



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 - Issue # 325 – April 2017

E-MAIL: info@lambdascifi.org

WEBSITE: www.lambdascifi.org

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 April 27, 2017.

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

April 27 – *Air*, by Geoff Ryman (moderator: Rob).

May 25 – *Lily and the Octopus*, by Steven Rowley (moderator: Bob A.).

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LSF Gaming Party

- April 1st -

announced by Peter

No foolin'! We're having an LSF Gaming Party on April Fool's Day! Come join the fun!

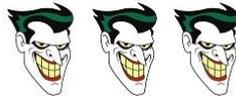
What: A gaming party.

When: Saturday, April 1st, 2:00 PM until ??

Where: Home of Peter and Rob, 1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC

Directions (with Metro and parking advice): <http://lambdascifi.org/club/PeterRob.html>

What to bring: Bring your favorite table game or two. There's plenty of room for gaming, so please bring your favorite table games (cards, board, RPG, etc.). Also, please bring munchies and/or soft drinks. We'll plan a dinner break – maybe order pizzas or something.



Dinner: For those that are interested, we'll order pizza. To get pizza, please bring \$8 in exact change. For those that don't want pizza, you can order take out or go forage for food. There are also a lot of food choices in the 14th & "U" St. Corridor.

Questions?

Please contact Peter at:

PeterPKnapp@gmail.com

or Rob at:

robgatesdc@gmail.com

or call Peter at 202-600-5511

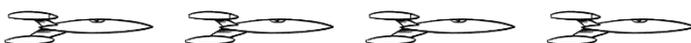
or Rob at 202-246-7800

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<<<<< April 2017 LSF Meeting >>>>>

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, April 9th**. 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 March LSF Meeting; Bill Paxton (obituary).

Page 3: TRAPPIST-1 and the Seven Planets.

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

Minutes of the March LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

Huge crowd in attendance today. Welcome, visitors! Teresa initiated a name circle to introduce everyone

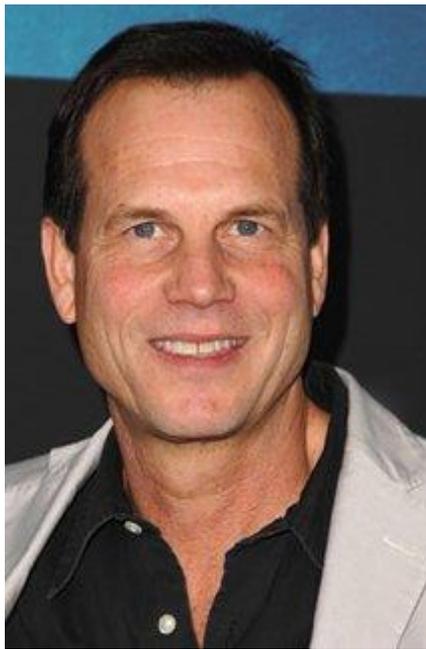
TV News: David described *Making History*, a new time-travel comedy show; the main character doesn't seem to understand the Butterfly Effect. In the new *Time After Time* series, Jack the Ripper travels to our current time via HG Wells's time machine, Wells then chases Jack in our timeline. *Buffy* appeared 20 years ago; and Peter noted that *Star Trek* is celebrating its 50th year celebration. *Doctor Who* miscellany: the original Cybermen and the Ice Warriors are returning; this is the last season for Peter Capaldi as the Doctor, which some people are happy to hear. Dan likes the DC Universe-based *Powerless*, which has a *Community* feel – lots of fun. Rob is loving Season #2 of *The Expanse* – the science is good.

Film News: Rave comments on the *Logan* movie – a gripping story with excellent dialogue; no flashback scenes; a realistic near-future universe; a story about characters and not about superpowers. The new *Kong: Skull Island* movie includes a few Easter eggs about potential Godzilla meetings in future. The latest *Wonder Woman* movie trailer is fantastic – Teresa guarantees to set up a LSF movie outing!

Book News: Dystopian fiction has been selling well. Dan is reading *The Mandibles: A Family, 2029-2047* by Lionel Shriver, a dystopian novel: the US dollar loses its value; the savings of a once-prosperous American family quickly diminish. The next season of Netflix's *Sens8* comes out in May; the book's characters are apparently much more "angst-y" than the TV show's characters; *Sens8* followers are getting excited.

Peter passed around recent

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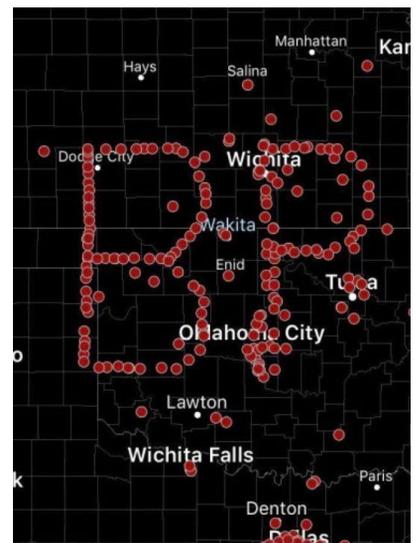


Bill Paxton 1955 – 2017

Actor Bill Paxton passed away on February 25th, from complications following cardiac surgery.

