



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044

(202) 232-3141 - Issue # 287 – February 2014

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.

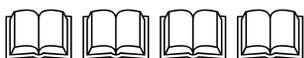
The LSF Book Discussion Group usually meets on the 4th Thursday of every month, starting at 7:00 PM, at Peter & Rob's home: 1425 "S" St., NW – for directions or more details, call 202-483-6369. The next book discussion will be held on February 27th.

Here are the details for the next several book discussions:

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). $\Lambda\Psi\Phi$



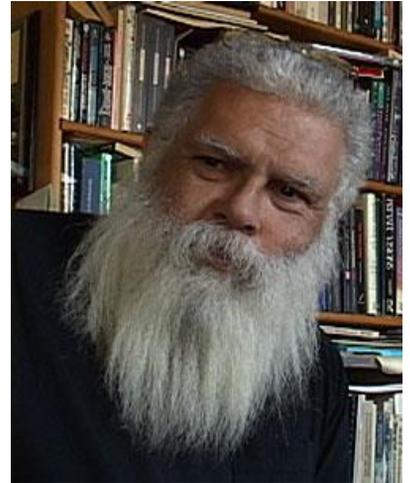
Rosetta Awakens!



On January 20th, the European Space Agency spacecraft Rosetta successfully awoke from a three-year slumber on its way to an historic rendezvous in space.

Rosetta was launched in 2004. Its mission: give us our first up-close-and-personal look at a comet. By August of this year, it will catch up with comet Churyumov-Gerasimenko and follow it all the way from near Jupiter to the inner solar system. Rosetta's orbit around "Chury" will take it to within a few tens of meters above the comet's surface.

By November, scientists and engineers will choose a site to drop Philae, Rosetta's washing-machine-sized lander. It is hoped that Philae will help to reveal secrets about the solar system and maybe even find clues about the origins of life. $\Lambda\Psi\Phi$



Samuel Delany Named Latest SF&F Grand Master

info passed along by Kendall

The Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers of America have named Samuel R. Delany to receive the 2013 Damon Knight Memorial Grand Master Award. Delany will receive this award for "lifetime achievement in science fiction and/or fantasy" at the 49th Annual Nebula Awards Weekend (May 15-18, 2014 in San Jose CA). Delany has also received 4 Nebula Awards and 2 Hugo Awards and was inducted into the Science Fiction Hall of Fame in 2002. $\Lambda\Psi\Phi$



<<<<< February LSF Meeting >>>>>

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, February 9th**. 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!

$\Lambda\Psi\Phi$

What's Inside?

Page 2: Nightmares After Christmas (book review); February LSF Minutes
Page 3: *The Starlost* (comments on an old TV series)

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

Nightmares After Christmas

book review by Carl

Installment # 3 of my reviews of the “creepy” reading I did during October 2013 (but didn’t get around to reviewing in the newsletter until December).



Reanimators

by Pete Rawlik

(Night Shade Books, 2013)

I figured this novel would definitely take me into “creepy territory” – after all, as it says on the cover: “H.P. Lovecraft only told you Herbert West’s side of the story.” A Lovecraftian story with links to “Herbert West—Reanimator” – that’s *gotta* be creepy, right? Well, yes and no.

Dr. Stuart Hartwell is a former Miskatonic colleague of Herbert West. But when one of West’s “reanimated” corpses kills Hartwell’s parents, Hartwell vows to avenge their deaths. He plans to do anything he can to frustrate West’s research – and to eventually kill him. Hartwell is also interested in perfecting “reanimation” – and, to a certain extent, he’s even better at it than West. So, off we go, with “dueling reanimators,” lots of gruesome experiments, and lots of reanimated corpses rampaging about throughout the story.

