Georgetown is closing. No, they’re not going out of business like Border’s; they simply lost their lease on the property (apparently to be replaced by a Target?).



Hugo for Best Novella, as voted by members of Worldcon. (It tied with Philip Jose Farmer’s “Riders of the Purple Wage.”) The following year (1969), her second Pern story – “Dragonrider” (also published in *Analog*, 1968) – won the Nebula Award for Best Novella, as voted by the Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers of America (SFWA). She was named a Grand Master by SFWA in 2005 and inducted into the Science Fiction Hall of Fame in 2006.

In late 1970, Anne and her two younger children emigrated to Ireland – by way of the North American Science Fiction Convention in Toronto, where she was the Guest of Honor. For the last 30 years, McCaffrey lived (according to the biography on her website) “in a house of her own design, Dragonhold-Underhill (because she had to dig out a hill on her farm to build it) in Wicklow County, Ireland.”

McCaffrey continued to write even into her 80s. She was still answering mail from her readers on her website a few weeks before her death. She apparently also kept her sense of humor. When health issues prevented her from attending the August 2011 World Science Fiction Convention in Reno, she asked her son Todd to apologize for her, saying: “Sorry that old age came up and bit me on the a**.”

Various upcoming movies were discussed, including *Sherlock Holmes: Crown of Shadows* and *The Adventures of Tin Tin* (written by Steven Moffitt). Rob announced that the 2nd “season” of the new BBC *Sherlock* series will be delayed until January.

(continued on page 3)

Steam-Powered: Lesbian Steampunk Stories

edited by

JoSelle Vanderhooff

(Torquere Press, 2011

a short review by Carl

Seemingly, there are new steampunk anthologies cropping up all the time lately. But “lesbian steampunk” stories? What a way to start! It doesn’t seem possible that there could be a more narrowly-defined literary niche than this! There is, however, a really cool motive behind the creation of this anthology.

As it says in the Introduction: “Nearly all of [the stories in this anthology] expressly peer beneath the romance of airships, goggles, and steam power to examine an uncomfortable truth: that the steam era was only possible because women, people of color, children, and other disadvantaged groups suffered, whether as low wage workers who mined coal and assembled the machinery, or as colonists watching their natural resources taken away for an empire’s benefit.” So, says the editor, “. . . when the opportunity to edit an anthology of lesbian-themed steampunk stories came along. . . I was thrilled. Here, I thought, was a chance not only to work in one of my favorite genres, but to provide more stories by and about queer women, who, as I am a queer woman myself, are some of my favorite people.” She was also determined to “make this book less white-centric and more like some-



thing that readers and writers from so many racial and ethnic backgrounds were asking to see.”

Really good intentions—but what about the quality of the stories in the anthology? As with almost every anthology I’ve read, I think the 15 stories in *Steam-Powered* are pretty much an up-and-down mix. However, I found the good ones to be *really* good! Here are some of the stories I particularly like:

“The Effluent Engine” (by N.K. Jemisin) is a tale of international industrial espionage in a steampunk ante-Bellum New Orleans. A Haitian undercover agent attempts to contact an American Creole scientist regarding a secret process that will help Haiti develop a new fuel source and maintain its hard-won independence.

She simultaneously falls for the scientist’s beautiful (and intelligent) sister and runs afoul of the racist Order of the White Camellia.

In “The Hands That Feed,” Matthew Kressel tells an entertaining steampunk crime story set in Gilded Age New York City. Two women—an aging Jewish pawnshop owner (who is also a secret mechanist) and a beautiful, penniless immigrant from India—find themselves opposing a popular and ambitious (but racist) mayoral candidate.

“Love in the Time of Airships” (by Meredith Holmes) is set in an often-overlooked 19th Century setting: France in the time of Napoleon III. A sheltered American socialite and a French *mechaniste* fall in love while attempting to foil a plot to betray important dirigible secrets to the Prussians.

Shweta Narayan’s “The Padi-shah Begum’s Reflections” is one of the most intricate and well-crafted steampunk stories I have ever read. It gradually reveals the inter-connected relationships between female Mechanicals and their human female lovers in Mughal India across three different centuries.

The stories in *Steam-Powered* are filled with unusual settings and protagonists for the sub-genre—and some of the stories even push the boundaries of the definition of “steampunk.” I’m fairly sure you’ll discover some favorites in there, too.

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December LSF Meeting

continued from page 2

Carl passed around a sheaf of various clippings sent in by Wayne # 1.

Dec. 20th will see the release of *Star Wars: The Old Republic*, a much-anticipated MMORPG (massively multiplayer on-line role playing game).

