PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044 - (202) 232-3141 - Issue #210 - Sept. 2007

E-MAIL: info@lambdasf.org **WEBSITE:** http://www.lambdasf.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 LBGT community), we invite you to join the LSF Book Discussion Group. Each month, we conduct fascinating roundtable discussions of works by significant F&SF authors.

The LSF Book Discussion Group generally 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 meeting will be held on September 27th.

Here are the details on the next several book discussion meetings:

Sept. 27th - Vellum, by Hal Duncan; moderator: Krista.

Oct. 25th - Smoke and Ashes, by Tanya Huff; moderator: Bob A.

Dec. 6th (NOTE: combined Nov./Dec. meeting) - Stardust, by Neil Gaiman; moderator: Greg. ΛΨΦ

September LSF Meeting

The next Lambda Sci-Fi meeting will be held on the Sunday, September 9th, at James Crutchfield's apartment (1414 17th St. NW, #413). The business meeting will begin at 1:30 PM; and the social meeting will begin at 2:00 PM.

Please bring some munchies or soft drinks, if you can. See you there! ΛΨΦ

Gaming Party

announced by Mike Felder

What: Gaming/Norman's Birthday Party.

When: Saturday, Sept. 29th.

Time: 1:00 PM till?

Where: The home of Mikey -22258 Waterberry Terrace, Ashburn VA.

What to Bring: Games (card, board, etc.) and snacks and non-alcoholic drinks to share. Dinner will be provided, but please let me know if you have any special needs (i.e. food allergies, vegetarian, etc.).

Games that I have: Killer Bunnies, Risk 2010 AD, Monsters, Magic the Gathering, Console System: PS3 & xbox.

During the party we will take a break to wish Norman a Happy Birthday!!

Directions (by car): Take I-495 to VA-267 (toll road). Travel down the toll road, through the Dulles Greenway, and take Exit-6. At the end of the off ramp, turn left onto Ashburn Village Blvd. Turn left onto Old Ryan Rd, and then take the 3rd right at Croson Ln. Take the first left at Mooreview Parkway in Amberleigh. (There are kids like to play around the trails; please be alert). Turn right onto Amberleigh Farms and make your first right onto Waterberry Terrace. I'm the first corner unit on the right.

If you don't have a car, please let me know and we'll see what we can arrange to get you out here!!



LSF Video **Potluck Party**

announced by Tanya Peltz

Come join us for a Lambda Sci-Fi video party. Hang out with good company, watch some genre videos, and enjoy a potluck dinner. Here are all the details.

What: A science fiction/fantasy/horror video and potluck party. Bring DVDs and videos to view. We will watch the movies that receive the most votes. There will be multiple screening areas, so you can take your pick of movies to watch.

When: Saturday, Sept. 8th.

Where: Home of Tanya, 924 Maryland Ave. NE, Washington, DC.

Directions at:

http://lambdasf.org/lsf/club/Tanya.html

Time: 3:00 PM - Midnight.

What to Bring: Bring science fiction, fantasy, and horror DVDs and videos to watch and snacks, dinner food, and/or non-alcoholic drinks to share.

For more information, please contact Tanya at: tpeltz1@yahoo.com or call: 202-543-5293 ΑΨΦ

You can reach me by email at: michael.felder@gmail.com or by cell phone at: 202-664-0907

Please RSVP so I can plan accordingly. This will be my first party at my new place. Hope to see yah!!!

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WHAT'S INSIDE?

Minutes for the August 12th LSF Meeting (pg. 2); New SF Awards Sites (pg. 2); The World Without Us (book review - pg. 3); Batman Masterpieces (book review - pg. 4); The World of Tomorrow (book review - pg. 5); About Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians (pg. 6); Con Calendar (pg. 6)

Minutes for the August 12th LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

Business

Rob announced that there has been no discussion about the LSF bylaws re: alcohol policy on the LSF members list.

Rob reminded everyone about the upcoming Gaylaxicon 2007 in Altanta in October. A number of LSF members will be attending.

