



Lambda Sci-Fi DC Area Gaylaxians



PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044



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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 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 (a combined November/December meeting) will be held on December 4th.

Here are the details on the next couple of discussion meetings:

Dec. 4th (combined Nov./Dec. meeting) - *The Host*, by Stephenie Meyer; moderator: Jack.

Jan. 28th (back to the regular 4th Thursday schedule) - *Havemercy*, by Jaida Jones & Danielle Bennett; moderator: Rob.

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Osamu Tezuka: God of Manga, Father of Anime

info passed along by Wayne 1

Apparently in recognition of the recent release of the new *Astro Boy* animated feature, the Freer Gallery of Art is presenting a retrospective of the remarkable works of Astro Boy's creator, Osamu Tezuka. Osamu Tezuka (1928-1989) was perhaps the most influential artist in the mediums of *manga* (comic books) and *anime* (animated features); he created hundreds of *manga* and dozens of animated films and television episodes.

Here's what you can see this month at the Freer's Meyer Auditorium:

Nov. 13 (Friday, 7 PM)

Introducing *Astro Boy* - *Astro Boy* (known as "Mighty Atom" in Japan) is one of Tezuka's most iconic and enduring creations. To kick off the retrospective, author and Tezuka expert



Frederik Schodt (*The Astro Boy Essays*) presents and discusses three *Astro Boy* episodes.

Nov. 14 (Saturday, 2 PM)

The Film is Alive: Osamu Tezuka Filmography (1990) - This 42-minute documentary provides an introduction to Tezuka's work and features live footage of the artist himself. The screening is followed by a panel discussion with authors Frederik Schodt (*The Astro Boy Essays*), Helen McCarthy (*The Art of Osamu Tezuka: God of Manga*), and Natsu Onoda Power (*Good of Comics: Osamu Tezuka*).

Nov. 15 (Sunday, 2 PM)

Marine Express (1979) - This 91-minute tale of skullduggery and smuggling on an undersea train features appearances by nearly all of Tezuka's most famous characters. In person: Frederik Schodt and Helen McCarthy.

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November LSF Meeting

The next LSF meeting will be held on the **Sunday, November 8th**. The meeting will be held at James Crutchfield's apartment (1414 17th St. NW, #413), near Dupont Circle. The business meeting will begin (as usual) 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!

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How LSF Was Founded
(With a Nod to James Crutchfield)
 by Peter Knapp



The genesis of Lambda Sci-Fi can dates back to Noreascon 3, the 1989 World Science Fiction Convention.

During the convention, the Gaylactic Network held a gay fandom party and circulated a sign-up sheet for people interested in meeting and creating local gay sci-fi clubs. After the con, those who filled out the sign-up sheet received a letter with contact information for other local people who had also filled out the sign-up sheet. In April of 1990, Loree and Marcelle Cook-Daniels held the first LSF meeting at their house in Takoma Park, MD. Nine founding members came to that first meeting and organized the club: Barrett Brick, Carl Cipra, Loree Cook-Daniels, Marcelle Cook-Daniels, Bruce Garrett, Tom Hertz, Peter Knapp, Al Weiner, and James Williams.

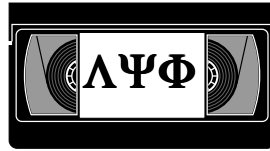
The next three meetings were held in Silver Spring, MD at Al Weiner's house. While a great a space to hold meetings, Al's house was not easily accessible by Metro, as it was so far out from the Washington, DC. Carl Cipra held the fifth meeting at his condo near Catholic University (walking distance from the Metro), and twenty five people showed up and stuffed into his small living room. The club needed to find a larger space near the Metro.

James Crutchfield, who joined the club at the August 1990 meeting, agreed to host future meetings at his place in the Dupont Circle area. Through his generosity over the years, hundreds of fans of science fiction, fantasy, and horror have attended LSF meetings in his large living room. The club has thrived in large part due to James's unwavering support over the last 19 years.

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The October LSF Meeting and Video Party
 a short report from Carl



Well, it all started with lots of LSFers traveling up to Minneapolis over the Columbus Day Weekend to attend Gaylaxicon 2009 (Oct. 9-11). And so the October LSF meeting was postponed (from its regular second-Sunday-of-the-month date) until Saturday, October 24th – and linked with a “Halloween-themed” potluck video party.

