



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 - Issue # 321 – December 2016

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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 January 26, 2017.

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

Jan. 26, 2017 – *The Last Policeman*, by Ben Winters (moderator: Konrad).

Feb. 23 – *The Long Way to a Small, Angry Planet*, by Becky Chambers (moderator: Konrad).

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Reminder: Annual LSF Book (et al) Exchange at Jan. 8th Meeting



That's right, gang, the Holiday Season is almost upon us again; and it's time for a short reminder about LSF's upcoming *twenty-seventh* annual book (*et al*) exchange, which will occur at the January 8th meeting! All LSF members are invited to participate in this "blind exchange" – and visitors are invited to join in the fun, too!

Briefly, this will be an opportunity for LSFers to exchange copies of their favorite science-fiction, fantasy, or horror books/videos/etc. and, thus, get to know each other a little better.

For those of you unfamiliar with the process, here's how it works: You won't be assigned to exchange with any *particular* person – it's a "blind" exchange, where participants will get their pick from a pile of anonymous wrapped packages. **Full details on the exchange in the next (January) newsletter.**

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LSF Holiday Gaming Party announced by Peter Knapp

What: A gaming party. There's plenty of room for gaming, so please bring your favorite games (cards, board, etc.).

When: **Saturday, December 3rd**; 1:00pm – ??

What to bring: Bring your favorite table game (or two). Also, please bring munchies and/or soft drinks.

Dinner: For those who are interested, we'll order pizza. To get in on the pizza order, please bring \$7 in exact change. If you don't want pizza, you can order take-out or go forage for food. There are a lot of food choices in the Midcity (14th and "U") Corridor. Also, delivery menus will be available at the party.

Where: Home of Peter and Rob, 1425 S St NW, Washington, DC 20009. Their home is in the Midcity (14th and "U") neighborhood, near Dupont Circle and Logan Circle.

Directions (with Metro and parking advice) at:

<http://lambdascifi.org/club/PeterRob.html>

Questions: Contact Peter at: PeterPKnapp@gmail.com or Rob at:

RobGatesDC@gmail.com

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<<<<< December 2016 LSF Meeting >>>>>

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, December 11th**. 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. Hope to see you there!



What's Inside?

Page 2: Minutes of the November LSF Meeting; Lovecraftian Anthologies, Part 2 (book reviews).

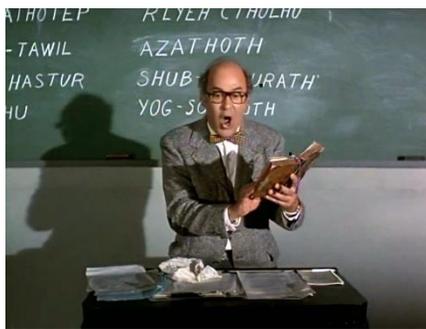
Page 4: Information About Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians and Con Calendar.

Minutes of the November LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

Peter has been contacted by Awesome Con regarding a potential panel at the 2017 convention. Attendees discussed what kind of panel that LSF could coordinate: comic books with LGBT characters? TV shows with LGBT characters? Sub-genres that serve as entries to the F&SF genre as a whole? The panel could have a mix of niche-specific genre subcategories – gamer, cosplayer, book reader, TV or movie watcher, anime, *Steven Universe* (on Hulu), etc.

Teresa really loved the *Dr. Strange* movie, with pretty special effects. Benedict Cumberbatch is a great actor. Lots of insider references. Teresa also loved the *Wonder Woman* movie trailer. Carl didn't particularly like *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*; although the special effects are very nice, he suspects that enjoyment of the film is predicated on having read the book. Wess and Scott enjoyed *The Arrival*: a compelling plot that includes humans trying to learn an alien language. *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* is hitting the big screen next week. The trailer for *Passengers* looks promising – about a generational ship, where characters played by Jennifer Lawrence and Chris Pratt wake up too early because something is wrong. A *Lego Batman* and King Kong of Skull Island are also coming out. Also, another *Resident Evil* movie is in the works. (Please, no!)



Carl Reiner,
as “Professor Peabody”

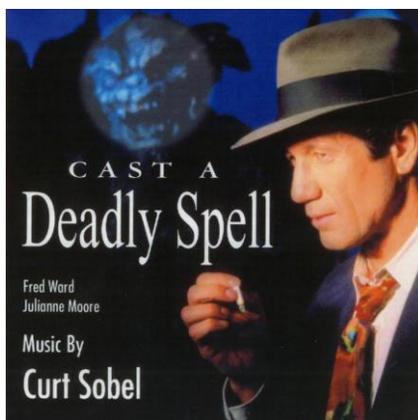
Dan & Teresa have been watching NBC's *Timeless*, as well as an Australian TV show called *Glitch*. Rob likes *Class*, the *Doctor Who* spin-off, which includes definite GLBT content. Dan raves about British-made series *Black Mirror*, created by Charlie Brooker – a modern anthology series similar to *The Twilight Zone*. (Maybe we'll watch a couple of episodes during the December LSF meeting?) Have you watched BBC's *Dirk Gently* four-part series about a “holistic detective” who investigates cases involving the supernatural?