There was a brief discussion about Gaylaxicon 2008 hosting a party of some sort at Gaylaxicon 2007. Peter suggested that perhaps LSF could contribute some funds for this party.

Rob suggested having a contribution bucket at LSF events as a minor fund-raising effort for Gaylaxicon 2008.

Social

Jack initiated a name circle, especially helpful since three first-timers were in attendance.

Rob said he enjoyed the new Sci-Fi Channel *Flash Gordon* series, but it did not "wow" him. Peter is looking forward to this year's *Tin Man* series this December on the Sci-Fi Channel.

Rob cheerfully reported that the first half of Lifetime's *Blood Ties* Season #1 did well; the second half of the season will air in October. And the new season of *Eureka* (Sci-Fi Channel) has started.

Peter said that he enjoyed the two-hour straight-to-DVD *Babylon 5* movie. He classified it as low-budget with the actors standing in front of blue screens.

There was mention of some Henson Company-produced *Farscape* webisodes – about 10 minutes each, down-loadable from some website.

The new *Stardust* movie! Peter and Rob loved it: "Delightful, okay special effects, nice fairy tale."

Rob is looking forward to the *Spiderwick Chronicles* and the *Golden Compass* films.

Peter passed around Parsec, the newsletter from the Pittsburgh sci-fi group.

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Michael provided a full-barrel report from the recent HorrorFind convention that he attended in Baltimore. He said that the dealer's room at the con was generally depopulated. Many of the haunted house industry vendors didn't show up at this con. But, as usual, Michael had lots of fun!

Rob reviewed the upcoming titles for the LSF book discussion group: *Teranesia*, by Greg Egan (August); *Vellum*, Hal Duncan's debut novel (September); Tanya Huff's *Smoke and Ashes* (October).

Mike Felder might host a video party at his new place out in Ashburn, VA.

There was some general chat about *Journeyman*, a *Quantum Leap*-style show; *Pushing Up Daisies*; *Bionic Woman*; *New Amsterdam* (haven't we seen this plot before somewhere....?); and *Nightfall*.

Yes, there is a rumor that there will be a new *Star Trek* movie – with Leonard Nimoy as an "old" Spock and Zachary Quinto, who plays the bad guy character "Sylar" from Heroes. The potential timeline for the movie? Rob suggested some time post-"Cage" and prior to the assembling of the crew of the Kirk-led *Enterprise*.

Is the JJ Abrams movie, code named *Cloverfield* for now, really a Godzilla movie? Lots of internet hints flying around now.

Michael finds the new Who Wants to be a SuperHero? series to be a total train wreck.

Rob commented that the BBC *Hex* series is not totally horrendous.

Joss Whedon has been talking about the character that Giles called the Ripper from the *Buffy* series. It was noted that the 8th season of *Buffy* in comic book form is now out and very good.

Rob vaguely mentioned a possible version of *Dark Shadows* with Johnny Depp. Wouldn't *he* be an interesting Barnabas Collins?

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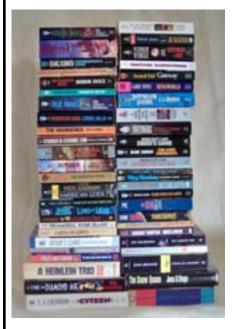
New SF Awards Sites

info passed along by Kendall

For those of you interested in SF-related awards, two new sites:



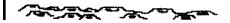
The Hugos finally have their own site: http://www.thehugoawards.org



There's a new site that will list awards and their sites, provide SF award-related news, discuss them, blog, etc. One of the people behind it is the former editor of the now-defunct great review-zine *Emerald City*. The site is:

http://www.sfawardswatch.com

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The World Without Us by Alan Weisman (St. Martin's Press, 2007)

reviewed by Carl Cipra

I think I first heard about this book through *Smithsonian Magazine*—but, wherever I first heard about it, I was immediately intrigued and figured I wanted to read it.

