



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 345 – December 2018

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 December 6.

Here are the details for the next several book discussions:

Dec. 6, 2018 (combined Nov./Dec. discussion) – *Leviathan Wakes* by James A. Corey (moderator: Konrad).

Jan. 24, 2019 – *Tremontaine, Season 1* by Ellen Kushner *et al* (mod.: Rob G.).

Feb. 28, 2019 – *Mongrels* by Stephen Graham Jones (moderator: Carl). $\Lambda\Psi\Phi$

LSF New Year's Eve Gaming Party!



Come join Lambda Sci-Fi as we ring out the old year and ring in the new with an afternoon and evening of gaming.

Date: Monday, Dec. 31, 2018

Time: The doors will open at 3:00 PM. The potluck dinner and gaming will begin in the 3:30 PM-to-4:00 PM range. We'll all ring in and toast the New Year with champagne, sparkling wine, and/or sparkling cider.

Where: Rob & Peter's home: 1425 "S" St NW, Washington, DC 20009

What to Bring: Your favorite table game or two or three (cards, board, etc.). It's a potluck meal, so bring something to eat: appetizers (veggies, chips, etc.), main course item (enough to serve at least 4-5 people), dessert, and/or non-alcoholic drinks (both regular and diet). For the New Year's toast, it's OK to bring some sparkling wine or

cider (champagne, if you're feeling generous). The hosts request that no one drink alcohol during the party other than at Midnight.

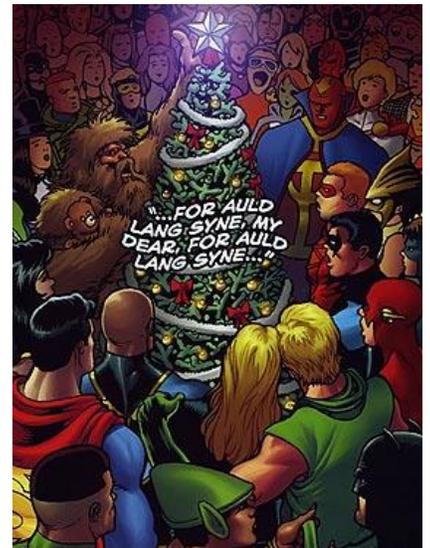
For more information, call 202-600-5511 or send e-mail to:

PeterPKnapp@gmail.com

Directions and Parking Suggestions:

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

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<<<<< December 2018 LSF Meeting >>>>>

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, December 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?

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**Reminder:
Annual LSF Book (et al)
Exchange at
Jan. 13th 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-eighth* annual book (et al) exchange, which will occur at the January 13th 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 opportu-



tunity 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.

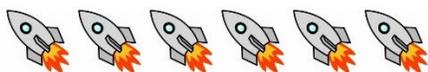
For those of you unfamiliar with the process, here's how it works: You won't be assigned to exchange with any *particular* person – it's a "blind" exchange, where participants will get their pick from a pile of anonymous wrapped packages. Full details on the exchange in the next (January) newsletter.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

**Minutes of the November
LSF Meeting
taken by Scott**

Movie News: Teresa loved *Venom*, which includes periods of humor. There seems to be lots of buzz surrounding the new animated "Spiderverse" movie: it includes Miles Morales and Gwen Stacey! Meryl Streep and Dick Van Dyke will star in the upcoming remake of *Mary Poppins*.

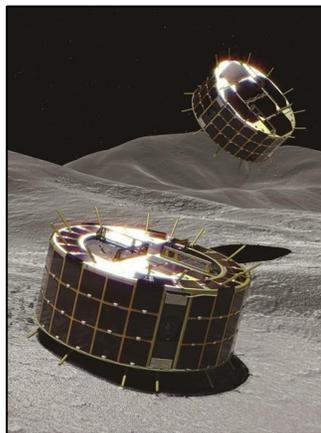
TV News: Scott thinks that NBC's *Manifest* is similar to *The 4400*: people disappear and then re-appear with super abilities. Teresa is giving new *Sabrina* a try. She is also watching the new *Haunting of Hill House* series, the plot line of which is not linear. Mixed reviews of the current *Doctor Who*; Teresa enjoyed both the "spider" episode and the "Rosa Parks" episode. Bill is trying to get into *Steven King's Castle Rock*. Rick Grimes, the main character on *The Walking Dead*, is leaving. Will the show survive?

