



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044

(202) 232-3141 - Issue # 285 – December 2013

E-MAIL: info@lambdascifi.org

WEBSITE: www.lambdascifi.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 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. *However, the next book discussion will be a combined Nov./Dec. discussion, held on **December 5th**.*

Here are the details for the next couple of book discussions:

Dec. 5 (combined Nov./Dec. discussion) - *The Yiddish Policemen's Union*, by Michael Chabon; moderator: Logan.

Jan. 23, 2014 – *Ghost Spin*, by Chris Moriarty; moderator: Randy K.

ΛΨΦ

New Year's Eve Video Party announced by Peter & Rob



Celebrate New Year's Eve with LSF at Rob and Peter's home. Here are the details on how to join the fun!

Date: Tuesday, December 31, 2013

Time: The doors will open at 3:00 PM. The potluck dinner and the videos will begin in the 3:30 – 4:00 PM range. We'll toast in the New Year with champagne, sparkling wine, and/or sparkling cider.

Where: Rob & Peter's home: 1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC

Directions:

<http://lambdascifi.org/club/PeterRob.html>

(continued on page 2)

Reminder: Annual LSF Book (*et al*) Exchange at Jan. 12th Meeting



That's right, gang, the Holiday Season is almost upon us again; and it's time for a short reminder about LSF's upcoming *twenty-fourth* annual book (*et al*) exchange, which will occur at the January 12th meeting! All LSF members are invited to participate in this "blind exchange" – and visitors are invited to join in the fun, too!

Briefly, this will be an opportunity for LSFers to exchange copies of their favorite science-fiction, fantasy, or horror books/videos/etc. and, thus, get to know each other a little better.

For those of you unfamiliar with the process, here's how it works: You won't be assigned to exchange with any *particular* person – it's a "blind" exchange, where participants will get their pick from a pile of anonymous wrapped packages. **Full details on the exchange in the next (January) newsletter.**

ΛΨΦ

<<<<< December LSF Meeting >>>>>

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, December 8th**. 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 at 2:00 PM. Please also bring some munchies or soft drinks, if you can. Hope to see you there!

ΛΨΦ

What's Inside?

Page 2: Dec. LSF Meeting Minutes; Nightmares Before Christmas (book reviews)

Page 3: AC Crispin (obituary)

Page 4: Info About Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians & Con Calendar

Dec. LSF Meeting Minutes

taken by Scott



Rob is eager to see the stage play *Waiting for Godot*, starring “the two Sirs” (Ian McKellan and Patrick Stewart).

TV News: Rob said he tried watching the new version of *Tomorrow People* but could not get into it after three episodes. Joe likes both *Once Upon a Time* and *Wonderland*. Teresa likes *Agents of SHIELD*, while Rob says that it’s too uneven and that actress Ming-Na’s character (Melinda May) is boring. Dan is enjoying the current season *Walking Dead*, but Joe thinks it’s too gory. Rob shouted praises for *American Horror Story*, saying each season is getting better. (The same actors play new roles each season.) Dan didn’t like the clichés in the first season, but Rob said that one must watch the entire season to understand the clichés. *Arrow* is adding more DC characters – Black Canary, Ra’s al Ghul. *Almost Human* – cop with an android partner – premiered this week.

Movie News: No one seems to have seen the *Carrie* remake. *Ender’s Game* – significant drop in attendance in the 2nd week, so perhaps there won’t be a sequel. *Star Wars Episode 7* release date has been announced: December 2015. *Catching Fire* – the 2nd “Hunger Games” movie – is coming out in a few weeks; and Subway is offering *Hunger Games* sandwiches – really? The third *Atlas Shrugged* movie is being funded by Kickstarter. (It’s funny that the Ayn-Randers are using Kickstarter.)

Book News: Carl mentioned that Katha Koje’s new novel *The Mercury Waltz* (sequel to *Under the Poppy*) will be published in two different formats: a limited edition “subscription only” hardback and a trade paperback. Carl and Rob talked about *S.*, a new book authored by JJ Abrams and Doug Dorst, which includes loose paper inserts (artifacts) that can be lost (frustrating for librarians; difficult for e-readers). The book is also a literary puzzle – a novel within a novel (a fictitious novel with

hand annotations by two different readers sending messages back and forth to each other). Marvel has introduced Kamala Khan, a New Jersey Muslim-American teen female whose super-power is shape-shifting.

Miscellaneous: Rob passed around some issues of *Parsec*, the newsletter of the Pittsburgh sci-fi group. David described the Voynich Manuscript, estimated to have been written in the early 15th Century, but most likely a hoax! Carl advised everyone that this year’s DarkoverCon (Thanksgiving weekend) will be the last one; it will be replaced by ChesieCon.