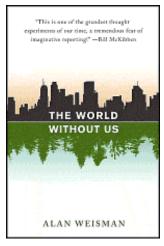
The World Without Us grew out of a discussion between the author and an editor-friend of his about the ecological follow-up to the Chernobyl disaster. ("...when humans fled Chernobyl, nature rushed in to fill our void.") During that conversation, she asked Weisman the following question: "What would happen if humans disappeared everywhere?" Here's what Weisman says in the "Acknowledgments" section of the book — I think it'll give you a pretty good idea of what to expect from the book:

It was a deceptively simple question that, I came to understand, lets us view our Earth's current myriad stresses from the disarming vantage of a fantasy in which we supposedly no longer exist, yet somehow we get to watch what unfolds next. Watch, and maybe learn.

OK, so here's the premise (quoted from the book's "Prelude"):

So, let us try a creative experiment: Suppose that the worst has happened. Human extinction is a fait accompli. Not by nuclear calamity, asteroid collision, or anything ruinous enough to also wipe out most everything else, leaving whatever remained in some radically altered, reduced state. Nor by some grim eco-scenario in which we agonizingly fade, dragging many more species with us in the process. Instead, picture a world from which we all suddenly vanished. Tomorrow. Unlikely perhaps, but for the sake of argument, not impossible.

Take your pick, he says: "a *Homo sapiens*-specific virus — natural



or diabolically nano-engineered;" "some misanthropic evil wizard somehow targets that unique 3.9 percent of DNA that makes us human beings and not chimpanzees, or perfects a way to sterilize our sperm;" the Rapture (for the religiously-minded); space aliens haul us away (for the SF-minded). Whatever. Just get rid of the humans and leave their infrastructure in place. It's what happens next that's the subject of Weisman's book. And off we go on a fascinating exploration of humanity's current effect on, and lasting (or transitory) legacy for, Planet Earth, its environments, and its eco-systems.

All the way through the book, I never ceased to be impressed with the breadth and depth of Weisman's research. Years of research went into this fascinating book — but, beyond Weisman's own personal research, he's based his information on decades (and, in some cases, centuries) of research by various experts in a staggering variety of fields: engineers, atmospheric and oceanic scientists, art conservators, botanists, archaeologists, national forest and game park rangers, zoologists, oil refiners, marine biologists, astrophysicists, paleontologists, chemists, physicists, and so on. His "Select" Bibliography runs for 23 pages!

But we're not talking about a dry-as-toast, excruciatingly-footnoted, boredom-filled tome here. No, sir-ee! For me, this book cruised all along the spectrum from fascinating to entertaining to intriguing to thought-provoking to downright frightening. Weisman's narrative carries his readers all over the

world: from an Ecuadoran tributary of the upper Amazon to the "forest primeval" between Poland and Belarus; from the subways and underground networks of New York City to the massive Texas City petrochemical refinery complex near Galveston; from the centuries-old British agricultural research facility at Rothamsted to the locks of the Panama Canal; from the DMZ between North and South Korea to the Rocky Flats nuclear defense facility (just outside Denver); from the hopelessly-irradiated (but wildlife-filled) wilderness around Chernobyl to the incredibly-isolated Kingman Reef (1000 miles SW of Oahu) - and even to the depths of interstellar space.

Weisman provides clear and explicit examples of humanity's effects on the planet — which ones are transitory, which ones will be healed in the course of biologic or geologic time, and which ones are (possibly) indelible. He also reveals Earth's amazing capacity for self-healing, by examining those areas that humans (for one reason or other) have been forced to abandon — such as the Chernobyl site, the Korean DMZ, or the UN-patrolled Green Line between Turkish and Greek Cyprus.