But, in my opinion, the “Hartwell vs. West” storyline isn’t the biggest attraction. As it turns out, *Reanimators* seems to primarily serve as a frame story. Ya see, Rawlik is a big-time Lovecraft fan; and he uses Hartwell’s adventures to link a whole slew of Lovecraft’s stories as part of an epic narrative. Fortunately, Rawlik doesn’t simply incorporate Lovecraft’s works wholesale into his novel – but, as Hartwell’s story unfolds, we find ourselves looking at a number of Lovecraft stories “from the outside” –

(continued on page 3)

Minutes of the January LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

The trailers for the new Godzilla movie look promising. Teresa noted that several actors from *The Simpsons* appeared in the previous Godzilla movie.

Rob reflected on the long-range impact of the 1983 made-for-TV movie *The Day After*. On a related discussion, Xena described a Miyazaki anime feature, a post-bomb story about a boy and a girl. (No one seemed to recall the movie title.) [Ed. Note: Maybe it was *Hadashi no Gen* (aka *Barefoot Gen*, 1983), directed by Mori Masaki?]

There was some discussion of Scarlet Johansson, who plays the voice of the female AI character in the film *Her* (starring Joaquin Phoenix). Might she be eligible for an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress, even though it’s voice-over work?

Everyone agreed that new Peter Jackson epic *The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug* is superior to the first Hobbit movie, but that addition the female elf love interest is a ridiculous addition to the story.

Teresa described *Knights of Badassdom* (starring Peter Dinklage & Summer Glau), a movie about LARP-ers who accidentally summon a succubus demon from the underworld.

Upcoming films: A film version of the *Veronica Mars* TV series is scheduled to be released in March 2014. *X-Men: The Days of Future Past* is due out in April, as is *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*. And a remake of the 1987 *Robocop* is due out in February (starring Joel Kinnaman and Gary Oldman).

TV stuff: Rob said reviews describe the SyFy Channel’s *Helix* (a new series about a mysterious contagion at a polar research facility) as being engaging and captivating. There was some chat about the new CBS series *Intelligence* (starring Josh Holloway and Marg Helgenberger), which has been described as “Chuck without the comedy”. Rob reported that this is *True Blood*’s last season.

There was a lengthy discussion about the concept of “magical realism”: what themes and such should be included and what should be excluded.

Rob read an example of “dinosaur erotica” that is available via Amazon.

Upcoming LSF book discussion titles: Chris Moriarty’s *Ghost Spin* (Jan.), Earnest Cline’s *Ready Player One* (Feb.), Melissa Scott’s *The Kindly Ones* (March), and David Brin’s *Glory Season* (April).

Finally, it was time for the annual LSF book exchange. Here is the rundown:

To David, from Peter: DVD set of all the *Alien* movies.

To Teresa, from Xena: Gregory McGuire’s *Wicked*.

To Rob, from Max: Clive Barker’s *Something*.

To Max, from Steve: Lynn Flewelling’s first “Shadowrunners” trilogy.

To Scott, from Teresa and Dan: Brian Aldiss’s *Hothouse*.

To Julian, from Scott: Hal Duncan’s *Vellum*, and Don Sakers’s *A Rose from Old Terra*.

To David, from Carl: Jack Vance’s *The Dying Earth* and “Demon Princes” anthology.

To Steve, from David: Terry Brooks’s *Elfstones of Shannara* and *Sword of Shannara*.

To Carl, from James: 2 “Raven” novels by Patricia Briggs, and Sofie Kelly’s *Cat Trick* and *Final Catcall*.

To James, from Julian: C.J. Cherryh’s “Chanur” series.

To David, from Rob: DVD set of the complete *Farscape* series.

To Xena, from David: 2 of Kurt Busiek’s “Astro City” graphic novels.

ΛΨΦ

Keep reading books,
but remember that
a book’s only a book,
and you should
learn to think for yourself.

-- Maxim Gorky (1968 – 1936) –

quoted in *The Quotable Book Lover*
edited by Ben Jacobs
& Helena Hjalmarsson
(Barnes & Noble Books, 2002)

Nightmares

continued from page 2

and other Lovecraft stories are altered to fit into the *Reanimators* narrative.