LSF News: A movie outing is planned to see the new *Fantastic Beasts: Crimes of Grindelwald* a week from today. The next LSF book discussion (Dec. 6th) will be *Leviathan Wakes*, the first book in the "Expanse" series. Teresa announced that she has DM'd her first role-playing game; she said that she needs more practice! $\Lambda\Psi\Phi$



**Japanese Asteroid Explorers
info passed along by Wayne & Carl**

The date is Friday, September 21, 2018. The action takes place about 100 million miles from Earth, as the Japanese Space Agency's Hayabusa 2 spacecraft deposits twin rovers (MINERVA-II 1a and 1b) onto a half-mile-wide, carbon-rich asteroid known as Ryugu. Each rover is "roughly the size of a cookie tin"; they're each equipped with a solar-powered internal rotor that allows them to lift and travel about in Ryugu's low gravity. Their mission is to move about the asteroid's surface taking photographs and gathering temperature data.



The asteroid's name derives from a popular Japanese folk tale, in which a fisherman visits a magical undersea palace named Ryugu and is given a mysterious box. Ryugu (the asteroid) is a "C-type"

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Scintillation

a con report by Claire R

I went to Scintillation because I wanted to take the train home.

As a rail fan, I've had Amtrak's Adirondack train on my bucket list for years. It has the prettiest scenery of any train east of the Mississippi, particularly in the autumn when it goes through its namesake mountains at the height of fall color. It is also one of the *slowest* trains in the Amtrak system, taking a scheduled ten and a half hours to cover the 370 miles from Montreal to New York (never mind the additional hours spent on the far less exciting Northeast Regional scenery between New York and DC). If I was going to commit to that, I needed a reason to be in Montreal in the first place. Then rumors started swirling in my social media feeds about a new sci-fi convention in Montreal—and I had my reason.

Scintillation was organized and hosted by Jo Walton (author of past LSF reads *Farthing* and *Among Others*) as an attempt to revive the spirit of her Farthing Parties, which ran from 2006 to 2014, without the angst that came from single-handedly fronting the capital for them. Instead of asking people to buy memberships in the traditional way (which results in many attendees not signing up until the month or day of the con), she organized the con as a Kickstarter a year in advance. She asked for \$3,000; she got \$17,374, enough to guarantee the convention would run in 2018, 2019, and 2020.

I had never been to a Farthing Party but had friends who had, so I had a vague idea what to expect: something small and intimate and very focused on books. What I got was, I think, somewhat larger than a Farthing Party; Scintillation ended up capped at around 200 people, and expanded from Farthing Party's traditional single programming track to two: one large room hosting panels, and one smaller room for readings, single-person lectures, and other smaller scale events. A third room offered tables for board games, and a single book vendor had a well-stocked table next to registration. That was it; no art show, no dealer's room, no costuming, no video room, just a lot of people very

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Scintillation

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eager to talk about books and a structure that encouraged them to do so.

Of course, since this was my first trip to Montreal, I didn't want to spend the *entire* weekend in the hotel—and Scintillation facilitated avoiding that by devoting Friday morning and afternoon to organized exploration of local attractions. I joined dozens of con-goers around the corner for dim sum Friday morning (Scintillation's hotel is in the heart of Montreal's Chinatown, which means any sort of food you want is around the corner as long as that food is Chinese), went with a smaller party to an upscale tea tasting at specialty shop Camellia Sinensis, and explored the Montreal Botanical Garden by the light of fantastical Chinese lanterns. It's unlikely any of these would have topped my list if I'd been planning my own touring rather than being guided by locals—and that would have been a shame, because every one of them was worth the trip.



Phoenix and Boar Lanterns
(pictures taken by Claire)

I made it to only one panel Friday (“Ask a Scientist!”) which featured a range of scientific professionals offering a broad Q&A opportunity for laypeople. On Saturday, though, I dove into the con in more depth with panels on “Good and Evil” (which discussed different cultural conceptions of morality and why fiction writers often find Evil so much easier to write about) and “Being a Gatekeeper” (which looked at how people who don't benefit from things like Lambda Sci-Fi Book Club find books—apparently, they use Amazon recommendations—strange.) Between the two, I managed to escape for a quick hike up Mount Royal. The convention Slack chat group made it

easy to reach out and find a hiking buddy on short notice—a nice upgrade on the more traditional convention physical boards for posting queries, messages, and party announcements.

I also sat through a number of Saturday readings. Ada Palmer read the opening of *Too Like the Lightning*—which I've now heard her read three times, but still find worth going back for both because of her excellent reading voice and the Q&A that generally follows. Fran Wilde read the opening from her new short story “Ruby, Singing”, available free online at <http://www.beneath-ceaseless-skies.com/stories/ruby-singing/>. Max Gladstone read a teaser for his forthcoming-in-June space opera *Empress of Forever*, which features a queer protagonist. Alison Sinclair shared a selection from an in-progress novel about traveling doctors in a plague-ridden near-future America; and Lila Garrott offered their own in-progress selection from *The Journeymen*, a coming-of-age fantasy about a nonbinary protagonist bound from infancy to never sleep in the same place twice.

