



lambda Sci-Fi DC Area Gaylaxians



PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044

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E-MAIL: info@lambdascifi.org WEBSITE: www.lambdascifi.org

Happy 22nd Birthday to Lambda Sci-Fi!!!



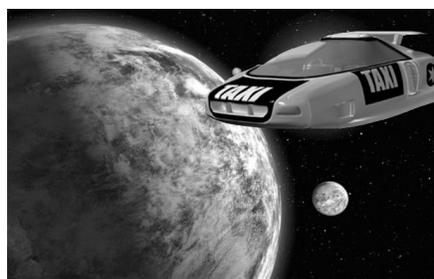
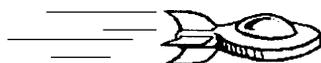
That's right, gang! Lambda Sci-Fi is 22 years old and going strong!

The first LSF meeting was held on March 14, 1990, at Loree & Marcelle's house in Takoma Park. There were nine attendees: Barrett, Carl, Peter, Jim W., Loree & Marcelle Cook-Daniels, Al W., Bruce G., and Tom H.

Here's an excerpt from the minutes of that first meeting: "After talking about what interested each of us in the field of science fiction and fantasy, we threw out some ideas on what we might like to do at a meeting of like-minded fans..."

The first issue of the newsletter (named "Lambda Sci-Fi" by the editor, Al W.) came out the following month (April 1990). LSF also hosted its first DC Pride Day table in 1990.

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Need a Cab, Mister?

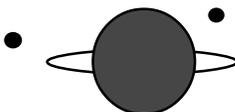
info passed along by
Wayne # 1 and Carl

On Feb. 7th, NASA announced that they're looking for at least two U.S. firms to design and build space taxis to carry astronauts to and from the International Space Station. NASA hopes to be able to fly its astronauts on commercial carriers by about 2017.

With the retirement of the U.S. space shuttles in 2011, Russia has had a monopoly on flying crews to the Station – at \$60 million per person (distance: 240 miles).

NASA plans to invest between \$300 million and \$500 million in each of the firms selected under new 21-month partnership agreements. The new program aims to build upon previous NASA investments (about \$365 million) in companies designing commercial passenger spaceships. Winning firms have until May 2014 to complete their designs, with the intention (if funding allows) to test-fly their spaceships in orbit by 2015.

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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 round-table 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 **March 22nd**.

Here are the details for the next three book discussions:

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

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

May 24 - *Batwoman: Elegy*, a graphic novel, by Greg Rucka; moderator: Teresa.

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March LSF Meeting

The next LSF meeting will be held on Sunday, **March 11th**. The meeting will once again 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.** Please also bring some munchies or soft drinks, if you can. See you there!

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WHAT'S INSIDE?

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Are you going to Gaylaxicon this year? If so, it's certainly time to be finalizing your plans (hotel reservations, airline reservations, etc.).

If you haven't quite decided yet, then you should *really* get to thinkin' about it. This will be the second Gaylaxicon hosted by the folks in Minneapolis – and they did a *great* job last time (2009)!

The logo they've designed this year is kind.a cool: "Department of Queer Defense (aka Gaylaxicon 2012)". Here's what their website says about the theme:

"In 2012, Gaylaxicon celebrates end-of-the-world hysteria through a queer lens. Join us in exploring GLBT apocalypses and utopias, along with other science fiction, fantasy, horror, comics, and games. Take refuge with us no matter what you gaydiation levels are."

The Gaylaxicon Writer/Producer Guest is Gary Russell. He has been a script editor for *Dr. Who* and *The Sarah Jane*

Adventures, as well as editor of *Dr. Who Magazine*. The Featured Artist is Wendy Pini, who introduced the popular *ElfQuest* series in 1978 and in 2007 adapted Edgar Allen Poe's "Masque of the Red Death" into a graphic novel "set in a seductive future utopia."

There'll be an Art Show, a Dealers Room, a Saturday evening Cabaret and "Cabaret Catwalk" (costume show), a Chocolate Symposium, a Sunday night "Movies Spectacular" – and much, much more! There's a "Program Idea Form" available on their website if you'd like to submit additional ideas.

Gaylaxicon 2012 will once again be held at the Doubletree Hotel Minneapolis-Park Place. They're accepting reservations now; and the website provides travel advice.

[Ye Olde Editor sayeth: "And if you're anything like me, you should also plan a trip into town to visit some of the

most fabulous bookstores anywhere: Uncle Hugo's and Dream Haven for F&SF, and Uncle Edgar's for Mystery. I really bent my plastic last time in 2009!!"]

