



Lambda Sci-fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

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Worldcon 2017

info passed along by Carl

Sad news: DC will not be hosting Worldcon in 2017. Out of a total of 2,625 votes (19 “no preference”), “Helsinki in 2017” received 1,363 votes (1,303 needed to win). The “DC17” bid came in a distant second (878 votes).

And now the big question is: Where will NASFiC (the North American Science Fiction Convention) be held in 2017? (As a reminder, the “DC17” committee stated they wouldn’t be trying for the NASFiC bid.)

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Happy Halloween
to all the
folks at
Lambda Sci-fi!

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 October 22, 2015.

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

Oct. 22 – *The Monstrumologist*, by Rick Yancey (moderator: Teresa).

Dec. 3 (FIRST Thursday, combined Nov./Dec. discussion) – *The City and the City*, by China Mieville (moderator: Ross).

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GAYLAXICON 2016: Oct. 7-9, 2016

Check out the updated website:

<http://www.gaylaxicon2016.org/>

<<<<< October 2015 LSF Meeting >>>>>

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, October 11th**. The meeting will 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?

Page 2: September LSF Meeting Minutes; Wes Craven (obituary).

Page 3: Some Suggestions for October Reading (book reviews).

Page 4: Information About Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians and Con Calendar.

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September LSF Meeting Minutes taken by Scott

Nothing for the Business Meeting today.

Social Meeting

TV News: *Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell* is a BBC mini-series based on the novel by Susanna Clarke. It's set in an alternate early 19th Century England, during the Napoleonic Wars. Magic once existed in England and has returned with two men who are magicians. Teresa and Dan are enjoying *Mr. Robot* – a young programmer gets recruited by an anarchist named Mr. Robot. The new series *Fear the Walking Dead* has begun! It was noted that the viewing audience already knows the rules of “the walking dead” from the original *Walking Dead* series. David is ecstatic that *Once Upon a Time* is returning in two weeks. Rob is looking forward to *Heroes Reborn*, the new limited-episode series. George R.R. Martin will be participating in an episode of SyFy's *Z Nation*. Everyone is looking forward to *Supergirl*. Rob raved about *Sense8*. Dan and Teresa loved the BBC's *Black Mirror* about unanticipated consequences of new technologies. Each episode is a different story with a different cast, similar to *The Twilight Zone*; there have only been six episodes so far; available on Netflix. Rob is excited about the reboot of *The Tick*. Halle Berry's acting in the SF series *Extant* is fantastic. Hugh Howey's *Wool* is being made into a TV series: a post-apocalyptic Earth theme with survivors living in a subterranean silo. What are the mysteries of the silo? Vertigo's *Preacher* is being made into an AMC series. How will AMC address the extensive vulgarity?

Film News: M. Night Shyamalan's

The Visit is receiving mixed-to-positive reviews. *The Martian*, starring Matt Damon as a stranded astronaut: a genre movie? It is definitely not a character movie. How can Matt Damon's character survive 90 days with only two days of food? The remake of *Poltergeist* was not horrible. The remake of *Psycho* was nothing special. *Stranger Than Fiction* was a great movie that no one has seen. Same with *Pushing Up Daisies*. The current *Fantastic Four* movie is crap. *Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials* is coming out this week. The film *The Scout's Guide to Surviving the Zombie Apocalypse* pairs some scouts with a cocktail waitress.

Fandom News: Then there was a long discussion about the impact of the Sad Puppies and the Rabid Puppies on the 2015 Hugo Awards at Sasquan (2015 Worldcon in Spokane, WA). The Sad Puppies have not been able to articulate what they really stand for. Vox Day comes across like he is from the Westboro Baptist Church. Rob mentioned that the 2016 Hugos will operate under the same rules as the 2015 Hugos. Any Hugo nomination rule changes would not take effect until 2017. Peter gets to travel to New York City to attend the premiere of *Doctor Who*. Whoo!

Other News: The “Wheel of Time” compendium is due out soon. David enjoyed Brandon Sanderson's new books in the series. Rob reminded everyone of the next three LSF book discussion titles: *Remembrances of Things I Forgot* by Bob Smith (Sept.); *The Monstrumologist* by Rick Yancey (Oct.); *The City and the City* by China Mieville (Nov./Dec.).

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Wes Craven
1939 – 2015

It somehow seems appropriate during October to note the passing of Wes Craven this August. Craven was recognized as a master of horror cinema and a proponent of “slasher” films. He was perhaps best known for creating the *Nightmare on Elm Street* and *Scream* franchises; and his most famous creation was “Freddy Krueger” (as portrayed by Robert England), the serial killer with the razor-blade glove.

