



Lambda Sci-Fi DC Area Gaylaxians

PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044

(202) 232-3141 - Issue #250 - January 2011

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LSF New Year's Eve Video Potluck Party announced by Peter Knapp

Come celebrate New Year's Eve (and a blue moon) with Lambda Sci-Fi at Rob and Peter's home in DC. This annual event will give us a chance to both recover from the hectic holiday season and to party some more in anticipation of the New Year. Here are the details on how to join in on the fun!

Where: The home of Rob & Peter: 1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC 20009. For directions, see:

<http://www.lambdasf.org/lsf/club/PeterRob.html>

Date: Thurs., Dec. 31, 2009

Time: The doors will open at 6:00 PM. The potluck dinner and the videos will begin in the 7:00 – 7:30 PM range. We'll toast in the New Year with champagne, sparkling wine, and/or sparkling cider.

What to Bring: Bring your favorite genre Blu-rays, DVDs, and/or digital AVI files on a USB drive (science fiction, fantasy, horror). Attendees will vote on which movies will be shown at the party. (There will be different concurrent "tracks.")

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Annual LSF Book (et al) Exchange at Jan. 9th Meeting



As promised in last month's newsletter, here's a short reminder about Lambda Sci-Fi's *twenty-first* annual book (*et al*) exchange, which will occur at the upcoming Jan. 9th meeting! All LSF members — and visitors, guests, attendees, etc. — are invited to participate in this "blind exchange."

In case you've never participated in one of these before (or in case you've forgotten), here's how it works:

(1) Go out and purchase a copy of your "favorite" science fiction, fantasy, or horror book. (**NOTE:** Over the years, LSF has expanded the concept of "book" to include comics, videotapes, "books on tape," etc. If you want — or if you're feeling particularly wealthy — you can even make it *several* favorite books or whatever.)

(2) Insert a piece of paper (or a bookmark) with your name on it. (That's so whoever eventually ends up with the item will know who it's from and will get to know a little more about you — at least to know what one of your "favorites" is.)

(3) Wrap up the exchange item, but don't put any identifying marks or

January LSF Meeting

The next LSF meeting will be held on Sunday, **January 9th**. 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. Remember: **This meeting will feature the annual LSF Book Exchange (see article to the left).** Please also bring some munchies or soft drinks, if you can. See you there!

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anything on the wrapped package to say who it's from. (That's to make sure it's a "blind" exchange — *i.e.* no one is supposed to know who it's from at first. And, by the way, all of that leftover Holiday wrapping paper should come in handy here!)

(4) At the meeting, add your wrapped exchange item to the pile with all the others; and you'll be assigned a number. (Only one exchange item — *i.e.* one package — per person, please!)

(5) When your number is called, you pick one of the packages from the pile. (And when you open it up, you'll find out who it's from.) See how easy?

I can hardly wait to see what shows up *this* year!

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WHAT'S INSIDE?

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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 *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 meeting will be held on January 27th.

Here are the details for the next several book discussions:

Jan. 27th - *The Steel Remains*, by Richard K. Morgan; moderator: Rob.

Feb. 24th - *The Book of Lost Things*, by John Connolly; moderator: Teresa.

March 24th - *Galileo's Dream*, by Kim Stanley Robinson; moderator: Claire.

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LSF New Year's Eve Party

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It's a potluck meal, so bring along something scrumptious to eat. Feel free to bring some appetizers (vegies, chips, etc.), a main course item (enough to serve at least 4-5 people), dessert (of course!), and/or nonalcoholic drinks (both regular and diet). For the New Year's toast only, it's okay to indulge. So bring some sparkling wine or sparkling cider (or champagne, if you're feeling generous) to toast the New Year. The hosts request that no one drink alcohol during the party other than at midnight.

