



# Lambda Sci-fi

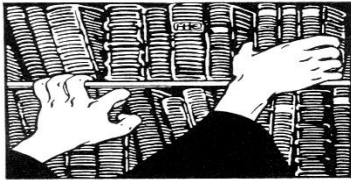
## DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 - Issue # 332 – November 2017

E-MAIL: [info@lambdascifi.org](mailto:info@lambdascifi.org)

WEBSITE: [www.lambdascifi.org](http://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 a combined November/December discussion held on December 7, 2017.

Here are the details for the next several book discussions:

**Dec. 7, 2017** (combined Nov/Dec) – *Ninefox Gambit* by Yoon Ha Lee (moderator: Dave R.)

**Jan. 25, 2018** – *Binti and Binti: Home* by Nnedi Okorafor (moderator: Carl)

**Feb. 22, 2018** – *Borne* by Jeff VanderMeer (moderator: Konrad).  $\Lambda\Psi\Phi$

### 2017 Nebula Awards

info passed along by Carl

The 51st Annual Nebula Conference was held in Pittsburgh, PA on the weekend of May 18-21. In addition to the conference itself, Nebula Awards for works published in 2016 were announced and presented May 20th. As a reminder, the Nebula Awards – awarded by the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America (SFWA) – recognize the best works of science fiction or fantasy published in the United States.

Here's the list of this year's winners:

#### Best Novel

*All the Birds in the Sky* by Charlie Jane Anders (Tor)

#### Best Novella

"Every Heart a Doorway" by Seanan McGuire (Tor.com)

#### Best Novelette

"The Long Fall Up" by William Ledbetter (*Magazine of F&SF*)

#### Best Short Story

"Seasons of Glass and Iron" by Amal



El-Mohtar (*The Starlit Wood*)  
Ray Bradbury Award for Outstanding Dramatic Presentation

*Kubo and the Two Strings* (LAIKA) - *Arrival* (21 Laps Entertainment/FilmNation Entertainment/Lava Bear Films/Senolinguistics)

Andre Norton Award for Young Adult Science Fiction and Fantasy

*Arabella of Mars* by David D. Levine (Tor)

For more information about the Nebula Awards (and a complete list of past nominees and winners), go to: <http://nebulas.sfwaworld.org/>  $\Lambda\Psi\Phi$



Happy ThanksgIVING, LSF!



### <<<<< November 2017 LSF Meeting >>>>>

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, November 12th**. 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 October LSF Meeting; What Color Is a Dinosaur?

Page 3: CORRECTION!

Page 4: Information About LSF: DC Area Gaylaxians and Con Calendar.

$\Lambda\Psi\Phi$

## Minutes of the October LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

### TV News

Rob is passionate about the new CBS series *Star Trek: Discovery*. He thinks that the third episode should have been the first episode. The first two episodes could have been referenced in flashback – they were boring. Fans believe that this series will focus on Section 31, which is not subject to the normal constraints of Starfleet ethical protocols. He-he.

Fox's *The Orville* is a traditional sense-of-wonder Trek-ish series with a little sophomoric humor added in.

Rob hated the first episode of *The Inhumans*, including the special effects of Medusa's hair. Carl agreed with the ridiculousness of Medusa's hair. (Somehow, it didn't seem so stupid in the Marvel comics.)

A 10-episode stand-alone anthology TV series called *Electric Dreams* is planned, based upon Philip K. Dick's short stories. SyFy Channel's new series *Happy* will air this Autumn; it's based on the comic book series by Grant Morrison: an ex-cop turned hit man, with a blue winged unicorn named Happy. Rob watched the last season of clones-themed *Orphan Black*; Tatiana Maslany won an Emmy for her performance(s).

Rob and David are enjoying NBC's *The Good Place*, about a woman who finds herself in the "good place" afterlife, but it's a mistake that she is there. The first season ended with an excellent surprise!

The reboot of a *Once Upon A Time* has begun – a seventh season – several years in the future from the sixth season. Henry is now an adult. Some of the actors will return, excluding the characters of Snow White and Prince Charming.

Rob reports that a two-hour movie finale for *Sense8* will be produced.

## What Color Is a Dinosaur?

by Carl (with additional info from Wayne #1)

Believe it or not, we now might actually be able to answer that question with a fair degree of certainty – at least in a few cases.

Discussions about dinosaur coloration had been pure guesswork for well over a century, due to the nature of the fossil record and the level of technology available to researchers. Think about it: how can you determine what color a dinosaur was when all you've got is a scrambled pile of fossilized bones? Up until recently, it seems to have been pretty much "agreed" that dinosaurs must have been some kind of dull green-grey-brown color combination – you know, like some kind of giant alligator or iguana.

But then came recent advan-

### Other News

Carl reported that Kathe Koja, author of *Under the Poppy*, has a new book titled *Christopher Wild*, her tribute to Christopher Marlowe.