Craven began making films after briefly teaching English at Westminister College in Pennsylvania. In 1972, he directed his first feature film (which he also wrote), the low-budget and extremely violent *Last House on the Left*. *Last House* was a hit, as was his next film, *The Hills Have Eyes* (1977). Then came *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984), which cost \$1.8 million to make and grossed about \$25 million. *Nightmare* spawned 6 sequels, although Craven only directed the last one, *Wes Craven's New Nightmare* (1994). In *New Nightmare*, Craven appeared as himself; and it was set in a world where the *Nightmare* movies existed, but where Freddy Krueger was a real person who was menacing actress Heather Langenkamp (star of the original movie).

Craven's career was relatively quiet until 1996, when his first *Scream* film was released. *Scream* led to three sequels (all directed by Craven) and an MTV series (with Craven as Executive Producer). More recently, Craven was nearing completion of *Coming of Rage*, a 5-issue graphic novel about zombies, werewolves, and vampires (co-written with Steve Niles).

In 2012, Craven received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the NYC Horror Film Festival.

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Some Suggestions for October Reading

reviews by Carl

Those dark and creepy October nights are upon us! What better time to think about some “dark and creepy” stuff to read? Here are a few suggestions that should help you while away the lengthening hours between sundown and sunrise... with your curtains drawn!

El Dia de los Muertos

by Brian A. Hopkins

(Earthling Publications, 2002)

Actually, this is rather a timely suggestion. *El Dia de los Muertos* (“the Day of the Dead”) is celebrated in many parts of Mexico, coinciding with a tri-lecta of Catholic holy days: All Saints’ Eve (Oct. 31), All Saints’ Day (Nov. 1), and All Souls’ Day (Nov. 2). Families visit the cemeteries in which their loved ones lie; skeleton-related artwork appears everywhere; and children suck on sugared confections designed to look like human skulls. But these celebrations are only the backdrop for Brian Hopkins’s novel, which deals with the far bloodier traditions originating in the pre-Colombian civilizations of Mexico.

Dr. Richard Bennington is an archeologist. For over a decade, he’s been working to unearth the ruins of Cacaxtla in the Yucatan; it’s a Mayan settlement that also seems to include evidence of the most southerly reach of Aztec culture. It’s (literally) a groundbreaking find; and Bennington has been so engrossed in his work that his marriage is failing. One day, while Bennington is working in Cacaxtla, a massive earthquake rocks southern Mexico. At a grand opening in the nearby village of San Miguel del Milagro, Bennington’s wife is horribly injured and their young daughter is killed in the collapse of a new, modern shopping center. Bennington blames himself and his obsession with Cacaxtla, feeling that if he’d paid more attention to his family, they might have avoided this tragedy. Now he’s doubly-driven, believing that he’s found a way to bring his daughter back to life and thus save his marriage.

In the ruins of Cacaxtla, he’s

found a fairly complete description of the Aztec New Fire Ceremony, which hasn’t been performed since the Spanish conquest. With this information, Bennington hopes to perform the rite and attract the attention of Huitzilopochtli (the Aztec sun god) and his mother, the creator-destroyer goddess Coatlicue. Then he thinks he can make a deal with Coatlicue to bring his daughter back to life. Bennington’s quest takes him to Mexico City, where he enlists the aid of a really shady scholar of Aztec religion, a man with both a “working knowledge” of the darker Aztec ceremonies (don’t ask!) and connections to Mexican criminal organizations. Troubles – and horrors – ensue!

El Dia de los Muertos is a fascinating exploration of the darker aspects of both Mexican society and the ancient Aztec and Mayan religions. I was blown away by Hopkins’s descriptions of Huitzilopochtli and Coatlicue, as well as the reality-altering effects of the New Fire Ceremony. In my opinion, Hopkins demonstrates that he has a good feel for the huge chasm that stands between the Western and Aztec conceptions of religion, society, and humanity’s relationships with the Divine. A rather exciting climax to the story, too!

Dreams of Shreds and Tatters

by Amanda Downum

(Solaris Books, 2015)

From a horrific visitation by Aztec gods, we move to the horrors of the Lovecraftian Mythos.

