



lambda Sci-fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 - Issue # 335 – February 2018

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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 de-tails, call 202-483-6369. The next book discussion will be held on February 22.

Here are the details for the next several book discussions:

Feb. 22 – *Borne* by Jeff VanderMeer (moderator: Konrad).

March 22 – *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle (moderator: Rob).

April 26 – *The Dinosaur Lords* by Victor Milan (moderator: Randy).

May 24 – *The Black Tides of Heaven* and *The Red Threads of Fortune* by JY Yang (moderator: Greg).

June 28 – *The Dispossessed* by Ursula Le Guin (moderator: Konrad).

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Congress of Games info passed along by Carl

At the January LSF meeting, we looked over a flyer from the Congress of Gamers about local gaming conventions sponsored by the Games Club of Maryland.

Here's what their declaration says:

We, the people of Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia, and

beyond are invited to the Sessions of the Congress of Gamers... For just \$20 [pre-registration fee for the entire weekend], we'll find an extensive game library, demonstrations, open gaming space, tournaments, game design workshop, no-ship math trade, auction store, special events, vendors, new games, and more...

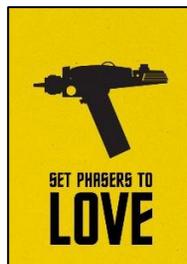
The two upcoming Congress of Gamers sessions for 2018 are:

- **August 17-19:** The Westin Tysons Corner, 7801 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA
- **October 13-14:** Rockville Senior Center, 1150 Carnation Drive, Rockville MD

For more information, visit:

www.emsps.com/cog or info@emsps.com

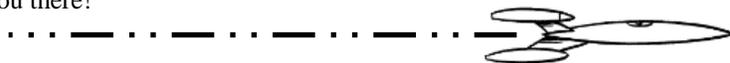
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♥ Happy ♥
Valentine's Day,
LSF!

<<<<< February 2018 LSF Meeting >>>>>

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, February 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 January 2018 LSF Meeting; Women in F&SF Short Stories, Part 2 (book review).

Page 3: Ursula K. Le Guin (obituary).

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

Minutes of the January 2018 LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

Rob reported that LSF has submitted a proposal for a panel at this year's Awesome Con, tentatively titled "Mr. Potato Head Theory of Fandom." He also reported that LSF has signed up for a table at the 2018 Pride Festival. Gaylaxicon will be held in Atlanta in May 2018.

Genre movies coming up: *Altered Carbon*, *Black Panther*, *Pacific Rim: Uprising*, *A Wrinkle in Time*, *Ready Player One*, *Avengers: Infinity War*, *Deadpool II*, *Solo: A Star Wars Movie*, *Jurassic Park: Fallen Kingdom*, *New Mutants*. A *Winchester House* movie is in the works, starring Helen Mirren.

Upcoming TV shows: *The Alienist* and Syfy's *Krypton*

Rob said he's caught up on the CW superhero shows. The gay character "The Ray" is part of the DC's "Arrow-verse". *Black Lightning* starts soon.

It was noted that actor Doug Jones, who plays Saru on *Star Trek: Discovery*, also plays the alien in the excellent SF film *The Shape of Water*. Lots of glee over the "Mirror Universe" episode of *Star Trek: Discovery*. Will the "Mirror Universe"-equivalent of the gay doctor appear?

Teresa raved about the series *Stan Against Evil*, which is similar to *Buffy*: gory, but funny.

A general discussion about *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*: Leia's blast into space did not lead to her death? Was Supreme Leader Snoke a male or a female? Rob likes the new character of Rose. Will the Leia character be referenced in the next movie (Episode 9)?

Peter did not like the Christmas "Doctor Who" special. He noted that the new Doctor will be played by *Broadchurch* actress Jodie Whittaker and that she'll have three companions.

And then we conducted the LSF Annual Book (*et al*) Exchange). Only 4 participants this year:

Women in F&SF Short Stories, Part 2

reviews by Carl

Continuing a series of reviews begun in the January 2017 LSF newsletter...

To Shape the Dark
edited by Athena Andreadis
(Candlemark & Gleam, 2016)

This anthology was created specifically for all-new SF stories featuring women scientists. Here's an explanatory excerpt from the editor's introductory essay "Astrogators Never Sleep":

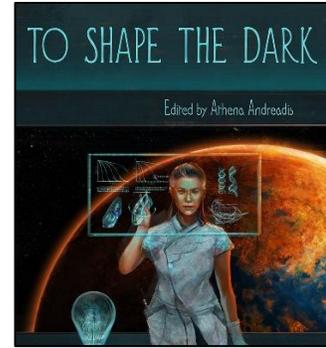
"So here I was... an unrepentant feminist and book devourer who detests the standard SF portrayal of scientists in general and women scientists in particular... I decided to launch an anthology focusing on women scientists who pursue science not-as-usual... In particular, I asked for women scientists, mathematicians or engineers who are not subject to the snooze-inducing conflict of work versus family and who are aware of the limitations and consequences of their vocation: and for cultures where science is a holistic endeavor as necessary as art—or air."

