



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 - Issue # 314 – May 2016

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At the March 24th LSF Book Discussion, the topic was *Her Smoke Rose Up Forever*



by James Tiptree, Jr.



(picture courtesy of Peter)



Only 5 months to go! See details on page 4.

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 May 26, 2015.

Here are the details for the next several book discussions:

May 26 – *The Three-Body Problem*, by Cixin Liu (moderator: Ross).

June 23 - *Annihilation*, by Jeff VanderMeer (moderator: Conrad).

July 28 – *The Magicians*, by Lev Grossman (mod: Ross/Carl).

Aug. 25 – *Nimona* (graphic novel), by Noelle Stevenson (moderator: Greg).

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<<<<< May 2016 LSF Meeting >>>>>

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, May 8th**. The meeting will be held at Peter and Rob's home, **1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC**. The meeting will begin at 1:30 and the "group watch" will begin at 3:00 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: SF Books (book reviews); Minutes of the April 2016 LSF Meeting.

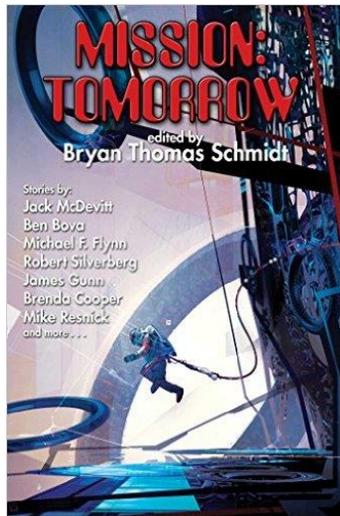
Page 4: Information About Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians and Con Calendar.

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SF Books
reviews by Carl

I suddenly realized that I've been reviewing a lot of Fantasy, Dark Fantasy, and Horror books lately; so I figured it was high time to get back to Science Fiction.

Coincidentally, all of the SF books I've recently read are space operas (sort of) set in and around the solar system, between Mercury and the Oort Cloud (nothing interstellar).



Mission: Tomorrow
edited by Bryan Thomas Schmidt
(Baen Books, 2015)

This great anthology includes nineteen stories, all but one of them printed here for the first time. Here's the theme for the anthology, as stated in the editor's Introduction: "This anthology was inspired by asking what will space travel look like in an age no longer dominated by NASA? With not only other governments taking increasing roles but also corporations and private citizens, how will that change things? What new ships, opportunities, and mission goals might we see?" (I didn't find this theme to be overly apparent in some of the stories.)

What initially attracted me to *Mission: Tomorrow* were the names of some of the authors included in it. There are lots of "big names" – many of them my favorites – including: Jack McDevitt,

**Minutes of the April 2016
LSF Meeting**
taken by Scott

David voted for the Hugo Awards for Best Dramatic Presentation (both long & short forms) before the 2016 deadline. He voted for Pixar's film *Inside Out* and *The Martian* (long form) and the pilot episode of *The Magicians* (short form).

Scott met a DC-area adult & middle-grade (teen) Fantasy author Diana Peterfreund.

Rob marveled at how *Marvel's Agents of Shield* continues to develop. It was clear that the audience was played when "Hail Hydra" was introduced late in the first season. The most recent episodes have been terribly gruesome – surprising for the 9:00 PM evening slot. *DC's Legends of Tomorrow* – Rob says that it has its ups & downs. The tone has been all over the place. It has been renewed for a second season. Everyone loved the *Supergirl/Flash* cross-over episode – with funny Glee references.

David said that extra scenes have been shot for *Suicide Squad*. Rob is not motivated to see *Suicide Squad* since it does not look too promising.

Robert Silverberg, Michael Flynn, Brenda Cooper, Mike Resnick, James Gunn, and Ben Bova. As with any anthology, you'll undoubtedly find that you'll like some of the stories better than others; but I must say that I don't think there's a "klunker" in the bunch. Many of the stories are truly inspiring; but a number of them don't have what you might call a "happy ending". Here are just a few of my favorites:

In "Tombaugh Station" by Robin Wayne Bailey, several one-way missions have been sent to Pluto to create and maintain a deep space telescope – now, survivors of the *first* mission are all dying from mysterious industrial accidents. Jack McDevitt's "Excalibur" tells the story of an investigative reporter who uncovers a series of top-secret NASA missions

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Production of the *Wonder Woman* movie has been moved up. It is planned for release is 2017 rather than 2018.