Abandoned city of Pripyat (Towers of Chernobyl in background)

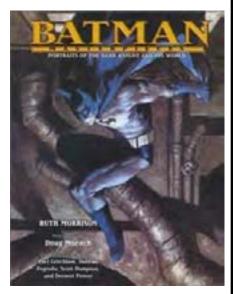
And the stuff you'll learn! I found it mind-boggling (and often quite amusing). Here are some examples:

— Even if it weren't raining, it would take no more than a couple of days for the entire New York City underground (subways and all) to fill with water. (With no people, no power — the pumps that keep the system clear would go off and stay off)

— The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) — in a salt dome formation 2000 feet below southeastern New Mexico —

(continued on page 4)

Batman Masterpieces:
Portraits of the Dark Knight
and His World
by Ruth Morrison
(original story by
Doug Moench)
(Winston-Guptill Pubs., 2002)
a short review by Carl Cipra



Now *here's* an unusual book for me to review: one based on DC Comics and Fleer Collectible Cards! I found my copy of this book on a sale table at Border's, looked through it, and just *had* to add it to my library.

The premise is rather unique. It's based upon a tale created by veteran Batman author Doug Moench: Batman has been murdered and only his archenemy, the Joker, can find out whodunnit! Weird? No doubt! Fascinating? Yes, indeed - especially as the story is illustrated by a series of spectacular paintings originally created for the Fleer Master Series card set. In the current book, the paintings that originally appeared on collectible cards are now reproduced as 8½-by-11-inch, full-page spreads. I'm not a devotee of comics/ graphic novel artists, but I'm sure the names of the artists represented here will be quite familiar to those who are: Carl Critchlow, Duncan Fegredo, Scott Hampton, and Dermot Power. In addition, this book includes reproductions of the paintings originally used for the "chase cards"in the Fleer collectible series - the works of Paolo Parente and Alex Horley

The World Without Us

continued from page 3



Rare White-Naped Cranes in the Korean DMZ

is where the radioactive waste from nuclear weapons and defense research is stored; and the Department of Energy is legally required to dissuade anyone from coming too close for the next 10,000 years. It is planned to have warnings (in 7 languages) posted on 25-foot-high granite monuments (and randomly buried on disks) throughout the site.

- The new 97.6% zinc penny will leach away if tossed in the ocean; but the Statue of Liberty (hammered from copper sheeting not much thicker) would "oxidize with dignity" at the bottom of New York Harbor if glaciers ever return and knock her off her pedestal.
- In about 2450 A.D., the expanding sphere of radio waves bearing signals of the earliest (1950s) episodes of *I Love Lucy* will emerge from the top and bottom

of our galaxy and enter intergalactic space.

- Without Maasai spears to protect them, cattle (which now account for more than half the live weight of the African savanna ecosystem) would quickly disappear, an orgy for binging lions and hyenas. Once the cattle are gone, the amount of food available for other grazers (such as antelopes and zebras and elephants) would more than double. — If people cease to exist tomorrow and we never send another carbon-bearing molecule skyward, the atmospheric changes we've already set in motion will take about 100,000 years to get back to pre-human levels. (In other words, humans have become a veritable force of nature — like plate tectonics or glaciers or volcanoes.)
- Every bit of plastic manufactured in the world for the last 50 years or so (about a billion tons of it) still remains. It's somewhere in the environment.
- If you want to destroy a barn, just cut an 18-inch-square hole in the roof. Then stand back and let nature take its course.

Like I said: fascinating.

The World Without Us is an incredible book, a real tour-de-force. Alan Weisman has come up with a truly innovative method for examining Homo sapiens and its relationship with Planet Earth — message and entertainment all in one.

– as well as for a set of "special fantasy chase cards" featuring paintings by Romas, Ken Kelly, Vincent Di Fate, Joe Devito, Nicholas Jainschigg, and James Warhola (and even *I* have heard of *them!*) – illustrators who don't normally do Batman-related art.

