



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044
(202) 232-3141 - Issue # 286 – January 2014

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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 book discussion will be held on January 23rd.

Here are the details for the next several book discussions:

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

Feb. 27 – *Ready Player One*, by Ernest Cline (moderator: Teresa).

March 27 – *The Kindly Ones*, by Melissa Scott (moderator: Claire).

April 24 – *Glory Season*, by David Brin (moderator: Randy). $\Lambda\Psi\Phi$

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



As promised in last month's newsletter, here's a short reminder about Lambda Sci-Fi's *twenty-fourth* annual book (*et al*) exchange, which will occur at the upcoming Jan. 12th 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 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! $\Lambda\Psi\Phi$



<<<<< January LSF Meeting >>>>>

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, January 12th**. 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. **See above for information on annual Book/Etc. Exchange.** Please also bring some munchies or soft drinks, if you can. Hope to see you there!

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What's Inside?

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Dec. LSF Meeting Minutes

taken by Scott

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Small crowd in attendance – snow/sleet storm impending.

Business Meeting:

The current set of LSF officers were re-elected by acclamation.

Social Meeting:

Mostly raves for the *Hunger Games II* movie. *The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug* opens this coming weekend. Wes mentioned the upcoming Disney movie, *Saving Mr. Banks*, which tells the story of Walt Disney's filming of *Mary Poppins*. Rob is eager to see the upcoming X-men movie, which features the casts from past and current X-men movies. Gal Godot has been cast in the role of Wonder Woman in the upcoming *Man of Steel* sequel. (Teresa disliked *Man of Steel*.)

Peter and Rob reported that the play *If/Then* – with parallel timelines in the plot – was not very interesting and was too long, even though the lead actress is very good. Teresa and Dan talked about a movie called *Room* (frequent late-night showings at the E St. Cinema); it isn't very good, but it has a cult following.

Carl passed an *Advocate* article about the MTV series *Teen Wolf*, which has continuing GLBT-positive content. It was reported that Barry Allen (the Flash) has appeared in a recent episode of *Arrow* – a sign of more superhero appearances to come?

Rob reported that he and Peter have watched the first two parts of the recent three-hour PBS special *Superheroes: A Never-Ending Battle*. This led to a general discussion of superheroes and of the PBS special itself.

47 Ronin, a new movie, looks promising, despite having Keanu Reeves as its main actor; and it appears to have F&SF content. Also, the new *Secret Lives of Walter Mitty* movie appears that it might have F&SF content, too. The upcoming film

Nightmares After Christmas

book reviews by Carl



OK, gang, time to continue my review of the “creepy” reading I did during October 2013 (but didn't get around to reviewing in the newsletter until last month...). So, on to installment #2.



I, Frankenstein looks brutal. Dan wondered if the next *Robocop* movie will involve attempting to rescue the pensions in Detroit.

Peter passed around the latest issue of *Parsec*, the newsletter of a Pittsburgh-area sci-fi group. Dan reported that all issues of (defunct) *Omni Magazine* are available for free at archive.org. (Note: *Omni* was noted as a great source of award-winning F&SF short fiction.)

Upcoming LSF Events:

Rob announced the upcoming LSF Book Discussion Group titles: *Ghost Spin* by Chris Moriarty (January), *Ready Player One* by Ernest Cline (February), *The Kindly Ones* by Melissa Scott (March), *Glory Season* by David Brin (April).

On Christmas Day, Peter & Rob are hosting a party to watch the *Doctor Who* Christmas Special, during which actor Matt Smith will be replaced by Peter Capaldi as the Doctor's latest regeneration. Julian offered to host a Christmas dinner at his place that afternoon.

Peter & Rob will also host the Dec. 31st LSF New Year's Eve Video Potluck Party.

The Jan. 12th LSF meeting will include the annual Book/Etc. Exchange (see page 1 of this issue).

Impossible Monsters
edited by Kasey Lansdale
(Subterranean Press, 2013)

Now we're firmly into “creepy” territory! *Impossible Monsters* suffers (IMHO) from the up-and-down quality of so many anthologies – but when it comes to “creepiness,” some of the stories in this all-new anthology are real humdingers! In “Blue Amber” by David Schow, insectoid creatures reproduce via human hosts – a truly “icky” story! Charlaine Harris's “The Glitter of the Crowns” offers some interesting variations on the werewolf story – and questions the nature of the prey-predator relationship. Al Sarrantonio's “Orange Lake” brings an ex-cop up against a mysterious lake full of ravenous squiggles. And Selina Rosen's “Nathan” gives you an inside view of a guy haunted by a malicious spirit – or possibly it's the story of a plain-old homicidal maniac? There's even a story by one of my absolute favorite authors: Joe Lansdale “hissself”, author of *Bubba Ho-Tep* and Weird Westerns like *Razored Saddles*. His “The Case of the Angry Traveler (A Dana Roberts Adventure)” pits the title character, a female investigator of the “supernormal”, against a unique subterranean menace: the ghost of a space alien (with scenes reminiscent of *Forbidden Planet*). Ya gotta love it!

American Supernatural Tales
introduced by series editor Guillermo del Toro
edited by S.T. Joshi
(Penguin Books, 2013)

Penguin Books has issued (or reissued) a pretty nifty series of books dealing with horror and the supernatural, including: *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley; *The Raven: Tales and Poems* by Edgar Allan Poe; *The Haunting of Hill House* by Shirley Jackson; and others – all of them “curated by filmmaker and lifelong horror literature reader Guillermo del Toro.” The cover of *American Supernatural Tales* features a bloody human heart grasped in a hand, all in bright crimson-red-and-black.