George RR Martin will be at Balticon this year. Rob is hoping for a new book by the end of the year. The plan is still to complete "The Game of Thrones" after seven books.

Carl ordered Kathe Koja's *The Bastards' Paradise* – third in the "Rupert & Istvan" series.

Jonathan has visited Hobbiton in New Zealand. Tours are available now.

The trailer for *Rogue One* "Star Wars" spin-off movie looks scary.

The next LSF Gaming Party is next Saturday, 04/16/2016.

Awesome Con this year will include John Barrowman & Peter Capaldi & Adam West & Burt Ward & Morena Baccarin & Summer Glau & huge list of media guests.

Archer is back, but there is no longer a spy agency. It has morphed into a detective agency.

And then the first Christopher Reeve *Superman* movie was shown.

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that had a secret agenda involving the Kuiper Belt. "In Panic Town, on the Backward Moon" by Michael F. Flynn: on Mars and Phobos, a corporate troubleshooter investigates a murder apparently involving black market operations and smuggling. Ben Bova's "Rare (Off) Earth Elements is one of his wry and witty "Sam Gunn" tales. This time, a female Chinese "taikonaut" runs into unexpected problems when she encounters entrepreneurial scoundrel Sam Gunn on a near-Earth asteroid. In Jack Skillingstead's "Tribute", NASA has been ruined by the very public deaths of its astronauts during an attempted Mars mission, and a follow-up corporate mission encounters its own set of disasters.

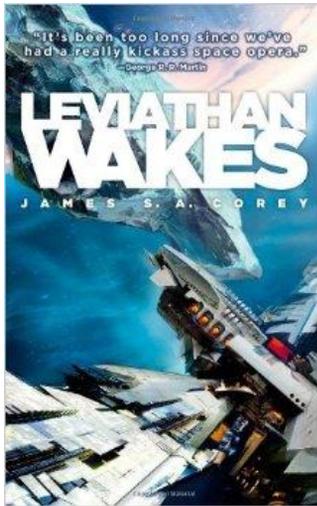
One story has GLBT content: "Malf" by David D. Levine. It's fascinating (continued on page 3)

SF Books

continued from page 2

nating. A gay sys-admin is guiding an asteroid to a controlled splash-down in the Pacific for a mining corporation when his program is hacked by person (or persons) unknown for reasons unknown. He faces financial and career ruin – and possibly the destruction of a major population center – if he can't re-sum control of the asteroid.

This is such a fine anthology that I found it difficult to highlight just these few stories. I truly recommend *Mission: Tomorrow*; I think you'll also find that all these stories are "winners".



Leviathan Wakes
by James S.A. Corey
(Orbit Books, 2011)

I decided to read this book for much the same reason that I started reading GRRM's "Game of Thrones" novels: after seeing some of it on TV, I decided to read it. *Leviathan Wakes* is Book 1 of "The Expanse", the basis for the current popular Syfy Channel Original Series. I'd caught a couple of episodes over Christmas vacation; and I was intrigued enough to decide that I wanted to read the original novel(s). (Subsequently, LSFers watched the first couple of *Expanse* episodes at the March LSF meeting.)

Leviathan Wakes is well-written "classic space opera" – albeit "interplanetary" rather than

"interstellar" in scope. Having said that, its vision of the Solar System in the near-distant future is still "epic" in scope. (It's been compared to GRR Martin's "Game of Thrones" in that respect. More on that later.) "James Corey" is actually the writing team of Daniel Abraham and Ty Franck, both of whom are popular Fantasy authors. "The Expanse" is their big foray into SF – and, I must say, they're really good at it! (It reminds me of Richard Morgan, who went "in the other direction" – from SF to Fantasy – and has shown himself to be darn good in both.)