It's one heck of a fascinating anthology, including 15 stories by a wide range of authors. The first two I'll mention are particular favorites of mine.

- From Carl to Rob: *The Complete Fiction of HP Lovecraft*.
- From Dan/Teresa to Peter: An illustrated edition of *The City on the Edge of Forever*.
- From Rob to Carl: A collection of Glen Cook novels: *The Annals of the Black Company*.
- From Peter to Teresa/Dan: a DVD collection of the complete original *Star Trek* series, plus the complete *The Animated Star Trek* series.

We then watched an excellent episode from the TV anthology *Black Mirror*, entitled "USS Callister".

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In Melissa Scott's "Firstborn, Lastborn", a powerful AI-scientist is contacted by a former lover with an incredible request: the scientist's help to locate an AI *and* the scientist's brother, who have both been lost for decades in "the adjacent possible" (an alternate dimension/space). The story has one heckuva twist of an ending.

In M. Fenn's "Chlorophyll is Thicker Than Water", an older lesbian couple – botanist-geneticists – have plans to enhance the intelligence of plants and save the world. What a hoot of a story!

A few other favorites are:

"From the Depths" by Kristin Landon: A exo-ecologist on an ocean-world makes first contact with the depth-dwelling intelligent creatures they never expected to find.

"Crossing the Middy Gate" by Aliette de Bodard: This is another of de Bodard's fascinating "Xuya" universe stories, set in a far-distant future in which Chinese and Vietnamese cultures predominate in an interstellar empire. In this story, political turmoil whirls around a disgraced scientist and her unlikely ally, the mindship *The Serpent's Pearl in the Sea*.

"The Pegasus Project" by Jack McDevitt: Two women – interstellar explorers for a colonization company – investigate a long-derelict spacecraft. The female-self-identified AI on the derelict ship reports an encounter with long-sought-for, non-human aliens. This is yet another of McDevitt's rollicking space-opera adventure-mysteries.

(to be continued next month)

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Ursula K. Le Guin 1929 – 2018

Ursula Le Guin passed away on January 22nd. Lamentations all around – some public, some private. (As Rob said in an e-mail: “I’m just going to be sad in a corner for a little while.”) She wrote mainly in the genres of Fantasy and Science Fiction, although she also wrote poetry, essays, and other nonfiction. The New York Times described her as “America’s greatest living science fiction writer” – but she said that she would prefer to be known as an “American novelist”. Her works dealt with such issues as gender inequality, racism, environmental destruction, sexuality, psychology, politics, and ethnography.

Le Guin and her three older brothers were the children of a UC Berkley anthropologist (Alfred Kroeber) and a writer-anthropologist (Theodora Kracaw, author of *Ishi, the Last of His Tribe*, 1964). Le Guin received her B.A. from Radcliffe College in 1951 (Renaissance French and Italian Literature) and her M.A. from Columbia University in 1952. She began her Ph.D. work soon after and won a Fulbright grant to continue her studies in France, where she met and married historian Charles Le Guin.

At age 11, young Ursula submitted her first story to *Astounding Science Fiction* – it was rejected. She continued writing but did not attempt to publish for a decade. In the early 1960s, her work began to be published regularly: an “Orsinian Tale” in *The Western Humanities Review* (Summer

1961); three stories in the monthly *Fantastic Stories of Imagination* (1962); and two stories (including the first “Hainish” story) in *Amazing Stories* (1964). The first of her famous “Earthsea” stories – “The Word of Unbinding” – was published in *Fantastic* (Jan. 1964).

In one of her SF “Hainish Cycle” novels (*Rocannon’s World*, 1966), Le Guin created the concept of the “ansible” (a contraction of “answerable”): an instantaneous interstellar communication device that connected the scattered worlds of a galactic civilization lacking FTL travel capability. This concept (and its name) has been liberally borrowed by such writers as Orson Scott Card, Vernor Vinge, Elizabeth Moon, Kim Stanley Robinson, and Dan Simmons (among others).