For more information, call 202-483-6369 or send email to:

Peter.P.Knapp@gmail.com

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In Praise (Mostly) of Recent Anthologies [Part 2]

short reviews by Carl

Stories: All-New Tales
edited by Neil Gaiman and
Al Sarrantonio

(Wm. Morrow/HarperCollins, 2010)

I have some reservations about this anthology. Oh, don't get me wrong: it's packed full of good stuff. It's just that these probably "aren't the droids you're looking for" if you want an anthology packed full of excellent F&SF. Despite the fact that Gaiman and Sarrantonio are the editors – and despite the fact that you'll find it on the F&SF shelves in your local bookstore – and despite the fact that the witty Tom Gauld illustration on the cover mis-leads you to believe there's a "Lovecraftian" element to it – it just ain't what I'd call an F&SF anthology. True, there are a number of really good Fantasy or Science Fiction stories in it – some Horror, too; but there are also a lot of what I'd consider non-F&SF stories in there. If you're in a really generous mood, I guess you could class most of the stories in here as varieties of Spec-Lit (*i.e.* "speculative literature"). On the flyleaf, *Stories* is referred to as "a groundbreaking anthology that reinvigorates, expands, and redefines the limits of imaginative fiction." OK...

As I said, however, this anthology contains a huge helping (428 pages, in hardback) of very good stories. Like the *Warriors* anthology, the editors of *Stories* didn't want to restrict this anthology to any particular genre. Neil Gaiman says in his Introduction ("Just Four Words"): "...I realised that I was not alone in finding myself increasingly frustrated with the boundaries of genre: the idea that categories which existed only to guide people around bookshops now seemed to be dictating the kind of stories that were being written." And so, like *Warriors*, *Stories* was planned as a mixture. That becomes obvious just by looking over the authors listed in the table of contents. It's almost like a *Who's Who* listing; among others, it includes Neil Gaiman, Joyce Carol Oates, Richard Adams, Joe Lansdale, Walter Mosley, Jodi Picoult, Peter Straub, Lawrence

Block, Jeffrey Ford, Chuck Palahniuk, Diana Wynne Jones, Gene Wolfe, Jonathan Carroll, Tim Powers, Michael Moorcock, Jeffery Deaver, and Elizabeth Hand. If some of those names don't ring a bell for you, then it's probably because you don't regularly stray over into the Mystery or Fiction or Literature aisles of your local bookstore. (Go ahead – look 'em up. I'll wait here until you're done.)

Here are just a few of my favorites. Roddy Doyle starts off with a surprising little story about a seemingly average Dubliner (bank employee, middle class, wife and two kids) who suddenly discovers he has developed an obsessive taste for "Blood". Michael Marshall Smith tells the story of a high-priced assassin who's been hired to kill a certain "jolly old gentleman" just before the Holiday Season ("Unbelief"). Mystery-thriller writer Lawrence Block has penned a really creepy tale about a serial killer with an unusual "Catch and Release" fixation. Twists and turns abound in Jeffery Deaver's "The Therapist", in which "negative memes" can infect humans in moments of stress. The very next story – Al Sarrantonio's "The Cult of the Nose" – similarly takes the reader on a twisty-turny ride to a surprising ending.

My two absolute favorites, however, are by Neil Gaiman and Michael Moorcock. "The Truth Is a Cave in the Black Mountains" is the kind of lyrical Gaiman-esque Fantasy tale we've all come to love. It's the story of a mysterious half-human little man and a Scottish Border reaver as they search for a cave of Fairy Gold that can be used to finance the return of the Stuart Dynasty. As if the possibility of "a falling out" over the potential treasure trove weren't enough (think, for instance, of the 1948 film *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*), legend has it that the cave itself exacts a magical price from all who enter it. Gotta love it! In contrast, Moorcock's "Stories" is only tangentially F&SF – but it really fascinated me. It's pretty much a straightforward memory-narrative about the lives of a circle of friends and acquaintances involved in writing for and publishing *Mysterious* magazine. As far as I can tell, it's also a fictionalized ac-

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Anthologies [Part 2]

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count of the SF New Wave movement of the 1960s (based around Moorcock's stint as editor of *New Worlds* magazine). I was pleasantly surprised to see the inclusion of Gay content in the story. Perhaps this reflects the involvement of the late Thomas Disch in the New Wave movement?

