



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044

(202) 232-3141 - Issue # 288 – March 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 March 27th.

Here are the details for the next several book discussions:

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

April 24 – *Glory Season*, by David Brin (moderator: Randy).

May 22 – *The Drowning Girl*, by Caitlín Keirnan (moderator: Carl)

June 26 – *Ascension*, by Jacqueline Koyanagi (moderator: Claire).

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Happy Birthday, Lambda Sci-Fi!!



Lambda Sci-Fi turns 24 this month!

The first meeting was held on March 14, 1990, at the home of Loree and Marcelle Cook-Daniels. There were nine attendees. The minutes of that first meeting include the following information:

“As for ‘business,’ we decided to circulate and read the Galactic Network’s Principles and By-Laws, with an eye toward sooner or later deciding if we want to join as a subsidiary group; not to decide now about officers, name, structure, etc...”

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All Things Takei?

info passed along by Peter & Carl



Wow! George Takei seems to be popping up everywhere lately! He's got a new cologne spray called Eau My (“a clean, refreshing fragrance for men and women”), with the advertising tag line “Set phasers to stunning!” He's written a new book – *Oh Myyyy! (There Goes the Internet)* – which recounts his experiences on Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook, the nature of viral sharing, and other aspects of our plugged-in culture. And a documentary about his life – *To Be Takei* (director: Jennifer Kroot) – premiered at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival. The film looks at George's childhood experiences in a WWII internment camp and his rise to fame as *Star Trek's* Mr. Sulu, an Internet celebrity, and an LGBT-rights activist. Full speed ahead, Mr. Sulu!

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<<<<< March LSF Meeting >>>>>

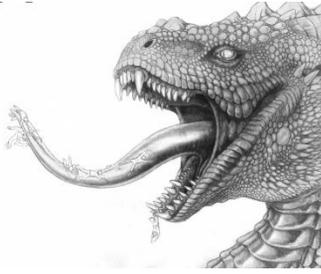
The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, March 9th**. The meeting will once again be held at Peter and Rob's home, **1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC**. The business meeting will begin at 1:30 PM and the social meeting at 2:00 PM. Please also bring some munchies or soft drinks, if you can. Hope to see you there!

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What's Inside?

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“Nightmares” Again book Reviews by Carl



[Note: This is the final installment in the series of my reviews of the “creepy” books I read during October 2013.]

The Curse of the Wendigo (2010)
The Isle of Blood (2011)
The Final Descent (2013)
by Rick Yancey
(Simon & Schuster/BFYR)

In the November 2010 LSF newsletter, I reviewed the first volume of a new YA-F&SF series, *The Monstrumologist* by Rick Yancey. I described it as being a prime example of “edgy” YA and even said: “It’s got ‘bite.’ (Pun intended.)” The second volume (*The Curse of the Wendigo*) came out later that year, and I happily “devoured” that one, too (once again, pun intended) – but, for some reason or other, I never got around to reviewing it. The long-awaited fourth “Monstrumologist” book was finally issued in October 2013, so I figured this was a clear sign for me to finish the series as part of my 2013 “Halloween read-a-thon.”

The series opens in a small Massachusetts town in 1888. Young Will Henry was orphaned when his father died while in the employ of Dr. Pellinore Warthrop, the world’s foremost “monstrumologist” (or, as he prefers to term it, “doctor of aberrant biology”). Will Henry becomes Dr. Warthrop’s assistant and finds himself entangled in a series of horrifying and ever-so-deadly adventures with (as it says in *The Monstrumologist*) “life forms generally malevolent to humans and not recognized by science as actual organisms, specifically those considered products of myth and folklore.” Or, as Dr. Warthrop

February LSF Meeting Minutes taken by Scott

Teresa and David both saw the new “Lego” movie – lots of franchise tie-ins. Teresa noted that the upcoming “Mr. Peabody and Sherman” movie apparently includes fart jokes. Teresa also commented that it appears that the sequel to the film *300* will have significant female characters.

Carl has just finished reading Nicola Griffith’s new novel *Hild*. He reported that it is an historical fiction novel – no genre content – and contains a couple of female-female sex scenes.

Avengers 2: Age of Ultron includes Elizabeth Olson as the Scarlet Witch and Aaron Taylor-Johnson as Quicksilver. Still no Wasp in the “Avengers” movies!

FX is adapting John Scalzi’s 2012 novel *Red Shirts* into a limited TV series. Seth Rogan is making *The Preacher* (Vertigo’s mature-themed comic book series) into a TV series for AMC.

Peter enjoyed watching *Gravity* in 3-D Imax. He also promoted the four-part BBC series about the life of Ian Fleming and the influences that led to him writing the “James Bond” novels. He’s not sure how accurate the history is.

Dan liked the *Ender’s Game* movie. David says that much of the thematic input of the book was stripped



out – for example, there is no explanation of how the aliens communicate. There was general consensus that the subsequent novel would not make a good movie.

AwesomeCon (April 18-20 at the DC Convention Center) is attracting some high profile guests, including: Billie Piper, comics artist George Perez, *Serenity*’s Ron Glass and Jewel Staite, plus more! And this will only be the second year for AwesomeCon!