(continued on page 3)

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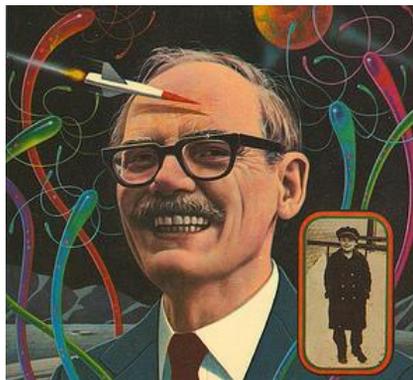
Nightmares

continued from page 2

As with each volume in the series, *American Supernatural Tales* features a fascinating introductory essay by del Toro. It's like an updated version Lovecraft's classic "Supernatural Horror in Literature." (I checked – the same del Toro essay is included in each book of the series.) This volume also features an Introduction by noted Lovecraft scholar S.T. Joshi, who also provides short informational articles as a lead-in to each work in the anthology.

American Supernatural Tales is quite a retrospective. It contains supernatural stories from the 18th through the 21st Centuries, including works from all of the classic "usual suspects" (Washington Irving, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, Ambrose Bierce, Henry James, HP Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, Robert E. Howard, Robert Bloch, August Derleth, and Fritz Leiber) and the "modern masters of supernatural horror" (Ray Bradbury, Shirley Jackson, Richard Matheson, Stephen King, Karl Edward Wagner, and Caitlin Kiernan). Twenty-six stories in all, each from a different author. Some of my favorites are: Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Edward Randolph's Portrait", Lovecraft's "The Call of Cthulhu", Robert E. Howard's "Old Garfield's Heart", T.E.D. Klein's "The Events at Poro Farm", Norman Partridge's "The Hollow Man", David Schow's "Last Call for the Sons of Shock", and Caitlin Kiernan's "In the Water Works (Birmingham, Alabama 1888)".

I'm not exactly sure that this anthology is gonna be everybody's cup of tea. If you've got a favorite brand of horror/supernatural story – whether it's the early stuff, the Pulp Era, splatterpunk, or psychological horror – then there's sure to be something in *American Supernatural Tales* that you're gonna enjoy; there's



Fred Pohl 1919 – 2013

With the passing of Fred Pohl, another of SF's "Great Old Ones" has departed for the Great Mystery Beyond. Pohl was an SF writer, editor, literary agent, and fan. During a career spanning over 75 years, he wrote 50-something novels and I can't even guess at how many short stories. His first published work was the poem "Elegy to a Dead Satellite: Luna" (*Amazing Stories*, October 1937, under the name "Elton Andrews"); and his last novel was *All the Lives He Led* (2011). Over the course of his long writing career, Pohl won four Hugo Awards and three Nebula Awards.

In September 1938, as a teenager in NYC, Pohl co-founded the Futurians (a sci-fi fan group) and began life-long friendships with Donald Wollheim, Isaac Asimov, James Blish, Cyril Kornbluth, and other early SF movers-and-shakers. (Wikipedia reports: "At one point in the earliest 1940s, approximately half of all the pulp sf and fantasy magazines in the U.S. were being edited by Futurians...") The young Pohl also published an SF fanzine titled *Mind of Man*.

Pohl started a career as a literary agent in 1937. It was a sideline for him until after WWII, when he started doing it full-time. He represented many successful SF writers, including Isaac Asimov. (Pohl closed the agency in the

early 1950s.)

From 1939 to 1943, Pohl was the editor of the pulp magazines *Astonishing Stories* and *Super Science Stories*. His own stories often appeared in these magazines, but always under pseudonyms. Pohl was also well known for his collaborations with other SF authors, beginning with "Before the Universe" (*Super Science Stories*, 1940, with Cyril Kornbluth, as "S.D. Gottesman"). From about 1959 to 1969, he edited *Galaxy Science Fiction* and its sister magazine *Worlds of If*. He also edited *Worlds of Tomorrow* from its first issue (1963) until it merged with *Worlds of If* (1967). During Pohl's term as editor, *Worlds of If* won the Hugo Award for Best Professional Magazine three years in a row (1966, 1967, 1968). In the mid-1970s, Pohl acquired and edited novels for Bantam Books ("Frederik Pohl Selections"), including Samuel Delany's *Dhalgren* and Joanna Russ's *The Female Man*.

Pohl's works won him much acclaim and many awards. *Man Plus* won the Nebula Award in 1976. *Gateway* (1977, his first "Heechee" novel) won four "year's best novel awards" (Hugo, Locus, Nebula, John W. Campbell Memorial). He won the John W. Campbell Memorial Award again in 1984 for *Years of the City* (a collection of novellas). *Jem* (1979) won a U.S. National Book Award and was a finalist for three other "year's best novel" awards. In 2010, he even won a Hugo for Best Fan Writer (for his blog "The Way the Future Blogs").

The Science Fiction Writers of America named Pohl its 12th recipient of the Damon Knight Memorial Grand Master Award in 1993; and he was inducted into the Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame in 1998.

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also a distinct possibility that it contains stuff you're *not* gonna like as much. But if you're an aficionado of the history of supernatural fiction, then this is the anthology for you!

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And there'll be more "creepy" book reviews in next month's newsletter, too!

* * 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, **January 12th, 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.furthemore.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 2-4, 2014 **GAYLAXICON/Outlantacon 2014**. Atlanta Marriott Century Center (Atlanta, GA). Guests: TBD. Membership: \$25 until 12/31/2013; will increase in 2014. Watch this space for further developments.

Website: www.outlantacon.org For more info: info@outlantacon.org



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