Rob announced: “Here’s some *Doctor Who* news that I heard about before Peter!” (It was just announced a couple of hours previously on the Internet.) Two “long-lost” *Doctor Who* episodes have been found: “Galaxy 4, Part 3” (featuring William Hartnell, the First Doctor) and “The Underwater Menace, Part 2” (featuring Patrick Troughton, the Second

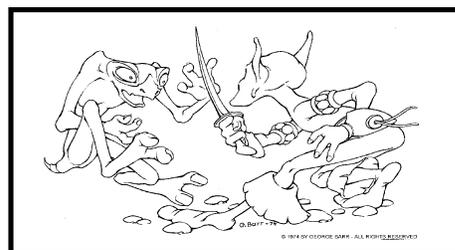
Doctor). Odds are they’ll be available in DVD sometime in the near future.

Apparently Hobbiton is now a tourist destination in New Zealand. When the village of Hobbiton was recreated—in “sustainable materials”—for the upcoming film *The Hobbit*, it was opened as a tourist attraction. This announcement led to a discussion of the upcoming two-part, still-in-the-works film version of *The Hobbit*. This, in turn, led to a discussion of Weta Workshop/Productions (Peter Jackson’s company) as “the new Industrial Light & Magic.” And then on to a discussion of the benefits, problems, and experience of 3D films.

Finally, there was an uproariously funny discussion of the 1978 *Star*

Wars Holiday Special—arguably “the worst two hours of television ever”—and two made-for-TV movies: *Caravan of Courage: An Ewok Adventure* (1984) and *Ewoks: The Battle for Endor* (1985). Rob threatened to bring said he was thinking about bringing a copy of the *Star Wars Holiday Special* to the LSF New Year’s Eve video party!!! (Be afraid! Be very afraid!)

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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, **January 8th, at Peter and Rob's home, 1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC**. 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



Feb. 17-19, 2012 **FARPOINT 2012**. Crowne Plaza Baltimore North (Timonium, MD). Guests: Kristin Bauer (*True Blood*, *Once Upon a Time*), Michael Hogan (*Battlestar Galactica*), Kate Vernon (*Battlestar Galactica*), Peter David, Mark Okrand. Membership: \$80 pre-registration for the weekend (daily rates available). Make checks payable to "Farpoint Enterprises" and send to: Farpoint Enterprises, 11708 Troy Ct., Waldorf, MD 20601.

Register on-line at: www.farpointcon.com E-mail Group: Farpointcon@yahoo.com

April 13-15, 2012 **RAVENCON 2012**. Holiday Inn Select Koger Center (Chesterfield, VA). GoH: Glen Cook; Artist GoH: Matthew Steward. Membership: \$30 before 12/31/2011; \$35 to 3/30/2012; \$40 at the door. Make checks payable to "Ravencon" and send to: RavenCon, PO Box 36420, Richmond, VA 23235. More info online at: <http://www.ravencon.com>

Register on-line at: <http://ravencon.com/registrationPAYPAL.php>

May 25-28, 2012 **BALTICON 46**. Marriott Hunt Valley Inn (Hunt Valley, MD). GoH: Jody Lynn Nye, Artist GoH: Jim Odbert, Scientist GoH: William D. Phillips (Nobel Prize in Physics 1997). Membership: \$50 to 2/28/2012, \$55 to 4/30/2012, \$62 at the door. Make checks payable to "Balticon" and send to: Balticon 46 Registration, PO Box 686, Baltimore, MD 21203-0686.

Website: www.balticon.org Registration form at: www.balticon.org/bconreg.html

Aug. 3-5, 2012 **SHORE LEAVE 34**. Marriott's Hunt Valley Inn (Hunt Valley, MD). Guests: TBA. Membership: \$80 pre-registration for the weekend (daily rates available). Make checks payable to "Shore Leave" and send to: Shore Leave 34, PO Box 6809, Towson, MD 21285-6809. Website: <http://www.shore-leave.com> E-mail: information@shore-leave.com

Aug. 30 - Sept. 3, 2012 **CHICON 7** (70th World Science Fiction Convention). Hyatt Regency Chicago (Chicago, IL). Guests of Honor: Mike Resnick (author), Rowena Morrill (artist), John Scalzi (toastmaster), Story Musgrave (astronaut). Membership: \$195 until 03/31/2012. (Will go up after that!) Make checks payable to "Chicon 7" and send to: Chicon 7, PO Box 13, Skokie, IL 60076. (You can also register on-line.) Website: www.chicon7.org Info: info@chicon.org

Oct. 5-7, 2012 **GAYLAXICON 2012**. Doubletree Hotel Minneapolis-Park Place (Minneapolis, MN). Guests: Gary Russell (writer/producer), Wendy Pini (*Elfquest*), Lyda Morehouse (author), Kyell Gold (furry author). Membership: \$70 - 2011 registration. Register on-line (via Eventbrite). Website: www.gaylaxicon2012.org