David attended Arisia con in Boston two weeks ago. He described a group of first-responder nerds called Operation Hammond First Responders. He also travelled up to NYC to see *The Glass Menagerie*, which included Zachary Quinto in the cast.

Season 2 of the popular BBC genre series *In The Flesh* is underway. The premise: the zombie apocalypse comes, but a cure is found and the undead are rehabilitated. But not all of the living welcome back “rotters” with “partially deceased syndrome”.

Dan remarked that *Star Trek: Next Gen* was too preachy. Peter generally agreed, but supplied specific exceptions to that premise.



says in *The Final Descent*: “I am an explorer. I carry a lamp into lightless places. I strive against the dark that others may live in the light.”

And the creatures that Will Henry and Dr. Warthrop hunt are deadly indeed. Yancey has created some truly innovative monstrosities. For example, *The Monstrumologist* features a ravenous species that’s a combination of the *Anthropophagi* (“man-eaters” from medieval cartography) and the *Blemmyae* (headless men from Greco-Roman legend).

In *The Curse of the Wendigo*, Dr. Warthrop and Will Henry head up to Canada in search of *Lepto lurconis* (“gaunt devourer”), aka the Wendigo,

and end up following a trail of blood and death as the ravenous vampiric creature makes its way to New York City. Parallels to Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* are inescapable. The Wendigo and Stoker’s Immortal Count have a lot in common – even more so when readers are introduced to Warthrop’s old mentor Dr. Abram von Helrung, president of the Society of Monstrumology. *The Curse of the Wendigo* also raises the “creepiness and gore” level beyond what is featured in *The Monstrumologist*.

(continued on page 3)



“Nightmares” Again

continued from page 2



In *The Isle of Blood*, Dr. John Kearns returns. He is an amoral “monster hunter” first seen in *The Monstrumologist*. But Kearns is rather more than that – you’ve probably heard of his exploits in Victorian London, under the alias “Jack”. Now Kearns and Warthrop are each racing across the world – from America, to England, to Italy, to a mysterious island off the coast of the Arabian peninsula – to locate the source of a hideously infectious, zombie-making serum. And the question seems to be: Which one of

them is the more ruthless, more determined to win at all costs? Poor Will Henry finds himself questioning his devotion to Dr. Warthrop and the high-sounding (but hollow?) principles of Monstrumology – and the story becomes a grim exploration of just who and what qualifies for the label of “monster”.

The Final Descent is rather different from the previous three novels. Oh, there’s a search for a deadly new monster, of course – a supposedly-extinct creature known as *T. magnificum* – but I don’t really think that’s the most significant facet of the novel. *The Final Descent* is the story of Will Henry’s continuing “descent” into an ever-increasing moral and philosophical dilemma. Has his always-prickly relationship with the irascible Dr. Warthrop influenced Will Henry in an unexpected direction? Can a young, impressionable mind spend years exploring “the dark side” of both nature and the human psyche without ill effects? Added to this is the fact that Will Henry is growing up and

and falling in love – and surging hormones and jealousy don’t make things any easier for him. The format of the story is also very different from the three previous novels – jumping back and forth between diary entries from three different periods of Will Henry’s life to illustrate his increasingly unsettled mental state. Many devoted fans of the “Monstrumologist” novels have expressed their dismay at Yancey’s conclusion to the series. As Yancey notes in his Acknowledgments: “*The Monstrumologist* was conceived as one thing and evolved into something quite different.” I found the entire series to be a really good read; and I think *The Final Descent* brings the story of Will Henry to a fascinating – albeit unsettling – conclusion. **ΛΨΦ**



Tidbits from Wayne # 1

[Ed. note: Here are some bits of info passed along by Wayne #1 in a recent packet of stuff.]

- Much of the original movie set of Tatooine (in Tunisia) has been swallowed by a 300-foot-wide crescent-shaped sand dune. It is visited by 100,000 tourists every year. It is predicted that a second movie set (for the 1999 *Phantom Menace* production) will be entirely covered within 45 years.
- North Carolina politician David Waddell recently stepped down from his local council – and tendered his resignation in Klingon.
- \$1,990: the cost of sending your ashes into space via Elysium Space, Inc.
- A scientist recently ran a computer simulation of what might happen if a pinhead-sized black hole (known as a “primordial”) passed through the Earth. The apparent answer: a slight, teacup-rattling temblor.

Just a Typical Day in the Office?



1938: Edgar Rice Burroughs Meeting with Glenn Morris (the 9th Tarzan)



* * 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, **March 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



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: \$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

November 6-9, 2014 **WORLD FANTASY CONVENTION 2014:** 1914-2014 – Three Centennials. Hyatt Regency Crystal City (Arlington, VA). Guests: Les Edwards (aka Edward Miller), Guy Gavriel Kay, Stuart David Schiff, Laid Finlay (daughter of Virgil Finlay), Jane Yolen. Attending membership: \$200. On-line and mail-in membership forms available on the website.

Website: <http://worldfantasy2014.org/>

For more info: info@worldfantasy2014.org