In a career spanning four decades, Paxton had roles in a number of memorable F&SF films. In one of his earliest roles, he portrayed a "punk thug" in *The Terminator* (1984). He was "the bullying older brother Chet" in John Hughes's *Weird Science* (1985); in 1986, he was "Private Hudson" in *Aliens*; and he was "Jerry Lambert" in *Predator 2* (1990). Most recently, in 2014 he appeared in the Marvel TV series *Agents of SHIELD*, in which he was featured in a recurring role as "John Garrett", the murderous and ambitious Hydra sleeper agent. He also "starred" as a playable character in the 2014 video game *Call of Duty: Advanced Warfare*.

Paxton also had feature roles in a number of big-screen non-F&SF films: as "Morgan Earp" in *Tombstone* (1993); as "Fred Haise" in *Apollo 13* (1995); as "Brock Lovett" in *Titanic* (1997); and (co-starring with Helen Hunt) in the lead role of "Bill Harding" in *Twister* (1996). Four years after filming *Titanic*, Paxton accompanied director James Cameron on an under-



Storm-chaser Tribute for Bill Paxton

sea expedition to the actual sunken ship; and a made-for-IMAX film about this trip (*Ghosts of the Abyss*) was released in 2003.

Paxton received much acclaim for his performances in two TV series: his lead role in HBO's *Big Love* (2006-2011, for which he received 3 Golden Globe nominations) and his performance as "Randall McCoy" in the miniseries *Hatfields & McCoys* (2012, for which he and co-star Kevin Costner received Emmy nominations).

The day after Paxton's death, nearly 200 storm-chasers and storm-spotters paid the actor an unprecedented tribute. Using GPS coordinates, they spelled out his initials in real time on a map depicting the heart of Tornado Alley, centered around Wakita OK (the site of some of the action in the film *Twister*). This is the first time a "non-chaser" was given this tribute. "There are probably hundreds, if not thousands of meteorologists today – myself included – who were impacted by the movie *Twister* and the role Bill played in that," said John Wetter (president of the non-profit organization that works with the National Weather Service to update weather forecasts). Paxton also appeared as himself in the 2011 IMAX documentary *Tornado Alley*.

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TRAPPIST-1 and the Seven Planets

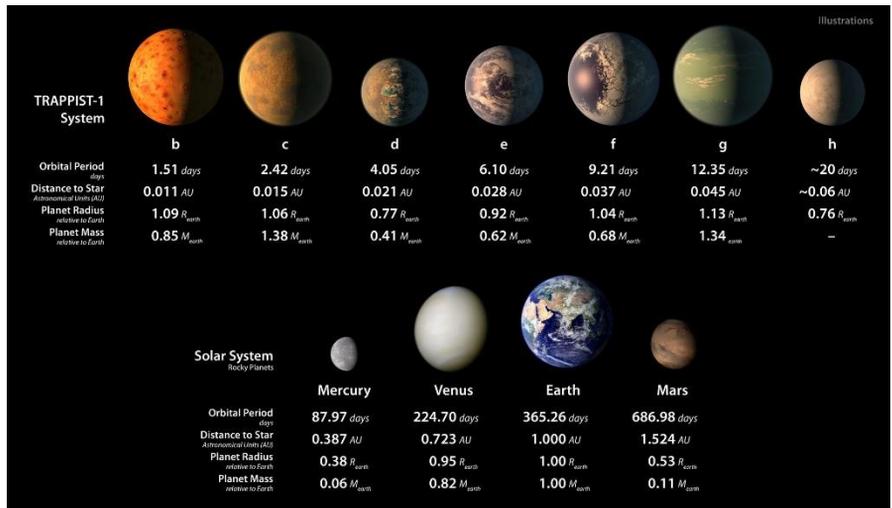
info passed along by Carl

A new planetary system has been discovered recently, orbiting an ultra-cool dwarf star now named TRAPPIST-1 (formerly 2MASS J23062928-0502285). This star is located about 39 light years from our Sun in the constellation Aquarius. TRAPPIST-1 is orbited by seven Earth-sized planets (labelled “b” through “h”), three of which (e, f, and g) are located in the “habitable” zone and could possess oceans of water – with the possibility of life.

The dwarf star was discovered in 1999 during the Two Micron All-Sky Survey (2MASS). In 2015, using the Transiting Planets and Planetesimals Small Telescope (TRAPPIST), astronomers first discovered three Earth-sized planets orbiting it. And on February 22 of this year, astronomers announced the discovery of four additional exoplanets orbiting TRAPPIST-1, using the NASA Spitzer Space Telescope (managed at Cal-Tech), the Very Large Telescope at Paranal (northern Chile), and others.

By the standards of our solar system, the TRAPPIST-1 system is quite unusual.

TRAPPIST-1 itself is only slightly larger than Jupiter but 84 times as massive; and its temperature is 2550 Kelvin (as compared to our Sun’s 5778 Kelvin). The age of the dwarf star is estimated to be at least 500 million years (compared to the Sun’s age of 4.6 billion years); but TRAPPIST-1 burns hydrogen very slowly and could “live” for another 10-12 trillion years, whereas it’s estimated our Sun will “expire” only a few billion years from now.