Upcoming Events: Rob reminded about the Nov. 23rd *Doctor Who* 50th Anniversary event at Peter & Rob’s place. The event includes the showing of the new docudrama about the creation of *Doctor Who*, as well as the Anniversary episode “Day of the Doctor” (featuring David Tennant, Matt Smith, and John Hurt). (In a related news item, David says that wearing a fez is now considered “genre”.) The next LSF book discussion (Thursday, Dec. 5th) will feature Michael Chabon’s *The Yiddish Policemen’s Union*. Finally, Rob reminded everyone about the LSF New Year’s Eve Party at his and Peter’s.

ΛΨΦ



Video Party

continued from page 1

Warning: Street parking is almost impossible to find in our neighborhood on the weekends. Take Metro if you can. There is a paid lot on the SW corner of 14th & “S” Streets NW that costs whatever the attendants can get away with. Fixed price parking is available at the Reeves Center Parking Garage, which is located on the north side of “U” Street west of 14th St NW.

What to Bring: Bring your favorite genre (science fiction, fantasy, horror) Blu-rays, DVDs, and/or digital AVI files on a USB drive. Attendees will vote on which movies will be shown. (There will be a couple of “tracks.”)

It’s a potluck meal, so bring something to eat. Feel free to bring appetizers (veggies, chips, etc.), a main course item (enough to serve at least 4-5 people), dessert (of course!), and/or non-alcoholic drinks (both regular and diet). For the New Year’s toast, it’s OK to indulge. So bring some sparkling wine or sparkling cider (or champagne, if you’re feeling generous) to toast the New Year. *The hosts request that no one drink alcohol during the party other than at midnight.*

For more information, call 202-483-6369 or send e-mail to:

Peter.P.Knapp@gmail.com

ΛΨΦ

Nightmares Before Christmas

book reviews by Carl

As is often my wont, I decided to read a lotta “creepy” stuff during the month of October. Unfortunately, the newsletter schedule once again prevented me from actually putting these reviews into the October newsletter. Not to worry... As you can see, I just gussied up a catchy title and put ‘em in *this* month’s newsletter. (Well, *started* this month!) So, here are a couple of “creepy” books (the first installment in a series) to while away these long winter nights.

The Ghost Prison
by Joseph Delaney
(Sourcebooks, 2013)

This is a short YA book (novelette? novella?). But don’t let the YA label or the shortness fool you – it’s really kind’a creepy and gritty – and it’s filled with excellent B&W illustrations by Scott M. Fischer. (Need I emphasize that Fischer’s illustrations contribute to the overall “creepiness” of the story?)

Billy Calder is 15 years old, and he’s been living in an orphanage for the past nine years. He’s just been

(continued on page 3)



Nightmares

continued from page 2

offered a rather unusual job – but it's his best chance for being able to support himself when he's turned out of the orphanage in less than a year. The creepy old castle on the hill above his village currently serves as a prison for "murderers, common criminals, and convicted witches." Billy has unexpectedly been offered a job as an apprentice guard on the night shift; and naturally he's kind'a scared. ("'Beggars can't be choosers,' my old ma used to say, God rest her soul.") On his first night on the job, Billy learns that the castle is filled with malignant ghosts and other things-that-go-bump-in-the-night, like the horrific (albeit unseen) prisoner in The Witch Well (who is nightly fed buckets of blood and raw flesh). In addition, Billy's trainer informs him that one particularly nasty spirit – Long Neck Netty, who'd been hanged as a witch some time ago – specifically requested that young Billy be assigned to the night shift.

I must admit that I didn't see the ending coming. It's downright Lovecraftian. Wow.

Under My Hat:

Tales from the Cauldron

edited by Jonathan Strahan
(Bluefire/Random House, 2013)

This anthology seemed perfect for the season. Halloween + stories about witches = a natural combination. Unfortunately, most of the stories in *Under My Hat* didn't actually include the "creepiness" factor I was looking for.

Oh, don't get me wrong. This is a *quality* anthology, with a consistency of quality that's not often seen in anthologies. I mean, take a look at just *some* of the authors with stories featured in this all-new anthology: Garth Nix, Holly Black, Charles de Lint, Tanith Lee, Neil Gaiman, Ellen Klages, Ellen Kushner, Delia Sher-



AC Crispin 1950 – 2013

Best-selling F&SF author AC (Ann Carol) Crispin passed away in September. Ann Tickell was born in Connecticut; but she spent much of her life in Maryland. Crispin graduated from the University of Maryland in 1972, with a B.A. in English. She worked for several years as a technical writer and computer programmer for the U.S. Census Bureau. She turned to writing fiction full-time in 1983 and has written (and/or co-written) 25 novels. For the last 12 years, she has been married to fellow SF writer Michael Capobianco.