So, what are you waitin' for? Get movin'! See you in Minneapolis in October!! (You can purchase membership on-line.)

Website: www.gaylaxicon2012.org



Minutes of the February 2012 LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

Ghost Rider II is being released this week. Will it be worse than *Ghost Rider I*?

There was some chat about YouTube's *The Guild* comedy web series about a group of online gamers – and how they interact online and offline. One of the stars is *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*'s Felicia Day. Will Wheaton also appears regularly in the series.

The next season of AMC's *Walking Dead* has begun. Will Rick and Hershel continue as a team or split apart?

Tom Hanks has enlisted Yahoo to stream his web series titled *Electric City*, which is an animated futuristic series. Each episode will be about 3 or 4 minutes long, with a total of 20 episodes.

The latest version of DC's *Teen Titans* includes a gay Mexican superhero called Bunker, who can project psionic bricks. Does he have a crush on Red Robin?

The new season of *Archer* has

begun. And *Archer* is wrong in so many ways!

Peter distributed the latest issue of *Sigma*, the newsletter of the Pittsburgh sci-fi group.

The Gay Men's chorus will be performing *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* at GWU next month – an all-male cast!

Question: Did you see the brief *Avengers* movie ad during the Superbowl?

The Disney *John Carter* movie (based on the Edgar Rice Burroughs "John Carter of Mars" stories) will begin its run next month. *Friday Night Lights*'s muscled Taylor Kitsch stars as John Carter.

How did we get on the discussion of oversexed porpoises? Sounds like an *Aquaman* plotline.

David Pratt's *Bob the Book* will be discussed at the February LSF Book Discussion. Carl commented that he feels *Order 66* – the April LSF Book Discussion selection – requires extensive knowledge

of the *Star Wars* universe. He says he sometimes had to look stuff up.

Previews for *The Hunger Games* movie are currently showing.

At one point, Carl mentioned the Ben Winters novel *Android Karenina*. This book incorporates steam punk elements into the famous 19th-century Russian novel.

The NBC genre series *Awake* – "two dreams, one reality" – premieres March 1st. A man, his wife, and their son are in a car crash: in one reality, his wife survives, but his son does not; in the second reality, his son survives, but his wife does not. It's sort of like the film *Sliding Doors*.

There might there be an LSF movie outing to see *Chronicle* – a movie about three teenage boys who get super-hero/telekinetic powers.

China Mieville is reviving DC's *Dial H for Hero*. Who'd'a think it?

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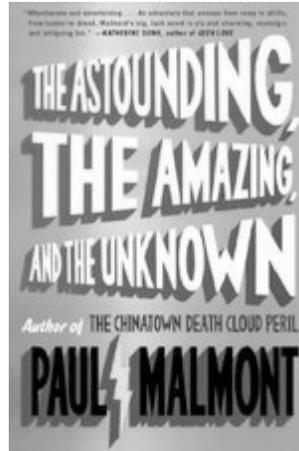
**The Astounding, the
Amazing, and the Unknown**
by Paul Malmont
(Simon & Schuster, 2011)
reviewed by Carl

Did you know that John Whiteside (“Jack”) Parsons – who pioneered the development of solid rocket fuel and was a co-founder of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and Aerojet Corp – was also a devoted occultist and ceremonial magician? And that he was personally chosen in 1942 to head up the Pasadena chapter of the Ordo Templi Orientis by none other than Aleister Crowley himself? And that Parsons’s mistress, Sara Northrup, was also the mistress (and later the wife) of L. Ron Hubbard? And that the three of them participated in various magickal rites in Parsons’s Pasadena mansion?

Neither did I – until I read *The Astounding, the Amazing, and the Unknown*... and then confirmed it all with some additional research. And that’s just part of the fun – and a few of the surprises – in store when you read Paul Malmont’s newest novel!

But first some set-up... Malmont’s first novel, *The Chinatown Death Cloud Peril* (2006), features two of America’s greatest pulp writers – William Gibson (creator of “The Shadow”) and Lester Dent (creator of “Doc Savage”) – as they attempt to solve the mysterious murder of H.P. Lovecraft in 1937 – accompanied by their irritating young sidekick, L. Ron Hubbard. It’s a Pulp Era joyride, as the authors find themselves embroiled in adventures worthy of their literary creations. Along the way, various other Pulp Era personalities make their appearances, including: Robert Heinlein, Jack Kirby and Stan Lee, Louis L’Amour, Chester Himes, and Orson Welles. Ya gotta love it!