As it turned out, about a dozen or so folks showed up on that rainy Saturday. The LSF meeting itself was rather perfunctory, lasting less than a half-hour – and everyone enjoyed the rest of the day and evening eating great food (including Julian's yummy pot roast and Tanya's tasty pulled pork – and LOTS of desserts!) and watching F&SF videos. We started off the event with Alfred Hitchcock's classic thriller, *Psycho* (1960, based on the Robert Bloch novel).



Then the party split into two venues – one upstairs and one downstairs – to give attendees a choice of videos to enjoy. On the downstairs screen were *The Thing* (1951, produced by Howard Hawks) and the first two Season 1 episodes of *True Blood* (the HBO series). The upstairs screen featured YA-type fare: *The Last Starfighter* (1984) and *Something Wicked This Way Comes* (1983, screenplay by Ray Bradbury, based on his novel). Good times – and good food! – from beginning to end! If you missed out on the fun *this* time, be on the lookout for LSF's *next* potluck video party! (As they say at the end of *The Thing*: “Watch the skies! Keep watching the skies!”)

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Osamu Tezuka Retrospective

continued from page 1

Nov. 20 (Friday, 7 PM)

Prime Rose (1983) – Demonic intervention throws a Japanese city and an American city into conflict in Tetsu Dezaki's 90-minute film featuring a time-traveling female warrior.

Nov. 22 (Sunday, 2 PM)

Tezuka's Short Films – This remarkable showcase of shorts made between 1962 and 1987 reveals Tezuka's energy, originality, and clarity of vision as he employs music and imagery to render dialogue unnecessary. These films show Tezuka the art house animator at his inventive best.



basis. Doors to the Meyer Auditorium open approximately 30 minutes before each show time.

For full descriptions and updates, visit:

www.asia.si.edu/events/films.asp

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The Freer Gallery of Art no longer requires tickets for films. Seating is available on a first-come, first-served

Hand of Isis
by Jo Graham
(Orbit Books, 2009)
a short review by Carl

Some months ago, I reviewed *Black Ships*, the marvelous first novel by up-and-coming author Jo Graham. And now her second book – *Hand of Isis* – has hit the stands. Suffice it to say that I rushed right out and bought a copy – and enjoyed it!

Once again, Graham has written a novel of the historical/fantasy variety. This time, however, the novel is set in actual historical times rather than being a “historical re-creation” of Bronze Age legends. *Hand of Isis* tells the story of Cleopatra – from her youth during the turbulent reign of her father, Pharaoh Ptolemy Auletes, to her rise to power and her relationships with both Julius Caesar and Marcus Antonius, and on to her tragic death (and beyond). Although there are definite links to the 1960 blockbuster film *Cleopatra* (starring Elizabeth Taylor, Rex Harrison, and Richard Burton) and to the Shakespearean plays, Graham has once again added some unique and fascinating twists of her own to the tale.

The story is told from the viewpoint of Charmian, one of Cleopatra’s “handmaidens.” Ah, but here comes the first kicker: Charmian and Iras (the other “handmaiden”) are actually Cleopatra’s half-sisters, illegitimate daughters of Pharaoh by a Thracian slave and a Nubian slave. And, as trusted members of the Royal House, Charmian and Iras eventually come to fulfill roles that are rather more significant than merely attending to the personal needs of their royal half-sister. Just as Queen Cleopatra comes to be recognized as the personification of the Goddess Isis (and “the Hand of Isis” on Earth), so do Charmian and Iras become Cleopatra’s “hands” (her “executive officers,” as it were). When Cleopatra ascends the Throne of Egypt, Charmian is given control of the Royal Palace and all its workings, and Iras becomes Cleopatra’s Royal Treasurer. Together, they work to maintain peace and prosperity for Egypt in a world increas-



ingly disrupted by the intrusion of Rome into the Eastern Mediterranean area.

I found one particular aspect of Charmian’s life to be truly fascinating: Ms. Graham has depicted Charmian as having a brief love affair with Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa (an actual historical character). They meet when the young Agrippa comes to Egypt as a staff officer in the entourage of Julius Caesar. For various reasons, the two young lovers are prevented from developing an ongoing relationship; and this becomes particularly poignant when, many years later, Agrippa eventually leads the Roman forces that decisively defeat the armies of Cleopatra and Marcus Antonius at the Battle of Pharsalus.

LGBT content plays a larger role than in Graham’s previous novel, *Black Ships*. In *Hand of Isis*, Dion is an up-and-coming scholar in the Great Library and a member of the Jewish Diaspora in Alexandria. He’s also a close personal friend of Charmian, as well as the long-time lover of Charmian’s husband, Emrys (a Gaul, a member of Caesar’s Guard). The relationship between these three people is, I think, handled rather endearingly. Graham herself has said: “I felt that Ashterah [the heroic young cross-dressing sacred prostitute] got a bad deal in *Black Ships*, and so it was good to give Dion room to grow and have an interesting life.”