The world's first talking sex robot, named Harmony, is ready for you. Harmony appears to resemble Ivanka.

*Wolfenstein*'s newest game shoots at Nazis (as does the original game). Current-day Nazis are not happy about the renewal of this game. Headline: "Nazi-Killing Video Game 'Wolfenstein II' Angers Nazis With 'Make America Nazi-Free Again' Slogan."

### Upcoming LSF Events

LSF will host a "spooktacular" board gaming party on Saturday, October 21.

Upcoming LSF book discussions: *Passing Strange* by Ellen Klages (October 26); *Ninefox Gambit* (The Machineries of Empire #1) by Yoon Ha Lee (Dec. 7, combined November/December discussion).

And then everyone watched episodes 2 and 3 of *Star Trek: Discovery* (with Captain Malfoy!).

ces in technology and paleontological research. Dinosaurs were probably endothermic ("warm-blooded") to one extent or another, as suggested by an analysis of bone structure and bone growth patterns. Closer analysis of their skeletal structures led to a whole new vision of how dinosaurs stood and moved and looked. And so on. And then some researchers speculated as follows: "Let's look at the coloration of dinosaurs' closest living relatives. Reptiles and birds express all kinds of colors – think of gila monsters or peacocks or chameleons or cardinals. Couldn't this also be true for dinosaurs?" Paleo-artists took up these concepts and ran with 'em; suddenly "dinosaur books" became much more visually interesting than they had ever been before. And let's not forget all those incredibly detailed fossils that have been discovered in northern China over the past decade: dinosaurs with feathers! Birds didn't "invent" feathers; they seem to have "inherited" them from their theropod dinosaur ancestors! Still, the speculations of paleontologists and paleo-artists about dinosaur coloration were just that: speculations. Until...

In 2008, Yale graduate student Jakob Vinther and colleagues inspected some 100-million-year-old fossil bird feathers from Brazil with a scanning electron microscope and discovered fossilized melanosomes (pigment-bearing organelles) in the dark bands of the fossils. (These are *really detailed* fossils, you understand.) Melanosomes are nano-sized packets of pigment found in the feathers of living birds. A hundred melanosomes can fit across a human hair.) And in 2009, Vinther's group further showed that another fossilized feather would have been iridescent in a living bird, due to microscopic light-refracting surfaces created by stacked melanosomes. OK, so these findings indicated that it's possible for melanosomes from Mesozoic times to survive in fossils. But no one had found melanosomes in *non-*

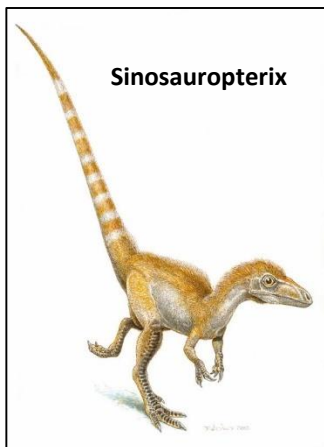
(continued on page 3)

## What Color Is a Dinosaur?

continued from page 2

avian dinosaur “proto-feathers” (filaments also called “dino fuzz”) – and no one had used melanosome shape and density to infer color. Until...

A team of paleontologists from the UK and China also used a scanning electron microscope to examine the fossils of feathered birds and dinosaurs found in Liaoning Province, China. These creatures lived between 131 million and 120 million years ago. Among the fossils they examined were those of *Sinosauropteryx*, a turkey-sized relative of *Tyrannosaurus rex* and *Velociraptor*. Based on the Vinther paper, the UK/China team “immediately” found melanosomes: sausage-shaped eumelanosomes (seen today in the black masks of cardinal birds and the black stripes of zebras) and spherical pheomelanosomes (which create the rusty reds of red-tailed hawks and red human hair). The team didn’t find any cell structures for such other colors as yellows, purples, and blues, possibly because they would contain proteins that might degrade more rapidly than organelles and thus leave no trace in fossils.



Based on what the UK/China team reported in 2010, *Sinosauropteryx* had light and dark feathered stripes along the length of its tail. The lighter stripes “could have been white” and the pheomelanosomes in the darker stripes indicate they were russet-orange in color. Melanosomes in the fossils of

*Sinornithosaurus* (another small theropod species) indicate that its feathery filaments possibly varied in color between black and russet-orange.

Well, that’s OK for feathered dinosaurs and prehistoric birds, but everyone figured we were simply out of luck when it came to non-feathered dinosaurs. Until...