For me, it's the artwork that made the sale – the paintings are mind-blowingly cool. I'd be really hard-pressed to name *a* favorite from among the 94 full-page illustrations. A couple of my favorites are by Scott Hampton: the close-up of the face of a leering Joker, wearing his Arkham Asylum togs, and Batman and Robin (Dick Grayson) swinging side-by-side across the face of the full moon. Another one of my favorites is by Nicholas Jainschigg: Batman perched on one of the decorative metal-eagle "gargoyles" atop the Chrys-

ler Building. A couple of the paintings (both by Dermot Powers) are even homoerotic: in one, a *very* buff Batman (wearing only cowl and loincloth, sort of a "Chippendale-zombie") is serving cocktails to Poison Ivy; and in the other, the knife-wielding serial killer Mr. Zsasz (wearing only a loincloth, his body scored by his "tally scars") stands over the slumped body of Batman.

Ah, heck! *All* the illustrations are incredible! Find a copy and look at 'em yourself! Odds are good you won't be able to resist owning a copy, too!

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The World Tomorrow:
Scenarios of
Global Catastrophe
by Yannick Monget
(trans. by Nicholas Elliot)
(Abrams Image, 2007)
reviewed by Carl Cipra

This book is an interesting companion-piece to *The World Without Us* (see review on page 3). Like the Weisman book, this book explores Mankind's impact on the climates and ecologies of Planet Earth. However, Yannick Monget explores only one aspect of that impact: global warming. And *The World Tomorrow* is rather more polemical than *The World Without Us*. In other words, Monget is more obvious about the fact that he has "an axe to grind." (The final chapter — "The Human Revolution" — and the Conclusion that tend to be the most preachy.)

Don't get me wrong, though; The World Tomorrow is well-written and well-researched. Monget (quite literally) presents pictures of possible futures that "are literal translations of various scenarios elaborated by researchers with, among other organizations, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)." The textual part of the book is surprisingly short; but it packs a lot of information into its brief chapters. There's also a modest (but impressive) Bibliography, listing various books, official statements and reports, periodicals, and web sites dealing with global warming and related topics.

As with Weisman's book, Monget provides some fascinating information about just what's going on with Planet Earth, from a geophysical standpoint. Here are a couple of items that I found particularly eye-opening:

— It's not the melting of the polar icecaps that will be the biggest contributor to rising sea levels. Global warming results in warmer oceans and thus expands their volume. (Warm water occupies more space than cold water.) The melting of *land* glaciers — in the Himalayas, the Alps, the Rockies, etc. — will have a greater impact on rising sea



levels than the melting of the polar ice caps.

— Global warming could (as incredible as it sounds) contribute to the onset of a new Ice Age. We all know the Gulf Stream keeps parts of the Northern Hemisphere "warmer" by moving tropical water along the shores of North America to the coasts of Spain, France, Britain, and Norway. When the polar ice caps melt, the salinity of the North Atlantic is reduced. (Glacial ice is made of salt-free water.) This, in turn, slows the sinking of polar water to the bottom of the sea. (This sinking polar water powers the motion to the Gulf Stream.) This modification of oceanic currents could potentially "shut down" the Gulf Stream. Without the Gulf Stream, Europe faces the potential of a serious drop in temperatures. (For example, Paris is farther north than Montreal; it's the Gulf Stream that helps give Paris its more temperate climate.) And it seems that a "slowing of the Gulf Stream has already been recorded."

Having said that, does Monget just stand on his soap box, wave a red flag, and scream that the end is near? No, he doesn't. Yes, he does say that the scenarios depicted in his book "are far from science-fiction fantasies"; but he also offers the following *caveat*:

Beware: This book makes no claim to predict the future. It only proposes "potential" futures. It is not important to know exactly which changes will take place (no one can say specifically), but to understand that a climate change will take place and that, no matter what it is, it will be damaging to our society's social, political, and economic balance.

OK, so *The World Tomorrow* "proposes 'potential' futures" — but it's the *way* Monget goes about it that sold me on this book. You all know the old saying: "A picture is worth a thousand words." Well, so does Monget; and he uses this knowledge to good effect. This book is *filled* with stunning, full-color, full-page depictions of the "what if" scenarios. I'm not sure what process Monget used to create them (it's never explained), but they appear to be altered photo-images of some sort. Whatever. I think they're stunning.

