



# Lambda Sci-Fi

## DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 - Issue # 311 – February 2016

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### LSF Meeting Format & AwesomeCon 2016

from Rob

#### New Monthly Meeting Format!

At our January meeting, the format of the monthly meeting was discussed. LSF rarely has “business” to conduct, and attendance at monthly meetings tends to be light. So we’ve decided to try switching it up a little bit.

Beginning with the February meeting, we’ll have a slightly different format to our meetings. The meetings will begin at 1:30 PM and be a little more free-form social from 1:30 to 3:00 PM. We’ll still have a chance to discuss the latest genre tidbits and events during that time, just like we always have. But at 3 PM, we’ll turn our attention to a group-watch of some genre media item. It might be a film. It might be a couple episodes of a new TV series. Like the book discussion group, we’ll pick viewing items in advance, sometimes relying on a Facebook group poll to make a final determination. We’ll also try to identify relevant items – new TV items folks might not have seen, things related to special events happening at that time, etc. Afterwards, we’ll have a chance to chat about what we just saw!

For February, we’re eyeing a couple of possibilities: perhaps a movie featuring David Bowie or Alan Rickman, or perhaps a couple episodes of one of the new SyFy Channel TV series! Watch the Facebook group page for the poll!

#### AwesomeCon 2016 Panel Ideas & Volunteers Sought!

At AwesomeCon in 2015, we had a packed-room panel on the topic of GLBT fandom. We’re thinking that if we can come up with something interesting to discuss this year, we’ll again try to put together a panel for AwesomeCon. So we’re looking for panel ideas and potential volunteers and will discuss this at the February meeting. The panel should be something that appeals to a media-centric crowd, deals with GLBT issues or content, and appeals to an age-varied crowd. For the panelists we want to have a more varied set of voices this year, younger fans, fans from different cultural communities, etc. If you have panel ideas or are potentially interested in helping us present them, come to the February meeting. If you can’t attend but want to make suggestions or offer help, contact Rob prior to the meeting: [robgatesdc@gmail.com](mailto:robgatesdc@gmail.com)

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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 February 25, 2015.

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

**Feb. 25** – *The Goblin Emperor*, by Katherine Addison (mod: Rob G.).

**March 24** – *Her Smoke Rose Up Forever*, by James Tiptree Jr., (moderator: Claire).

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### <<<<< February 2016 LSF Meeting >>>>>

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, February 14th**. 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: Minutes of the Jan. 2016 LSF Meeting; The Muses in F&SF (book reviews).

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



# Minutes of the January 2016 LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

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### Business portion

Rob made two suggestions for future LSF meetings: (1) eliminate the “business” portion of the meeting; and have the start-time for the meeting continue at 1:30 PM; and (2) have some sort of video viewing at 3:00 PM (with attendees voting on what will be shown at the next meeting). All attendees agreed with these suggestions.

### Social portion

Film news: There was lots of fanboy chatter about *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*. In an upcoming *Dr. Strange* movie, Benedict Cumberbatch will portray the Marvel title character. *Pride & Prejudice & Zombies* looks like it will be cheesy fun. (Teresa described a related card game called *Finding Mr. Darcy*.)

TV news: David said that the second season of *Galavant* has introduced Fantasy elements (like a unicorn) and that the gay bar scene was over the top! Teresa is not a fan of the BBC series *Sherlock*; but Carl is a big-time fan. David parti-

ipated in the Kickstarter effort for TVTropes.com and has received a *Freud Was Right* tchotchke. Rob said that the new DC series *Legends of Tomorrow* is starting soon; it will feature Hawkgirl, Hawkman, Atom, White Canary, Firestorm, Heat Wave, Captain Cold, and Rip Hunter vs. Vandal Savage.

AwesomeCon news: Rob discussed LSF hosting another panel at this year’s AwesomeCon. What could the panel topic be? Since AwesomeCon is primarily media-oriented and not book-oriented, the panel topic should be media-focused.. Possibly comics-related? AwesomeCon will be held June 3-6 at the DC Convention Center. It was decided to delay a decision until the February meeting.

Other news: Peter advised that Sir John Hurt will be attending next month’s Gallifrey One convention. Peter also invited other LSF members to organize movie outings. (Not all official movie outings need to be coordinated by Peter and Rob.)

Then the annual LSF Book Exchange was held. (See the chart below for the details.)

Finally, we watched the not-family-appropriate trailer for *Deadpool*, along with the “Off With His Shirt” song from *Galavant*. ΛΨΦ

# The Muses in F&SF

short reviews by Carl



Happy is he whom the Muses love:  
sweet flows speech from his lips.