In 1983, Crispin wrote *Yesterday's Son*, based on the *Star Trek* character Mr. Spock and a direct sequel to the original-series episode "All Our Yesterdays". It was the first non-novelization *Star Trek* novel to appear on the *New York Times* Best Seller List. She subsequently wrote 4 more popular *Star Trek* novels: *Time for Yesterday* (1988), *The Eyes of the Beholders* (1990), *Sarek* (1994), and *Star Trek:*

man, Patricia McKillip, Tim Pratt, Jane Yolen, Jim Butcher, Peter S. Beagle. Wow! Really good stories: well-written, often lyrical explorations of the concepts of witchcraft and witches.

On the whole, though, the stories in *Under My Hat* just weren't the kind of "creepy" stories I was looking for. All except for "The Education of a Witch" by Ellen Klages. That one started out rather innocuously, but it ended with some *really* frightening implications.

ΛΨΦ

Enter the Wolves (2001, with Howard Weinstein).

AC Crispin was well known for her ability to successfully write studio-authorized "tie-in" novels. She wrote three prequels about the early life of Han Solo, as well as short stories for *Star Wars* anthologies (*Tales from the Mos Eisley Cantina* and *Tales from Jabba's Palace*) and three very popular novels based on the television series *V*. Crispin even turned her hand to the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise, writing about the youthful exploits of Jack Sparrow (*Pirates of the Caribbean: The Price of Freedom*, 2011). In addition, she co-authored 2 "Witch World" novels with the great Andre Norton: *Gryphon's Eyrie* (1984) and *Songsmith* (1992).

In 1989, Crispin's novel *Starbridge* was published. This was a new YA series she developed, which featured an outer-space academy that taught students how to explore the universe and develop beneficial relationships with other lifeforms and cultures. During the 1990s, she co-authored 6 more "Starbridge" novels.

AC Crispin served for 10 years as the eastern regional director of the Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers of America. She also helped found the watchdog organization Writer Beware, to alert people about on-line scams by would-be agents and publishers seeking to entrap and defraud new writers unfamiliar with the publishing world. In April 2013, Crispin was named a Grand Master by the International Association of Media Tie-in Writers.

More "creepy" book reviews in next month's newsletter!



* * 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 copy of 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, **December 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 & James



Feb. 14-16, 2014 **FARPOINT 2014.** Crowne Plaza Baltimore (Timonium, MD). Guests include: Melissa McBride ("Carol Peletier", *The Walking Dead*), Alan Dean Foster, Phil LaMaar. Full guest list available at website. Membership: \$80 weekend pre-registration; daily rates available. Make checks payable to "Farpoint Enterprises" and send to: Farpoint Enterprises, 11709 Troy Ct., Waldorf, MD. Website: www.farpointcon.com

March 14-16, 2014 **FUR THE 'MORE.** (A furry convention. The theme is "Pirates vs. Ninjas".) Hunt Valley Inn (Hunt Valley, MD). Registration (non-refundable): \$40 on-line; \$45 at the door. Website: <http://www.furthermore.org>

April 18-20, 2014 **AWESOMECON 2014.** Walter E. Washington Convention Center (Washington, DC). Guests include: Peter Mayhew ("Chewbacca"), Ernie Hudson (*Ghostbusters*), Dirk Benedict ("Starbuck", *Battlestar Galactica*), Nicholas Brendon ("Xander Harris", *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*), David Yost & Walter E. Jones (Blue Ranger & Black Ranger, *Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers*). Two-day tickets for \$50; one-day tickets for \$30. Tickets available at the convention; you can also order tickets on-line. Website: <http://awesomecondc.com>

April 25-27, 2014 **RAVENCON 2014.** Doubletree by Hilton Richmond Midlothian (Richmond, VA). Author Guest of Honor: Elizabeth Bear. Membership: \$35 until 12/31/2013; \$40 before 4/11/2014; \$45 at the door. More information available online: <http://www.ravencon.com>

May 23-26, 2014 **BALTICON 48.** Hunt Valley Inn (Hunt Valley, MD). Author GoH: Brandon Sanderson. Artist GoH: Halo Jankowski. Bard/Filk GoH: Kenneth Anders. Membership: \$55 to 2/28/2014; \$60 to 4/30/2014; \$67 at the door. Make checks payable to "Balticon 48" and send to: Balticon 48 Registration, PO Box 686, Baltimore, MD 21203-0686 Check website for details about on-line registration. Website: www.balticon.org

GAYLAXICON 2014. Breaking news! Atlanta will be the site for Gaylaxicon 2014! Watch this space for developments.