Humanity hasn't made it to the stars yet; but much of the Solar System has been colonized. And there's a lotta tension in the ol' Solar System. The major competing powers ("the inner planets") are Earth/Luna ("the United Nations") and Mars, with Mars being the hyper-competitive "up-and-comer". (Maybe think of the British Empire and Germany.) Then there are "the outer planets" – the asteroid belt, the moons of Jupiter and Saturn, and some of the moons of Neptune – which are chafing under the military-economic-corporate domination of "the inner planets". And there's someone (or something) working behind the scenes to deliberately instigate a war. Will it be "Earth vs. Mars" – with the Outer Planet Alliance taking advantage of the opportunity to throw off the yoke of the inner planets? Or will it be an interplanetary free-for-all that will rain down destruction on everyone?

The spark that sets it all off occurs out in the asteroid belt. The *Canterbury* (an ice-hauling ship) answers a distress signal from the *Scopuli*. But they discover that the *Scopuli* is deserted – with a huge breach in the hull, the distress signal on automatic, and nobody (no *bodies*) on board. As soon as the rescue crew sets foot on the *Scopuli*, a secret transmitter sends out a second signal. A powerful warship – apparently part of the Martian Navy – shows up; the *Canterbury* is destroyed; and the shuttle crew that boarded the *Scopuli* flees the scene and broadcasts all the details to the Solar System at large. And the war

drums start to pound...

With such a huge canvas to work from, you'd think the cast would be huge, too. Here's where the similarity to "The Game of Thrones" falls apart. Unlike the *massive* cast of "Game of Thrones", the "on-screen" cast of *Leviathan Wakes* is comparatively small – I'd estimate less than a dozen major and supporting characters – and it mainly focuses on two POV characters: Jim Holden and Detective Miller.

Jim Holden is the *Canterbury's* idealistic Executive Officer; and it's his decision – based on what little evidence he has – to broadcast the details of the "Martian atrocity" to the rest of the Solar System. Detective Miller is a cynical investigator with the corporate/privatized police force on Ceres (currently classed as a "dwarf planet" in the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter). He's been assigned to a hum-drum "missing person" case, looking for the wastrel daughter of a powerful "inner planets" corporate executive. (Indications are that the family wants to get daughter-dear home before a war breaks out; but Miller turns up some disturbing information as his investigation proceeds.) For much of the novel, the narration alternates between Holden and Miller, until their storylines quite literally collide – and the action (never dull) *really* heats up!

Leviathan Wakes is a real joy to read: fascinating world-building, great characters and interpersonal conflicts, *lots* of action. Despite its size (500-something pages of trade paperback), I found it to be a rather fast read. And I look forward to reading the next "Expanse" novel, *Caliban's War*.

(to be continued next month)

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* * 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, **May 8th, 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



May 27-30, 2016 **BALTICON 50**. The Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel (Baltimore, MD). GoH: George R.R. Martin; Artist GoH: John Picacio. Membership: \$64 4/15; \$70 thereafter. On-line registration available at: registration@balticon.org Website: www.balticon.org E-mail: balticoninfo@balticon.org

June 3-5, 2016 **AWESOME CON 2016**. Walter F. Washington Convention Center (Washington, DC). Guests include: Peter Capaldi, Adam West, Burt Ward, John Barrowman, Karl Urban, Kevin Smith, Morena Baccarin, Summer Glau (and many, many more). 3-Day Geekend Pass: \$75 (lots of extra "add-ons" available for additional fees). Memberships is on-line thru the convention website. Website: www.awesome-con.com

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 E-mail: information@shore-leave.com

Aug. 17-21, 2016 **MIDAMERICON II, the 74th 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 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

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: \$65 thru Sept. 12th; \$80 at the door. Registration is on-line. Website: <http://www.gaylaxicon2016.org/>

Nov. 25-27, 2016 **CHESSIECON 2016**. Radisson North Baltimore [formerly North Baltimore Plaza Hotel] (Timonium, MD). Membership: \$55 until 11/15; \$60 at the door. GoH: Sarah Pinsker; Artist GoH: Tabitha Ladin; Music GoH: S.J. Tucker; Special Guest: Elizabeth Schechter. On-line registration via PayPal; or make check payable to "Thanksgiving Science Fiction Society" and send (with membership form) to: TSFS, Inc., PO Box 83032, Gaithersburg, MD 20883-3032 Website: <http://chessiecon.org/> Information: info@chessiecon.org