Rob passed around Sigma, the newsletter from the Pittsburgh sci-fi group.

Carl described the proceedings of the Gaylactic Network Board meeting held at Gaylaxicon. The Network has revised its Charter to reflect its new structure as a collection of Affiliates (*i.e.* clubs). Each Affiliate designates a representative to the Network Board, with the office of Speaker being a rotating year-long position. As of January 1st, the LSF representative will be the designated Network Speaker. (As a reminder, Carl is currently the LSF rep.)

For to the video-viewing portion of the meeting, attendees watched a couple of Lovecraftian videos: “Professor Peabody's Last Lecture” (a short *Night Gallery* episode, starring Carl Reiner in the title role) and the 1991 made-for-HBO feature *Cast a Deadly Spell* (starring Fred Ward as detective “Phil Lovecraft” and Julianne Moore as the *femme fatale*).

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Fred Ward, as “Phil Lovecraft”

Lovecraftian Anthologies (Part 2)

reviews by Carl



Here are a couple more Lovecraft-inspired anthologies to help while away these long December nights.

Lovecraft's Monsters

edited by Ellen Datlow
(Tachyon Publications, 2014)

The first thing that attracted me to this anthology was the editor, Ellen Datlow. She's put together some really cool anthologies. In her Introduction to this anthology, Datlow says: “I had three goals in choosing stories: the first, as usual, was to avoid pastiches; the second was to use stories that have not been overly reprinted in the many recent mythos anthologies; third, I wanted to showcase Lovecraftian-influenced stories by at least some authors not known for that kind of story.”

The list of authors includes some prestigious SF/F/H names: Neil Gaiman, Laird Barron, Kim Newman, Elizabeth Bear, Caitlin R. Kiernan (of course!), Thomas Ligotti, Karl Edward Wagner, and Joe R. Lansdale (“hissf”). And of the 16 stories and 2 poems included here, all but 2 of the stories have been published previously. A number of “Lovecraft's monsters” are featured in the stories in this anthology: Azathoth, Cthulhu and Deep Ones, Elder Things and Shoggoths, Ghouls, and Shub-Nigurath. Some stories also feature “Lovecraftian” monsters that weren't actually created by HPL: the Hounds of Tindalos (created by Frank Belknap Long), the King in Yellow (created by Robert W. Chambers), and the Serpent People (created by Robert E. Howard).

(continued on page 3)

Lovecraftian Anthologies

continued from page 2

Oddly enough, two of my favorites in this anthology don't seem to feature any of "Lovecraft's monsters". Laird Barron's "Bulldozer" invokes such cosmic horrors as Chemosh and Belphegor, as one of their Earthly devotees leads a Pinkerton agent down a trail of cannibalism and grisly murders throughout the Weird Wild West. And Joe Lansdale's "The Bleeding Shadow" tells a satisfyingly creepy tale of a cursed jazz recording and the price of fame, featuring grisly – albeit unnamed – "Lovecraftian" horrors.

Here are some of my other favorites: In Brian Hodge's "The Same Deep Waters as You", agents of Homeland Security hire an "animal whisperer" to help them investigate the inhabitants of a remote island base where a colony of Deep Ones have been incarcerated since the U.S. Government's 1928 assault on Innsmouth, Massachusetts. (As a reminder, this is based on Lovecraft's 1936 story "The Shadow Over Innsmouth".) In "Inelastic Collisions", Elizabeth Bear tells how two Hounds of Tindalos – disguised as humans – run into some unexpectedly difficult prey. What happens when a Ghoul falls in love with a Deep One? Find out by reading Caitlin R. Kiernan's "Love Is Forbidden, We Croak and Howl" – *Romeo and Juliet* it ain't! And in "Children of the Fang", John Langan effectively recreates one of my favorite Lovecraftian motifs – the gradual unfolding of an ancient mystery – as an intelligent young girl investigates her Grandfather's secret life and the curse that has apparently been decimating her family over the course of several generations.

Finally, there's "Black as the Pit, from Pole to Pole" by Howard Waldrop and Steven Utley – truly a creative *tour de force*. Waldrop and Utley have actually managed to combine Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Jules Verne's *A Journey to the Center of the Earth*, and Lovecraft's *At the Mountains of Madness* into an

incredible odyssey of polar and subterranean adventure. Wow!