**The Nodosaur Fossil**

In 2011, a miner digging in Canadian oil sands unexpectedly found the fossil of a nodosaur, an armored Cretaceous dinosaur weighing some 2,900 pounds and larger than a black rhinoceros. Fossil preparer Mark Mitchell worked for more than 5 years to expose the fossil within the rocks. Then a team led by Caleb Brown (a paleontologist at the Royal Tyrrell Museum in Canada) examined the incredibly well-preserved fossil nodosaur and published a report on it this August (2017). This was an *exceptionally* well-preserved specimen. “There’s no other dinosaur specimen like it,” Brown said. It looks like a statue of a nodosaur, still shows its skin and the remnants of its last meal in its stomach, and it’s not all contorted (as so many fossils are). Why, you ask?

Well, researchers figure that the nodosaur tumbled into a river and died; then its body floated out to sea and sank. There, layers of sand kept scavengers away as the body was petrified. How’d they come up with that idea? The oil sands where the miner had been digging are the remains of a prehistoric sea that covered that part of northeastern Alberta. That region has previously provided fossils of many marine reptiles like plesiosaurs and ichthyosaurs. At any rate, this was a *really*

lucky find for a land-dwelling dinosaur of this size.

Back to the laboratory... Brown and his colleagues found molecular signatures left by pheomelanin pigments in the nodosaur’s fossilized skin. Even more surprising, they found that the reddish-brown pigment was more pronounced on the dinosaur’s back than on its belly. In other words, this nodosaur was a darker red-brown color on top. This pattern is known as countershading – it’s a common camouflage pattern found in such prey mammals as chipmunks, gazelles, and giraffes, but it’s never been seen on a land animal the size of a rhino. Of course, nodosaurs were hunted by *much* bigger predators, such as *Tyrannosaurus rex*, so maybe the camouflage coloration makes sense after all.



**Nodosaur**

As a side note, Brown has said: “There’s going to be a lot more work on this particular animal.” For example, an analysis of its preserved stomach contents can reveal what it ate before it died.

And I guess that’s all there is to say about “dinosaur coloration”. Until...

(continued next month)

ΛΨΦ

### **CORRECTION!** from Y<sup>e</sup> Olde Editor

Oops! A correction to a boo-boo in last month’s *Cassini-Huygens* “obituary”. It should have said that the craft “traveled 4.9 billion miles since launch” – NOT “4.9 billion *million* miles”.

## \* \* INFORMATION ABOUT LAMBDA SCI-FI: DC AREA GAYLAXIANS \* \*

**Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians** (LSF) is an organization for gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and trans-gendered (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, **November 12th, 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



Nov. 10-12, 2017 **PHILCON 2017**. The Crown Plaza Hotel (Cherry Hill, NJ). Author GoH: Seanan McGuire; Artist GoH: Don Maitz; Special Guest: Janny Wurts. Membership: \$60 from 9/1 thru 10/31; \$65 at the door.

Website: [www.philcon.org](http://www.philcon.org)      [www.facebook.com/Philcon.PSFS](https://www.facebook.com/Philcon.PSFS)

Nov. 24-26, 2017 **CHESSIECON 2017**. Radisson North Baltimore (Timonium, MD). Author GoH: Ada Palmer; Music GoH: T. 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](http://www.chessiecon.org)      Info: [info@chessiecon.org](mailto:info@chessiecon.org)

Feb. 9-11, 2018 **FAIRPOINT 2018**. Delta Hotel by Marriott (Hunt Valley, MD). Guests include: Nana Visitor, Matt Frewer, author Timothy Zahn. Membership: \$85 for the weekend. Mailing address: Farpoint Enterprises, 11708 Troy Court, Waldorf, MD 20601. On-line registration available.

Website: <http://www.farpointcon.com/>

Feb. 16-18, 2018 **KATSUCON 2018**. Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center (Washington, DC). An annual 3-day fan convention for multicultural enthusiasts and entertainment. Membership: \$70. Registration on-line.

Website: <http://www.katsucon.org/>

May 11-13, 2018 **GAYLAXICON/OUTLANTACON 2018**. The Network Board has approved Outlantacon's bid to host Gaylaxicon in 2018. Membership: \$35 until 9/31 (will go up after that).

Website: <http://www.outlantacon.org/>      Info: [info@outlantacon.org](mailto:info@outlantacon.org)

Aug. 16-20, 2018 **WORLDCON SAN JOSE**, the 76th World Science Fiction Convention. McEnery Convention Center (San Jose, CA). Guests of Honor: Chelsea Quinn Yarbro & Spider Robinson. Membership: currently \$190 (will go up!). On-line registration thru the convention's website. More information (including hotel information) as it becomes available.

Website: [www.worldcon76.org](http://www.worldcon76.org)

Nov. 1-4, 2018 **WORLD FANTASY CONVENTION**. Baltimore Renaissance Harborplace Hotel (Baltimore, MD). Membership: \$175 (current rate; will go up). On-line registration or print out registration form & send to: WFC2018 c/o Baltimore Science Fiction Society, Inc., PO Box 686, Baltimore MD 21203-0686

Website: <http://www.wfc2018.org/>