Which Lovecraft stories, you ask? Well, minor references to various Lovecraftian stories and characters are scattered throughout *Reanimators*; but the following stories play major or minor roles: “Herbert West—Reanimator” (of course), “Cool Air”, “The Shadow Out of Time”, “The Dunwich Horror”, “The Music of Erich Zann”, “The Statement of Randolph Carter”, “The Shadow Over Innsmouth”, “The Colour Out of Space”, “Dreams in the Witch House”, and even August Derleth’s “Ithaqua”. Characters from a number of other authors are also cleverly inserted into the storyline, including: Wolf Larsen (from Jack London’s *The Sea Wolf*), Gaston Leroux’s *Phantom of the Opera*, Captain Englehorn (from the film *King Kong*), Nick Charles (from Dashiell Hammett’s *The Thin Man*), Charlie Chan (from the novels of Earl Derr Biggers), and a certain “Professor Henry Jones and his son”.

This comparatively short novel took me rather longer to finish than I thought it would. It certainly wasn’t due to the novel itself – in and of itself, it’s a fairly quick read – but I found myself putting it down every now and then to go and re-read the original Lovecraft stories.

I’m not sure if *Reanimators* will be to everyone’s taste. Yes, *Reanimators* is a clever creation – but Rawlik is no Lovecraft. I rather think it will appeal more to the die-hard Lovecraft fan, someone who’ll appreciate all of the Lovecraftian themes, characters, and stories incorporated into it.

ΛΨΦ



[This series will hopefully be concluded next month.]

The Starlost

comments from Scott & Jim



from Scott

I recall with much amusement both *Space 1999* and *UFO* from my high school days. I vaguely recall a *third* tepid sci-fi TV show whose title I couldn’t remember – or the actors. But I did vaguely recall that there were three Amish-y people running around an Earth space ark.

So a simple Bing search revealed *The Starlost*, starring Keir Dullea (of *2001: A Space Odyssey* fame) no less. How could I forget that it starred Keir Dullea? In retrospect, the character that he played sort of looks like a porn star. It was produced in Toronto in 1973-1974.



Did you know that the names of Harlan Ellison and Ben Bova are associated with *The Starlost*? Yup. But...

As you can read in the review on the “Eighteen Bridges” website (see link below), Harlan Ellison started off with high hopes for the show but got ticked off over the production crew, the show’s writers and producers, etc. In order to distance himself from the show, he used the pseudonym “Cordwainer Bird”. This name appears in the show’s opening credits.

And Ben Bova? His role was to “to make sure the series didn’t violate basic rules of physics or biology in its quest to entertain.” He supposedly grew increasingly bothered as the red lines he drew under scientific impossibilities or gaffes in the scripts were

disregarded. He later admitted: “I was paid rather handsomely as a consultant, and praised by everybody...and my advice was totally ignored.”

I do recall enjoying the show back in high school – so much for my taste back then. I don’t recall anyone else in the club ever mentioning *The Starlost*. Did any of you watch it?

So, can Canadian TV produce good sci-fi? I would say that *Continuum*, currently on the SyFy channel, is excellent! Yes, Canadian TV can produce quality sci-fi!

Want to watch a few episodes – or maybe just 10 minutes of a single *Starlost* episode? It’s available via YouTube.

It really is *that awful*.

Here’s the link to a rather lengthy commentary, which you can read (or skip), depending upon your attention span at the moment:

<http://eighteenbridges.com/story/canada%E2%80%99s-tomorrow-never-was>

from Jim

I also watched *The Starlost* when it was first shown. Yes, it was awful; but it had some interesting ideas and an interesting premise. They tried to do the special effects on video, which didn’t work well at all and ended up looking a lot like *Dr. Who* effects of the period. Walter Koenig had a role as a villain in at least one episode



ΛΨΦ

“Unless you want what someone gives you, it is not a gift, it is an imposition.”
-- Oro, “The Return of Oro”,
The Starlost

* * 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, **February 9th, 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 week-end 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: \$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: currently \$45; will increase later. 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