Here are a few of the more striking images:

- Waterspouts and tornadic funnels devastate downtown Singapore.
- —Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament rise from the waters of the Atlantic, as much of the Thames Basin is permanently flooded.
- Storm waves crash against the pylons of Seattle's Space Needle.
- The skyscrapers of New York City are buried several-stories-deep in glacial snow and ice. (Shades of the movie *The Day After Tomorrow!*)
- The U.S. Capitol Building is covered with dense vegetation, as a tropical anteater ambles along in the foreground. (Shades of the movie *Logan's Run*!)
- Waves crash on a tropical beach around the Eiffel Tower (*avec* palm trees and iguana).
- Mount Rushmore is partially buried in shifting desert sands.

Granted, *The World Tomorrow* isn't intended to be a work of science-fiction; but the "what if" scenarios — as well as the images presented — are certainly part and parcel of everyone's science-fictional sensibilities. (Check out Kim Stanley Robinson's latest "ecothriller" trilogy for a similar SF treatment: *Forty Signs of Rain, Fifty Degrees Below*, and *Sixty Days and Counting*.)

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It's almost here!!
Don't miss out on
all the fun!!
Join now!!
(See Con Calendar
on page 6
for details.)

INFORMATIONABOUTLAMBDASCI-FI:DCAREAGAYLAXIANS

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 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 the **Sunday**, **September 9th**, at James Crutchfield's apartment (1414 17th St. NW, #413). The business meeting will begin at 1:30 PM; and the social meeting will begin at 2:00 PM. Please bring some munchies or soft drinks, if you can. 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

October 5-8, 2007 **GAYLAXICON 2007**. Sheraton Midtown Atlanta at Colony Square (Atlanta, GA). Publisher GoH: Steph Pagel; Author GoH: TBA. Membership: \$60 after Labor Day 2007; memberships available online via PayPal. Website:http://gaylaxicon2007.org/

October 12 - 14, 2007 **CAPCLAVE 007** ("Dodo Noir, Neo-Pulp"). Hilton Silver Spring (Silver Spring, MD). Author GoH Jeffrey Ford; Editor GoH: Ellen DatlowMembership: \$50 from 7/1 to 9/30/07. Make checks payable to "Capclave 2007" and send to: Capclave 2007 c/o Barry Newton, PO Box 153, Sandy Spring, MD 20860-0153.

Website: http://www.capclave.org

Nov. 23-26, 2007 DARKOVER GRAND COUNCIL MEETING. Holiday Inn Select Baltimore-North (Timonium, MD). "Avery GLBT-friendly con." Guest of Honor: Esther Friesner; Artist GoH: TBA; Special Guest: Katherine Kurtz. Membership: \$45 until 11/1/2007; \$50 thereafter & at the door. Make checks payable to "Armida Council" and send to: Armida Council, PO Box 7203, Silver Spring, MD 20907 Website: www.darkovercon.com Info at: jaelle@darkovercon.com

Nov. 16-18, 2007**PHILCON 2007**. Sheraton Philadelphia Center City Hotel (Phila., PA). Principal Speaker: Eric Flint; Artist GoH: Sue Dawe; Costuming Special Guest: Kevin Roche. Membership: \$45 until 10/31/2007; \$50 after that & at the door. Download PDF membership from their website. WWW.PHILCON.ORG e-mail: registration2007@philcon.org

August 6-10, 2008 DENVENTION3 (The 66th WorldCon). Colorado Convention Center & nearby hotels (Denver, CO). Guest of Honor: Lois McMaster Bujold; Artist GoH: Rick Sternback. \$130 thru 05/31/2007 (will go UP after that!). Make checks payable to "Denvention 3" and send to: Denvention 3, PO Box 1349, Denver, CO 80201

October 10-13, 2008 **GAYLAXICON 2008**. Hotel: to be announced (Washington DC area). Membership: \$60 at present. Guest of Honor: Geoff Ryman. Artist Guest of Honor: Alicia Austin.