Back in 1895, a book of 10 short stories by Robert W. Chambers was first published as *The King in Yellow*. It’s named after a fictional play of the same title, a recurring motif in the first four stories. The play supposedly induces despair or madness in those who read it. Down the years, *The King in Yellow* has become a classic of supernatural or weird fiction. H.P. Lovecraft read Chambers’s book in 1927; and he included references to various places and entities from the book in “The Whisperer in Darkness” (1931), one of his seminal “Cthulhu Mythos” stories,

linking the Yellow Sign to Hastur. Later, August Derleth identified Hastur as one of the Great Old Ones; and the King in Yellow has been described by some Lovecraftian authors as an avatar of Hastur. In the meantime, the imaginary play “The King in Yellow” has taken its place alongside the *Necronomicon* as one of the horrific works of occult Lovecraftian literature.

Into this tradition now comes Amanda Downum’s *Dreams of Shreds and Tatters*, in which she brings the King in Yellow into modern times.

Rising Canadian artist Blake Enderly (a gay man) has gotten himself mixed up with an artsy crowd that frequently dabbles in “darker” endeavors. In fact, they hope to somehow use Blake’s artwork as a gateway to otherworldly realms. Then, as a result of a mysterious accident, Blake’s lover is killed and Blake himself now lies comatose in a Vancouver hospital. Blake’s best friend Liz Drake is plagued by strange nightmares about Blake and rushes across Canada to find out what’s going on. Her investigations cause her to run afoul of homicidal cultists and their deadly extra-dimensional deities. Chilling Lovecraftian horrors ensue in this dark urban fantasy.

One of the more fascinating aspects of Ms. Downum’s version of the Lovecraftian Mythos is that the “Forces of Evil” aren’t monolithic – there are competing interests amongst them. (If you don’t think this makes sense, then I ask you to think back to Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings*, specifically Saruman the White’s plans for Middle Earth domination despite being an ostensible ally of Sauron. – or, in our own history, the alliance between Adolf Hitler and Joe Stalin, which ended with the Nazi invasion of Russia.) Downum does a masterful job of showing her readers what happens when Dark Lords – as well as their self-absorbed cultists – collide. ΛΨΦ

(to be continued next month)



* * 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, **October 11th, at Peter and Rob's home, 1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC.** 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



Oct. 9-11 **CAPCLAVE 2015**. Hilton Washington DC North/Gaithersburg (Gaithersburg MD). Guests include: Gordon Van Gelder (Editor, *F&SF Magazine*); Alastair Reynolds (*Revelation Space*). Membership: \$60 until Sept. 30th; \$65 at the door. On-line registration thru the convention website. Website: www.capclave.org

Nov. 20-22, 2015 **PHILCON 2015**. Crown Plaza Hotel (Cherry Hill, NJ). Membership: \$40. Make checks payable to "Philadelphia Science Fiction Society" and send to: Philcon Registration, PO Box 8303, Philadelphia, PA 19101-8303. For on-line registration and additional information: www.philcon.org

Nov. 27-29, 2015 **CHESSIECON 2015** ("Where Traditions Evolve"). Radisson North Baltimore Hotel (Timonium, MD). Author GoH: Seanan McGuire; Artist GoH: Ursula Vernon; Music GoH: Heather Dale; Special Guest: Tamora Pierce. Membership: \$55 until Nov. 15; \$60 at the door. On-line membership available (using PayPal), or print out the membership form and mail it and a check payable to "Thanksgiving Science Fiction Society" to: TSFS, Inc., PO Box 83032, Gaithersburg, MD 20883-2032. Website: <http://chessiecon.org> Info at: info@chessiecon.org

Feb. 12-14, 2016 **FARPOINT 23**. Radisson Hotel North Baltimore (Timonium, MD). Guests to include: Sean Maher ("Simon Tam" from *Firefly*); more guests TBA. Membership: \$80 for the weekend (daily rates available). On-line membership available (using Everbrite). Website: <http://www.farpointcon.com/>

Feb. 12-14, 2016 **KATSUCON 2016** (anime, manga, cosplay, etc.). Gaylord National Resort (National Harbor, Washington DC). Membership: \$60 until August 31st; \$70 until Jan. 31, 2016. Registration is on-line. Website: <http://www.katsucon.org/>

Oct. 7-9, 2016 **GAYLAXICON 2016**. Doubletree by Hilton Hotel Minneapolis-Park Place (Minneapolis, MN). Guests of Honor: Eleanor Arnason (author); David Maxine (Hungry Tiger Press); Eric Shanower (*Age of Bronze*). Registration: \$50 thru 2015; \$80 at the door. Registration is on-line. Website: <http://www.gaylaxicon2016.org/>



Ravana's Penance, by Sanjay Patel