Le Guin said she was influenced by F&SF writers such as JRR Tolkien, Philip K. Dick, Lord Dunsany, Theodore Sturgeon, and Cordwainer Smith, and such other figures of Western literature as Virgil, Tolstoy, the Brontë sisters, and Virginia Woolf – as well as *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Worm Ouroboros*, *The Wind in the Willows*, *The Jungle Book*, Norse mythology, and the *Tao Te Ching*.

Over the course of her long writing career, Le Guin was the recipient of numerous awards: several Hugos (*The Left Hand of Darkness*; *The Dispossessed*; *The Word for World Is Forest*); several Nebulas (*The Left Hand of Darkness*; *The Dispossessed*; *Tehannu: The Last Book of Earthsea*); several Locus Fantasy or SF Awards (*The Lathe of Heaven*; *The Dispossessed*; *Tehannu: The Last Book of Earthsea*; *Annals of the Western Shore*, vol. 3: *Powers The Telling*; *Lavinia*); and the World Fantasy Award (*The Other Wind*). In 2017, she won the Hugo Award for Best Related Work for *Words Are My Matter: Writings About Life and Books, 2000-2016* (a collection of essays). Le Guin also received the following awards: the

Gandalf, Grand Master of Fantasy Award (1975); the World Fantasy Award for Life Achievement (1995); inclusion in the Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame (2001); a SFWA Grand Master of Science Fiction (2003); and the National Book Foundation’s Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters (2014) – and probably about a dozen or so other F&SF or literary awards.

Here’s what admirer and fellow author Margaret Atwood said in her “Appreciation” (*Washington Post*, 2/25/2018):

When I heard that [Le Guin had died], I had an absurd vision based on the scene in her haunting fantasy novel A Wizard of Earthsea, in which the mage Ged tries to summon the spirit of a child back from the land of the dead. There was Ursula, moving calmly away down a hill of whispering sand under the unchanging stars; and there was me, distraught and running after her calling: “No! Come back! We need you here and now!”

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Anger is a useful, perhaps indispensable tool in motivating resistance to injustice. But I think it is a weapon – a tool useful only in combat and self-defense... Anger points powerfully to the denial of rights, but the exercise of rights can’t live and thrive on anger. It lives and thrives on the dogged pursuit of justice... Valued as an end in itself, it loses its goal. It fuels not positive activism but regression, obsession, vengeance, self-righteousness.

Ursula K. Le Guin
“About Anger” (2014)

**** 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 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. 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 until 02/2018 (\$170 for "VIP tickets"). Registration on-line. Website: <http://www.katsucon.org/>

March 30 – April 1, **2018 AWESOME CON 2018**. Walter E. Washington Convention Center (Washington, DC). Guests include: Dave Bautista ("Drax the Destroyer"); Jeremy Bulloch (adult "Boba Fett"); Joe Keery (from *Stranger Things*); Joonas Suotamo ("Chewbacca" in the latest *Star Wars* films); Karen Gillan ("Amy Pond"; "Nebula"); Michael Rooker ("Yondu Udonta"); Phil LaMarr (voice actor). Membership: \$75 for the weekend (daily rates available, as well as more expensive "special packages"). Tickets available on-line. Website: www.awesome-con.com

May 11-13, 2018 **GAYLAXICON/OUTLANTA CON 2018**. Renaissance Concourse Atlanta Airport Hotel (Atlanta, GA). Outlantacon is hosting Gaylaxicon in 2018. Membership: \$50 until 4/22/2018. On-line registration. Website: <http://www.outlantacon.org/> Info: info@outlantacon.org

May 25-28, 2018 **BALTICON 52**. Baltimore Renaissance Harborplace Hotel (Baltimore, MD). GoH: Catherine Asaro; Artist GoH: Galen Dara; Special Guest: Larry Niven. Membership: \$64 until 2/28; \$69 until 4/15; \$72 until 5/15 (on-line); \$75 at the door. Website: <http://balticon.org/wp52/> E-mail: balticoninfo@balticon.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 \$210 (will go up!). On-line registration thru the convention's website. More information (including hotel information) as it becomes available. Website: www.worldcon76.org

October, 2018 **CAPCLAVE 2018**. [More details as they become available.] Membership: \$55 until May 2018. For updates, please visit: www.Capclave.org Info: info@capclave.org

Nov. 1-4, 2018 **WORLD FANTASY CONVENTION**. Baltimore Renaissance Harborplace Hotel (Baltimore, MD). Membership: \$200 (current rate; will go up). Guests of Honor: Kaaron Warren, Scott Edelman, Michael J. Walsh. Artist Guest of Honor: Tom Kidd. Special Guest: Aliette de Bodard. 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/>