— Homeric Hymn to the  
Muses and Apollo

The Muses: the nine immortal daughters of Zeus and the Titaness Mnemosyne (Memory); they are patronesses of the arts, sciences, and culture. They are guiding spirits who give inspiration to all artists (particularly poets, painters, dancers, musicians, philosophers, and astronomers). They certainly sound like bright and beneficent deities don’t they? Even today, artists seek their aid or favor. On the other hand, the Muses have their darker aspects: they know that true sadness can also inspire poets to their greatest work; and they frequently punish over-proud mortals who dare to challenge them.

I recommend several novels that present a rather darker picture of the Muses. Artistic genius has its price, they say – often a terrible price. And – just maybe – the Muses are not exactly the beneficent creatures we believe them to be. I invite you to share these darker visions...

*Sacré Bleu: A Comedy d’Art*  
by Christopher Moore  
(HarperCollins, 2012)

This is the novel that started me reading F&SF novels about the Muses. I picked up an autographed first edition back in 2012, although I didn’t get around to reading it until 2013. What originally attracted my attention was the blue Art Nouveau-style cover, because I’d never read any of Moore’s previous novels such as *You Suck* and *Lamb: The Gospel According to Biff, Christ’s Childhood Pal*. Now that I’ve read *Sacré Bleu*, I’m certainly glad I did.

(continued on page 3)

To	From	What
Wess	Peter	“Indiana Jones” movie music CD’s
James	Teresa	<i>Castle Waiting</i> Vol. 1 by Linda Medley
Baltimore Carl	Carl	<i>A Killing in Comics, Strip For Murder &amp; Seduction of the Innocent</i> by Max Alan Collins
Peter	Karl	<i>The Worlds of Frank Herbert</i> (short story collection)
Rob	Wess	<i>Star Trek</i> comic book movie collection
Carl	Zena	<i>Jeremiah</i> by Cathy G. Johnson, <i>The Ragwitch</i> by Garth Nix, <i>The Ghatti’s Tale</i> by Gayle Greeno
Teresa	Rob	DC Comics “Convergence” series
Karl	James	The “Night” novels by Yasmin Galomin
Zena	Baltimore Carl	First 3 “Shadowrunners” novels by Lynn Flewelling

## The Muses in F&SF

continued from page 2



*Sacré Bleu* is a Dark Fantasy novel – with elements of absurdity and comic relief – about a Dark Muse and her relationships with such artists as Van Gogh, Renoir, Cezanne, Toulouse-Lautrec, Monet, Seurat, and Gauguin.

The novel opens in July 1890 in Auvers, France, with Moore’s version of the events leading up to the mysterious death of Vincent van Gogh: he is gunned down out in the countryside by The Colorman when Van Gogh refuses to turn over a painting that The Colorman insists is owed to him. (The actual details of Van Gogh’s death are pretty sketchy and mysterious – Moore just added an intriguing Fantasy angle to it.)

Most of the action takes place in, around, and *under* Paris, as Van Gogh’s friends Henri Toulouse-Lautrec and Lucien Lessard (a baker and would-be painter) investigate Van Gogh’s death – and their encounters with Bleu (the body-jumping Muse) and The Colorman (a gnome who is the only one able to create the otherworldly shade of blue known as *Sacré Bleu*). They uncover a story that reaches back into the mists of prehistory: the darker side of artistic inspiration that cost Van Gogh his life.

*Sacré Bleu* is a lot of fun; and I found Moore’s exploration of the “hidden history” behind artistic inspiration to be fascinating.

### *The Stress of Her Regard*

by Tim Powers

(Ace, 1991)

It was when I finished reading *Sacré Bleu* that I remembered

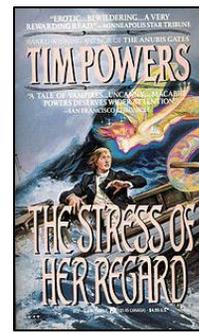
bered another book buried somewhere in one of my “to read” piles that dealt with a similar theme. So I dug out *The Stress of Her Regard*.

I’ve read a number of works by Tim Powers over the years – *The Anubis Gates* and *On Stranger Tides* come immediately to mind – and I’ve enjoyed them all. I’m happy to say that *The Stress of Her Regard* continues that enjoyable tradition. (*Stress* was nominated in 1990 for both the World Fantasy and Locus Awards; and it won the Mythopoeic Award.)

This time, the Muse-haunted artists are famous English Romantic poets (early 19th Century): Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats, and Lord Byron. In fact, the novel opens with a Prologue set in Switzerland in 1816, where Byron and Shelley and their friends spend a stormy holiday at the Villa Diodati near Lake Geneva. (This was actually a significant event in the history of F&SF. It was here that Mary Shelley began writing *Frankenstein* and Dr. John Polidori wrote “The Vampyre”.)