What's my overall impression of *Stories*? Hmm... If you prefer stories of a more "conventional" F&SF flavor, then you should probably give this anthology a miss. But if you're willing to "expand your horizons a bit," then I think you'll find lots to like here.

Songs of Love & Death: All-Original Tales of Star-crossed Love edited by **George R.R. Martin** and **Gardner Dozois** (Gallery Books, 2010)

OK, these guys are on a roll: this is the same editorial duo who brought us the anthology *Warriors* (reviewed in the Dec. newsletter). It's another anthology of all-new, previously-unpublished stories. And, once again, it's a heckuva line-up of big-name authors, including: Jim Butcher, Cecelia Holland, Melinda Snodgrass, Robin Hobb, Lisa Tuttle, Neil Gaiman, Jacqueline Carey, Tanith Lee, Peter Beagle, and Diana Gabaldon.

But this time I guess Martin and Dozois decided to flip the coin to view the other side of life—from "warriors" to "lovers." Oh, and there's another big difference: unlike *Warriors*, every story in *Songs of Love & Death* is clearly and firmly set within the F&SF genre. There's romantic fantasy, science fiction, space opera, paranormal romance, dark fantasy, and plain-old-plain-old Fantasy—but it's all F&SF of one type or another. (It's also not quite as big as *Warriors*: 17 stories in a 468-page hardback.)

From this short description (and the listing of authors above), you can pretty much guess that (as they say in the Introduction) *Songs of Love & Death* is "a cross-genre anthology... which explores the borderlands of fantasy and romance, stories from the heart

and about the heart, tales of endangered love played out against every kind of setting..." And it's one heckuva collection: all winners, as far as I'm concerned.

It's quite a mixed bag of F&SF. Here are a few examples:

Jim Butcher's "Love Hurts" is a new story in his "Harry Dresden (wizard for hire)" series. In this adventure, Dresden faces an insidious threat when the vampiric White Court dabbles in emotional manipulation. "The Marrying Maid"—by historical romance author Jo Beverley—is set in 18th Century England. Young Rob Loxleigh, son and heir to Viscount Loxleigh, is a pawn in the age-old feud between Oberon and Titania, King and Queen of Fairies; he must find his "one true love" or risk the destruction of his entire family. Melissa Snodgrass's contribution to the anthology ("The Wayfarer's Advice") is a fascinating space opera story, wherein a rogue spaceship captain is unexpectedly reunited with his former lover, who is now the Infanta, heiress to the Imperial Throne of the Solar League. Marjorie Liu's "After the Blood" is set in a creepy post-apocalyptic world; a "witch" and a "vampire" fall in love while trying to save their neighbors from zombie-like predators. And there's a real treat for fans of Jacqueline Carey's "Kushiel" novels. "You, and You Alone" is a brand new story that reveals early, pivotal events in the life of Anafiel Delaunay, when he fell in love with Prince Rolande, heir to the throne of Terre D'Ange. (Yes, significant gay content!) Tanith Lee's "Under/Above the Water" is an intricate tale of true love found—and lost—across time. The final story in the anthology—Diana Gabaldon's "A Leaf on the Wind of All Hallows"—is a new story for her popular "Outlander" series. It's the tragic tale of a WWII RAF pilot who's catapulted back to 18th Century Scotland—and it apparently provides information relevant to *An Echo in the Bone* (one of her "Outlander" novels).

If you like your F&SF tinged with romance and tales of "star-crossed lovers," then I'm pretty sure you'll find lots to like about *Songs of Love & Death*.