The Fantasy angle is also rather more pronounced in this novel. It begins right as the novel opens, with the death of Charmian and her spirit’s appearance for judgment before Isis and Serapis in the Hall of Amenti. There are also lots of hints about reincarnation, with brief glimpses of the previous and subsequent lives of some of the characters. Of particular interest are indications that Charmian and other characters in *Hand of Isis* were characters (in previous incarnations) in the story of the Aeneid (as retold in *Black Ships*) AND will also be characters (also in previous incarnations) in Graham’s next novel, *Stealing Fire*. One of the supernatural characters in *Hand of Isis*, a minor winged deity named Mikhael (seemingly an earlier form of Michael the Archangel) also previously made an appearance in *Black Ships*.

As in *Black Ships*, Graham once again truly gives her readers a taste of life in another age. This time, however, rather than providing an historical veracity to myth and legend, she provides glimpses of what life might have been like in late Ptolemaic Egypt. All this and a fascinating story too!

I’m *really* looking forward to Graham’s next novel, *Stealing Fire*. It will apparently recount the story of Alexander the Great, told from the viewpoint of one of his Companions. And if you haven’t read either *Black Ships* or *Hand of Isis*, I highly recommend that you rush right out and read one (or both!) of them. I’m pretty darn sure you’ll be glad you did.

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**I came into this world and
everyone was laughing
as I was crying.
I leave the world and
everyone is crying
and I am laughing.**

-- Kabir --

quoted in
*If Ignorance Is Bliss, Why Aren't There
More Happy People?*
by John Lloyd & John Mitchinson
(Harmony Books, 2008)

****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 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. But the next Lambda Sci-Fi meeting will be held on the **Sunday, November 8th**, at James Crutchfield's apartment (1414 17th St. NW, #413), near Dupont Circle. 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



November 20-22, 2009 **PHILCON 2009**. The Crowne Plaza Hotel (Cherry Hill, NJ). Principal Speaker: Catherine Asaro; Artist GoH: Frank Wu; Special Guest: L.A. Banks. Membership: \$60 as of Nov. 1st and at the door. "If you are able to, please use online registration, even if you're mailing in a check. Just select 'Other Payment Options,' then click on 'Pay by Check' when you've completed the form." Website: <http://2009.philcon.org>

November 27-29, 2009 **DARKOVER GRAND COUNCIL MEETING XXXII**. The Crowne Plaza Baltimore (Timonium, MD). GoHs: Emma Bull and Will Shetterly; Special Guest: Katherine Kurtz; Musical GoH: Clam Chowder. Membership: \$50 after Nov. 1st and at the door. Make checks payable to "Armida Council" and send to: Armida Council, PO Box 7203, Silver Spring MD 20907 Website: <http://www.darkover.org>

February 12-14, 2010 **FARPOINT** ("Baltimore's Fandom Family Reunion"). Crowne Plaza Baltimore North (Timonium, MD). Guest: Mira Furlan ("Rousseau" from *Lost*; "DeLenn" from *Babylon 5*); and more to be announced! Pre-registration membership for the weekend: \$70. (Daily rates available.) Register on-line at: www.farpointcon.com -- or make your check payable to "Farpoint Enterprises" and send registration info to: Farpoint Enterprises, Inc., 11708 Troy Ct., Waldorf, MD 20601. Website: www.farpointcon.com E-mail: trekcontact@comcast.net

August 5-8, 2010 **RECONSTRUCTION** (NASFiC 2010). Raleigh Convention Center; Raleigh Marriott City Center; Sheraton Raleigh Hotel (Raleigh, NC). GoH: Eric Flint; AGoH: Brad Foster. Membership: currently \$95 (will go up!). Make checks payable to "ReConStructure" and send to: ReConStructure, PO Box 31706, Raleigh, NC 27622 Website: www.reconstructionsf.org

October 29-31, 2010 **GAYLAXICON 2010**. Marriott Chateau Champlain (Montreal, QC, Canada). More details as they become available. Website: www.gaylaxicon2010.org

Aug. 17-21, 2011 **RENOVATION** (69th World Science Fiction Convention). (Reno, Nevada). Guests of Honor: Ellen Asher, Charles N. Brown, Tim Powers, Boris Vallejo. More details as they become available. Website: www.renovationsf.org Membership queries: memberships@renovationsf.org