Top Row: Artist’s conception of the seven planets of TRAPPIST-1, with their orbital periods, distances from their star, radii, and masses as compared to those of Earth.

Bottom Row: Data about Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars. (from NASA/JPL–Cal-Tech)

TRAPPIST-1’s seven “terrestrial” planets range in size from 25% smaller to 10% larger than Earth. And all seven of them have orbits *much* closer to TRAPPIST-1 than Mercury is to our Sun. (In fact, Mercury’s orbit is six times farther from the Sun than the outermost planet (h) is from TRAPPIST-1.) The seven planets are in such tight orbits that it only takes them between 1.5 and 20 days to make a complete orbit. It’s believed that the planets formed together further from the star and were pulled in, very similar to Jupiter and its Galilean moons. Most – if not all – of the TRAPPIST-1 planets are believed to be “tidally locked” (*i.e.* always facing one way to the star).

The three planets closest to the star might be too warm to support liquid water; and the outermost planet is probably too distant and cold to support water on the surface. Researchers believe that the fifth planet (TRAPPIST-1f) is the best candidate for supporting life – depending on the

Make-up of its atmosphere. If you were standing on the surface of TRAPPIST-1f, the star would appear 10 times bigger than our Sun appears in the sky; and because of the red nature of the star, its light could have a “salmon hue”. As the other planets soared by, they would appear up to twice the size of the Moon as seen from Earth.

In the coming years, astronomers will focus on determining the nature of the atmosphere on each planet orbiting TRAPPIST-1, looking for methane, water, and “more complex and convincing molecular signatures” that could indicate if life has managed to thrive and release gases in a similar way to life on Earth.

For more information about the Spitzer mission, visit:

<http://www.nasa.gov/spitzer>
and
<http://spitzer.caltech.edu>

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March Minutes

continued from page 2

Parsec newsletters from the Pittsburgh-area genre group. He also announced an LSF Gaming Party for Saturday, April 1st. Upcoming LSF Book Discussions: *Long Way to a*

Small Angry Planet by Becky Chambers (March); *Air* by Geoff Ryman (April); *Lily and the Octopus* by Steven Rowley (May).

Carl brought out a small cake to celebrate the 27th anniversary of the founding of Lambda Sci-Fi. The LSF Book Discussion Group has been in

operation for 18 years. Happy Birthday, LSF!

Then we watched the first (double) episode of *Legion*. Whoa!

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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, **April 9th, 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 12-14, 2017 **OUTLANTACON** ("The Best in LGTBIQ Sci Fi, Fantasy, Horror, Anime, and Gaming"). Atlanta Marriott Century Center (Atlanta, GA). Membership: \$50. Registration on-line at registration@outlantacon.org
Website: www.outlantacon.org Information: info@outlantacon.org

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; 2017 Robert Heinlein Award Winner: Robert J. Sawyer. Membership: \$69 until 4/15; \$75 thereafter & at the door. Checks payable to "Baltimore Science Fiction Society" 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>

July 6-9, 2017 **NORTHAMERICON '17** (NASFiC 2017). Sheraton Puerto Rico (San Juan, Puerto Rico). Guests of Honor: Daina Chaviano, Tobias Buckell, George Perez, Brother Guy Consolmagno, Javier Grillo-Marxuach, Paula Smith. Attending Membership: \$100 (will go up)
Website: www.northamericon17.com

July 7-9, 2017 **SHORE LEAVE 39** ("a fan-run media SF convention"). Hunt Valley Inn (Hunt Valley, MD). Guests: "to be announced as soon as confirmed". Membership: \$95 for the weekend (daily rates available). Checks payable to "Shore Leave" and send to: Shore Leave 39, PO Box 6809, Towson, MD 21285-6809
Website: www.shore-leave.com

Aug. 11-13, 2017 **OTAKON 2017** ("an annual convention to celebrate Asian pop culture and its fandom"). Walter E. Washington Convention Center (Washington, DC). New memberships: \$95; \$100 at the door. On-line registration.
Website: www.otakon.com

Oct. 6-8, 2017 **CAPCLAVE 2017**. Hilton Washington DC North (Gaithersburg, MD). Author GoH: Ken Liu; Editor GoH: Neil Clarke. Membership: \$55 to May 31; \$60 from June 1 to July 31; \$65 from Aug. 1 to Sept. 30; \$70 at the door.
Website: www.capclave.org Info: info@capclave.org

Nov. 24-26, 2017 **CHESSIECON 2017**. Radisson North Baltimore (Timonium, MD). Author GoH: Ada Palmer; Music GoH: T.J. Burnside Clapp; Artist GoH: Megan Willis. Membership: \$55 through Nov. 15; \$60 at the door. Make checks payable to "Thanksgiving Science Fiction Society" and send to: TSFS, Inc., PO Box 83032, Gaithersburg, MD 20883-3032 (Also registration on-line via PayPal.)
Website: www.chessiecon.org Info: info@chessiecon.org