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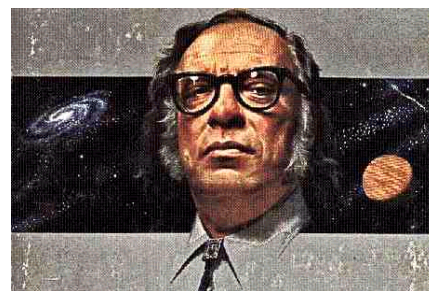
Everyone in the JLA wishes everyone in LSF a Happy New Year!!!



From Ye Olde Editor

Due to conflicts with vacation time, Ye Olde Editor needed to get this issue of the newsletter to print ASAP. That's why the minutes of the Dec. 12th LSF meeting are *not* included in this issue. Rest assured that I will print them in the *February* newsletter.

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In a healthy society, dissent is free and can be endured. If you think that a sex-ridden society, or a permissive society, or a think-as-you-please society is not healthy, you have but to try the kind of society in which unbridled repression sees to it that you think, write, say, and do only what some dominating force says you may, and you will find out what an unhealthy society really is.

-- Isaac Asimov --

quoted in *Science Fictionisms*,
compiled by William Rotsler
(Gibbs-Smith, Publisher - 1995)

****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. The next Lambda Sci-Fi meeting will be held on **Sunday, January 9th**, 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. 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. 18-20, 2011 **FARPOINT 2011**. Crowne Plaza Baltimore (Timonium, MD). Guests: John ("Dr. Phlox," *Enterprise*) Billingsley, Bonita ("Gen. Diane Beckman," *Chuck*) Friedricy, more TBA. Pre-registration for weekend: \$80 (daily rates available). Make checks payable to "Farpoint Enterprises" and send to: Farpoint Enterprises, Inc., 11708 Troy Ct., Waldorf, MD 20601
Website: www.farpointcon.com E-mail: trekcontact@comcast.net

April 8-10, 2011 **RAVENCON 2011**. Holiday Inn Kroger Center (Richmond, VA). Author GoH: John Ringo; Artist GoH: Kurt Miller. Membership: \$35 from 1/1/2011 to 4/1/2011; \$40 at the door (daily rates available). Download registration forms from their website; make checks payable to "Ravencon" and send to: Ravencon PO Box 36420, Richmond, VA 23235.
Website: www.ravencon.com

May 13-15, 2011 **GAYLAXICON 2011** (held in conjunction with OutlantaCon 2011). Holiday Inn Select Atlanta-Perimeter (Dunwoody, GA). Special Media Guest: Melissa Carter; Artist GoH: Steve Scott. Membership: \$45 thru 1/31/2011 (purchased on-line thru their website).
Website: www.outlantacon.org Information: info@outlantacon.org

May 27-30, 2011 **BALTICON 45**. Marriott's Hunt Valley Inn (Baltimore, MD). GoH: Ben Bova; Artist GoH: Vincent DiFate. Membership: \$55 until 4/30/2011; \$60 after that and at the door. Make checks payable to "Balticon 45" and send to: Balticon 45 Registration, PO Box 686, Baltimore, MD 21203-0686. (Registration forms available on-line.)
Website: www.balticon.org Information: balticoninfo@balticon.org

May 27-29, 2011 **TIMEGATE** ("The Home of Doctor Who and Stargate Fandom in Atlanta!"). Holiday Inn Select (Atlanta, GA). Guests Sophie Aldred ("Ace," from the era of the 7th Doctor); Ben Aaronovitch (Dr. Who script writer); Melissa Scott (author); and more. Membership: \$35 to 5/1/2011; \$45 at the door. Make checks payable to "TimeGate" and send to: TimeGate, PO Box 500565, Atlanta, GA 31150. Or purchase membership on-line at: www.timegatecon.org/memb/htm
Website: www.timegatecon.org

Aug. 17-21, 2011 **RENOVATION** (69th World Science Fiction Convention). Reno-Sparks Convention Center (Reno, Nevada). Guests of Honor: Ellen Asher, Charles N. Brown, Tim Powers, Boris Vallejo. Membership: currently \$160 (will go up!).
Website: www.renovationsf.org Membership queries: memberships@renovationsf.org