Steampunk Cthulhu: Mythos Terror in the Age of Steam

edited by Brian M. Sammons & Glynn Owen Barrass
(Chaosium, Inc., 2013)

Chaosium, Inc. has published some really good Lovecraftian anthologies over the years. This one is an anthology of 17 original stories by (at least to me) unfamiliar new authors. It takes as its theme the following passage from Lovecraft's "The Call of Cthulhu" (1926): "...but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the daylight into the peace and safety of a new dark age."

Setting Mythos stories in the Victorian Age is certainly an interesting premise – and I'm a big fan of the "Cthulhu by Gaslight" RPGs – but somehow the combination of Steampunk "scientifiction" and Lovecraftian supernatural horror just didn't seem to work well for me. Having said that, this anthology does in fact contain some stories that I rather enjoyed:

"The Reverend Mr. Goodworks and the Yeggs of Yig" (by Edward Erdelac) is a Weird West tale, featuring a semi-mechanical "circuit rider, bringing the word or the fist of God wherever it is needed." In this story, the Reverend takes on an infestation of Serpent People as they attempt to re-take the world from humanity.

"Before the Least of These Stars" (by Lee Clark Zumpe) is an alternate history tale of sorts: a Civil War hero from our world is accidentally transported to an alternate world in which humanity is losing a worldwide battle against the Deep Ones. It reminds me a lot of the 2013 sci-fi spectacular *Pacific Rim*, with steam-powered giant robots standing in for *Pacific Rim*'s giant mecha warriors.

If you're interested in either Steampunk or Mythos stories, then I think you might something you like.

That Is Not Dead: Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos Through the Centuries

edited by Darrell Schweitzer
(PS Publishing Ltd, 2015)

I picked this one up at this year's Balticon. Schweitzer has an interesting premise for this collection: "This anthology asks the question: so why didn't anybody notice these lingering, dreadful presences before the characters in Lovecraft's stories did, about 1900. If the Old Ones have *always* been there, how have they figured in and influenced the history of unsuspecting mankind?" In answer to these questions, he has collected 14 stories by 13 authors, including such Big Names as Esther Friesner, John Langan, S.T. Joshi, Harry Turtledove, and Schweitzer himself. And, as promised, the stories span the ages (and the world): from Egypt in 1200 BC to modern-day England.

Here are a few of my favorites: "What a Girl Needs" by Esther Friesner (Mesopotamia, 2nd Millennium BC) is a somewhat light-hearted look at the Dark Gods. An ugly temple prostitute in Uruk finally gets her wish and attracts a willing customer... a *very* strange customer indeed... and the earth did indeed move! In "Of Queens and Pawns" by Lois Gresh (Russia, Late 17th Century AD), the Chief Minister to the Tsar of all the Russias learns that his monarch has made an unholy pact with Yog-Sothoth in order to guarantee the continuation of the dynasty. "Incident at Ferney" by S.T. Joshi (France, 1762) stars a couple of fascinating protagonists, Voltaire and Diderot, who investigate a hideous murder in a tiny French village and run afoul of Nyarlathotep and his minions. Don Webb's "Slowness" (Massachusetts, early 20th Century) features a notorious Lovecraftian character. In a series of discussions with a mysterious professor of Renaissance poetry, Dr. Herbert West learns that a notorious 18th Century alchemist might still be alive and kicking.

A lotta (dark) fun!

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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, **December 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



Feb. 17-19, 2017 **FARPOINT 2017**. Radisson Hotel North Baltimore (Timonium MD). Membership: \$80 pre-registration for the weekend (daily rates available). Guests: Enver Gjokaj ("Agent Daniel Sousa" from *Agent Carter*), more TBA. Checks payable to "Farpoint Enterprises" and send to: Farpoint Enterprises, 11708 Troy Ct., Waldorf, MD 20601. Register and pay on-line at: www.FarpointCon.com/register Website: www.FarpointCon.com

March 24-26, 2017 **(RE)GENERATION WHO3**. Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace (Baltimore MD). Membership: Pre-registration \$80; \$90 at the door; VIP packages available. Guests: Sylvester McCoy (7th Doctor), Michelle Gomez (Missy), Peter Purves (1st Doctor Companion Steven Taylor), Katy Manning (3rd Doctor Companion Jo Grant). Registration through the website: <https://regenerationwho.com/>

May 26-29, 2017 **BALTICON 51** (including The 1632 Minicon). Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace (Baltimore MD). Membership: [more information as it becomes available] GoH: Eric Flint; Artist GoH: Donato Giancola. Checks payable to ? and send to PO Box 686, Baltimore, MD 21203-0686 Website: www.balticon.org E-mail: balticoninfo@balticon.org

June 16-18, 2017 **AWESOME CON 2017**. Walter E. Worthington Convention Center (Washington, DC) "Awesome Con welcomes some of the biggest and nerdiest names across comics, movies, TV, and more." Membership: \$75 for the basic 3-day weekend pass (daily rates & "add-ons" available). Registration on-line. Website: <http://awesomecon.com>