There were more readings after that, but I was torn away by the promise of a party featuring excellent cake and conversation. It delivered on both fronts.

Sunday's reading track opened with a Farthing Party tradition: “The Joy of Reading”, a small gathering where every attendee was invited to read a page or two from something they loved but had not themselves written. I went, clutching Rosemary Sutcliff's memoir as my own contribution, not sure what to expect. What I got was an amazing array of genres—fantasy, adventure, poetry, popular science, and politics—spanning four centuries and all worth hearing. A similarly-structured but more focused reading session later in the day allowed attendees to mourn and memorialize Ursula K. Le Guin with favorite passages from her works, although it ended up being dominated by a full reading of “Coming of Age in Karhide.” In a more traditional reading vein, I heard Ada Palmer again, this time reading a teaser from her forthcoming *Perhaps the Stars*, and Sherwood Smith presenting a passage

from her forthcoming YA fantasy *A Sword Named Truth*.

I did escape the reading room for two panels: “Our Real Influences and Why We Lie”, where a number of authors talked about their concerns about being labeled pretentious or disingenuous if they admitted to being inspired by the classics, and “Imagining the Future”, which spoke to my urban-planning-loving heart by opening with the future of architecture before moving on to discuss issues of equality and social justice. I also found time to stop by the registration desk and pre-register for Scintillation 2019—one of 82 people to do so. If nearly half your attendees committing to return isn't the mark of a successful first-year convention, then I don't know what is. (If you want to check out the convention yourself next year, registration information should appear soon at <http://www.scintillation.ca/>.)

“Imagining the Future” was the closing event at the hotel—but not the closing event of the convention. That honor was saved for the best Dead Dog party I've ever attended, hosted at Jo Walton's apartment. As one would expect for the apartment of a noted author and critic, it was crammed with double-layered bookshelves—and yet somehow she still found space to fit in scores of fans. I left after midnight, and the conversation was still going strong.

Oh, and the train back? The scenery was just as lovely as promised—and I made up for having utterly missed the game room at the convention proper by taking over a cafe car table with fellow fans and playing five board games back to back. Why let the convention end just because you've left for home? **ΛΨΦ**



Jo Walton

*** * 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, **December 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

Feb. 8-10, 2019 **FARPOINT** ("Your FAN-RUN CONVENTION for 26 YEARS!"). Delta Hotel by Marriott (Hunt Valley, MD). Guests: Wallace Shawn, Peter David, Keith RA DeCandido ("more to come!"). Membership: full weekend (3-day) pre-registration: \$85. Website: www.FarpointCon.com

April 5-7, 2019 **RAVENCON 14** (Virginia's Science Fiction & Fantasy Convention of Opportunity). Doubletree by Hilton Williamsburg (Williamsburg VA). Author GoH: Melinda Snodgrass; Music GoH: Library Bards (more to come). Membership: \$35 before 12/31/2018; \$40 until 3/9/2019; \$50 at the door (daily rates available). Membership on-line through the website. Website: <http://www.ravencon.com/>

May 24-27, 2019 **BALTICON 53**. Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel (Baltimore MD). Guests of Honor: Elizabeth Bear, Scott Lynch, Nicky Drayden (2018 Compton Crook Award Winner). Registration will open toward the end of November 2018. Membership: \$66 before March 1, 2019; \$71 from March 1 until April 15; \$74 beginning April 16; \$77 at the door. Website: <https://www.balticon.org/wp53/> E-mail at: balticoninfo@balticon.org

October 2019 **GAYLAXICON 2019**. Crown Plaza Aire Hotel (Minneapolis MN). During Outlantcon-Gaylaxicon 2018, the Gaylactic Network Board approved the bid by the North Country Gaylaxians to host Gaylaxicon 2019. More details as they become available.

Japanese Asteroid Explorers

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asteroid that scientists have "often compared to time capsules from the earliest days of the solar system, more than 4 billion years ago".

In coming months, MINERVA-II 1a and 1b will be joined by two more landers. In addition, Hayabusa 2 will also use explosives to blast away part of

the asteroid's surface and expose underground material (possibly even water trapped inside the asteroid). The plan is for the spacecraft to gather samples until late 2019 and then return to Earth by 2020 with a capsule filled with those samples. Scientists can then examine the Ryugu materials and compare them to the composition of meteorites and samples from other missions. They hope thereby to gain greater understanding of the processes that allowed planets to form

from the gas and dust that surrounded the primitive Sun. Says Bill Nye "the Science Guy": "By studying asteroids, we learn more about the early solar system and more about life itself."

In 2020, NASA's OSIRIS-Rex is scheduled to arrive at the asteroid Bennu and retrieve samples from it. $\Lambda\Psi\Phi$