In *The Astounding, the Amazing, and the Unknown* (yes, named for the three most prestigious SF pulp magazines of the time), the scene shifts to 1943; and a younger set of pulp writers takes center stage, including: Robert Heinlein, Isaac Asimov, L. Sprague de Camp, and (once again) the irrepressible L. Ron Hubbard. As with, *Chinatown Death Cloud Peril*,



this new novel freely mixes historical reality with fiction. Part of the fun is sifting through the mix to find out (surprisingly) just how much reality Malmont has included in his story.

Amid rumors of “super weapons” being developed by Nazi Germany, John Campbell (editor of *Astounding Science Fiction*) has convinced the U.S. Government to set up a covert military lab inside the Philadelphia Naval Yard – a lab staffed by promising young visionaries (including Heinlein, Asimov, and de Camp) who are tasked with developing the death rays, force fields, and invisibility devices envisioned by science fiction. (Not surprisingly, this arrangement also allows Campbell to keep tabs on his top-producing authors and keep them safely out of overseas combat.)

Unfortunately, despite the impressive scientific and technical backgrounds of the lab staff, progress on these sci-fi weapons is minimal (to the point of non-existence), and the U.S. military hierarchy isn’t impressed. Meanwhile, Nazi U-boats cruise along the Eastern seaboard, and there are fears that Germany is developing long-range bombers that might be able to reach U.S. cities. In fact, a half-drowned German spy is pulled from the Hudson River, his goal apparently having been to locate a secret cache of horrific chemical weapons. (This is one of several direct links to the earlier novel, *The Chinatown Death Cloud Peril*.)

In addition to all the rumors of Nazi spies, there’s the added complication of the over-zealous and ever-suspicious forces of the House Un-American

Activities Committee and the FBI. Malmont does a fine job of depicting the very real – and very serious – scrutiny SF writers were under during WWII. It was, after all, Cleve Cartmills’ story “Deadline” (*Astounding*, March 1944) that described some of the details on the development of an atomic bomb (as gleaned from unclassified sources) and led to FBI investigations of Cartmill, Asimov, Heinlein, Campbell, and others as possible foreign agents or sympathizers. No, *really!!* You get to see some of this in Malmont’s story.

And then there’s the abandoned Wardencliff Tower facility in New York... Never heard of it? It’s where Nikola Tesla had once supposedly adapted his ideas of “transmission of electrical energy without wires” into some form of powerful “directed energy weapon.” Yes, all of Tesla’s papers were declared Top Secret upon his death and sequestered by the FBI; but Heinlein discovers that there might be no “supposedly” about Tesla’s energy weapon! (Think “Tunguska Event.”) Mad scientists, foreign spies, the FBI, and a bunch of pulp SF writers – the race is on!

And the supporting cast? In addition to Heinlein, Asimov, de Camp, and Campbell, there are: Norvell Page, Forry Ackerman, Fred Pohl, Walter Gibson, Lester Dent, Albert Einstein, Robert Oppenheimer, Harold Urey, Hugo Gernsback, Virginia Gerstenfeld (the future Mrs. Heinlein), and the crew of the *USS Eldridge* (as seen in the 1984 sci-fi film *The Philadelphia Experiment*). Gotta love it!

The Astounding, the Amazing, and the Unknown is an absolute romp! Pretty darn suspenseful at times, too. And, as I said at the start of this review, part of the fun is seeing just how well Paul Malmont has interwoven fact and (science) fiction. I think it’s indeed a worthy successor to his earlier *Chinatown Death Cloud Peril*. I highly recommend that you pick up a copy, and then sit back and enjoy the ride!

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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, **March 11th, 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



April 13-15, 2012 **RAVENCON 2012**. Holiday Inn Select Koger Center (Chesterfield, VA). GoH: Glen Cook; Artist GoH: Matthew Steward. Membership: \$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: \$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

Nov. 23-25, 2012 **DARKOVERCON GRAND COUNCIL 35**. (A very LGBT-friendly convention.) Crowne Plaza Baltimore (Timonium, MD). Guest of Honor: Nalo Hopkinson; Artist GoH: Samantha Press; Special Guest: Katherine Kurtz. Membership: \$50 until 11/1/2012; \$55 after 11/1 & at the door. Make checks payable to "Armida Council" and send to: Armida Council, PO Box 7203, Silver Spring, MD 20907. Website: www.darkovercon.org Info at: jaelle@darkovercon.org