In Chapter 1, the scene shifts to Kent, England, where Michael Crawford, a Navy doctor, is getting married. In a drunken haze following a pre-wedding party at a village inn with his Navy friends, Crawford slips his wedding ring on the finger of a statue of a beautiful woman. The next morning, the statue has disappeared, so Crawford buys a replacement ring and duly marries his young bride – only to find her horribly murdered in bed next to him on the following morning. Crawford is, of course, suspected of murder. He flees England, fearing for his sanity and believing himself to be pursued by a lamia, a malignant female spirit that claims that he is her bridegroom.

On the Continent, Crawford seeks the help of Byron, Keats, and Shelley – learning that they also have had experiences with similar creatures. Together they criss-cross Europe, battling a spirit that seeks ultimate pleasure through their ravaged bodies and imperiled souls. They encounter poets, wannabe poets, fetishists who *seek* to become vampiric vic-



tims, and Crawford’s mentally-ill sister-in-law (who wants to kill him). As Crawford attempts to break his mysterious ties to the lamia, the body-count steadily rises.

Tim Powers drew on European and Semitic mythology – as well as scientific speculation – to posit a race of beings based on aluminum, Earth’s most abundant metal (rather than being carbon-based, like us). These creatures – variously known as the Siliconari (“silex” is Latin for “flint”) or Nephilim – were Earth’s first intelligent race. Over the course of this long and fascinating novel, Powers explains how the existence of this predatory race led to the origins of such myths as Lilith, succubi, lamias, fairies, jinn, shape-shifters, animated statues and stones, vampires, the Feathered Serpent, Saint Elmo’s Fire, the Muses, and others. Humans are often attracted to these creatures – or, to look at it another way, succumb to “vampiric possession”. Yes, their “kiss” or “embrace” activates the imaginative abilities of humans; but this artistic “inspiration” comes at a fearful cost. The human life-force is drained by their Muse-like “benefactors”. (This sounds very similar to Celtic legends of the *leanan sidhe* – or “fairy mistress” – who steadily drains the life from her lovers in return for her love and inspiration.)

Powers has also masterfully fused this supernatural theme with a “secret history” of the lives of such men as Keats, Shelley and Byron, all of whom died young.

*The Stress of Her Regard* is definitely *Dark Fantasy*. Often horrific and gruesome, it lacks the occasional comic relief to be found in *Sacré Bleu*. But – oh, boy! – it’s good! I’ve discovered that it’s also back in print for the first time since 1994: available from Tachyon Press and in Kindle format.

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(to be continued)

## \* \* 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 14th, 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



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: \$70 until Jan. 31, 2016. Registration is on-line. Website: <http://www.katsucon.org/>

May 27-30, 2016 **BALTICON 50**. The Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel (Baltimore, MD). GoH: George R.R. Martin; Artist GoH: John Picacio. Membership: \$59 until 2/29; \$64 from 3/1 to 4/15; \$70 thereafter. On-line registration available: [registration@balticon.org](mailto:registration@balticon.org). Website: [www.balticon.org](http://www.balticon.org) E-mail: [balticoninfo@balticon.org](mailto:balticoninfo@balticon.org)

July 15-17, 2016 **SHORE LEAVE 38**. (Celebrating Star Trek's 50th Anniversary.) Hunt Valley Inn (Hunt Valley, MD). Membership: \$90 for the weekend (daily memberships available) – deadline for pre-registration 6/15/2016; prices higher at the door. Send a membership form, self-addressed stamped envelope, and check payable to "Shore Leave" to: Shore Leave 38, PO Box 6809, Towson, MD 21285-6809 Website: [www.shore-leave.com](http://www.shore-leave.com) E-mail: [information@shore-leave.com](mailto:information@shore-leave.com)

Aug. 17-21, 2016 **MIDAMERICON II, the 74<sup>th</sup> Worldcon**. Kansas City Convention Center & Bartle Hall (Kansas City, MO). GoHs: Kinuko Craft; Patrick & Teresa Nielsen Hayden; Tamora Pierce; Pat Cadigan. Membership: \$185 "until Spring 2016" (will go up after that). Registration is on-line (via PayPal). Website: <http://midamericon2.org/>

October 7-9, 2016 **CAPCLAVE 2016**. Hilton Washington DC North/Gaithersburg (Gaithersburg, MD). Membership: \$50 from 1/1/2016 thru 5/31/2016; \$55 from 6/1 thru 7/31; \$60 from 8/1 thru 9/30; \$65 at the door. Author GoHs: Sarah Beth Durst, Tim Powers. On-line registration. Website: [www.Capclave.org](http://www.Capclave.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/>