

**** 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. However, the next Lambda Sci-Fi meeting will be held on **Sunday, April 10th**, at Peter and Rob's home (1425 "S" St., NW), 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

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

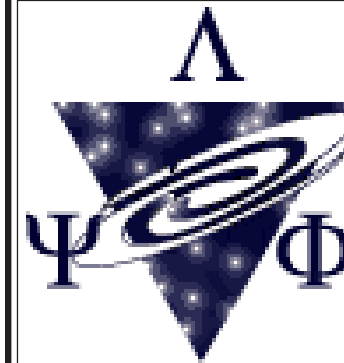
May 13-15, 2011 **GAYLAXICON 2011** (held in conjunction with OutlantaCon 2011). Holiday Inn Select Atlanta-Perimeter (Dunwoody, GA). Special Media Guests: Amber Benson & Melissa Carter; Artist GoH: Steve Scott. Membership: \$50 (purchased on-line thru their website). Website: www.outlantacon.org Information: info@outlantacon.org

May 27-30, 2011 **BALTICON 45**. Marriott's Hunt Valley Inn (Baltimore, MD). GoH: Ben Bova; Artist GoH: Vincent DiFate; Special GoH: Steve Geppi. 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

Oct. 14-16, 2011 **CAPCLAVE 2011**. Hilton Washington DC/North Gaithersburg (Gaithersburg, MD). Guests of Honor: Carrie Vaughn & Catherynne Valente. Membership: \$45 thru June; \$55 July thru September; \$60 thereafter. Make checks payable to "Capclave" and send to: Capclave 2011, PO Box 53, Ashton, MD 20861. Register online at: www.capclave.org Website: www.capclave.org Info at: info@capclave.org



**lambda Sci-fi
DC Area Gaylaxians**

PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044

(202) 232-3141 - Issue #253 - April 2011

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 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 April 28th.

Here are the details for the next several book discussions:

April 28th - *The Hundred Thousand Kingdoms*, by N.K. Jemisin; moderator: Jamaki.

May 19th (*NOTE: changed to third Thursday for May!*) - *Triton* (also retitled as *Trouble on Triton*), by Samuel R. Delany; moderator: Tod.

June 23rd - *The Gaslight Dogs*, by Karin Lowachee; moderator: Carl. Λ Ψ Φ



WHAT'S INSIDE?

Diana Wynne Jones (obituary - pg. 2); **To John Connolly...And Beyond!** (book review - pg. 2); *Up Jim River* (book review - pg.3); **About Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians and Con Calendar** (pg. 4)

**Gaylaxicon 2011
Is Next Month!**

an invitation from
Scott Tatum, Con Chair

We are excitedly preparing for your visit to see us on May 13-15 at Gaylaxicon/Outlantacon 2011. If you have not yet been to either of these great conventions, I strongly suggest you make your arrangements now to go.

This will be the 19th Gaylaxicon and the 3rd Outlantacon. Both have some great events, and you can participate in all of them. In addition to the great fun you can normally have at a sci-fi convention, we also have Gaylactic Jeopardy, Celebrity Match Game, Project Cosplay, the Spectrum Awards, the Chocolate Symposium, and a costume-masquerade.

We also have great guests: Amber Benson, from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*; artist Steve Scott of Marvel and DC Comics; DJ Melissa Carter of The Bert Show on Q100; and many others. You can

**April LSF Meeting
*** Change of Place *****

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, April 10th**. The meeting will be held at Rob and Peter's house (1425 "S" Street NW), 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 also bring some munchies or soft drinks, if you can. See you there!

Λ Ψ Φ



read more about them on our website.

We are holding the convention at the newly-remodeled Holiday Inn Select—Perimeter. If you book your hotel room through the website, the convention room rate is \$84 per night. There are plenty of restaurants to choose from which are a short walk or free shuttle from the hotel. Bring some cash for the dealer's room and art show!

Cost: The current registration for the convention is \$50.

Transportation: If you are flying into Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson Airport, MARTA is the suggested way to go, at \$4.50 for a round-trip ticket. Take the Gold Line train to the Doraville Station. The hotel has a free shuttle that runs from 7 AM to 10 PM; and you can arrange pickup with the front desk at 770-457-6363.

What to Bring: A costume (for fun); a swimsuit (it'll be warm); chocolate and a fun game to share with friends; and a camera.

If you have extra vacation time, Atlanta has a lot of fun things to do. (My favorite is Six Flags Over Georgia.)

So click on our website and register for the convention now:

www.outlantacon.org

We are anxious to see you and have a great time!





Diana Wynne Jones
1934 – 2011

The members of LSF were saddened to learn of the passing of well-respected author Diana Wynne Jones. Various of her works – such as *Howl's Moving Castle*, *The Dark Lord of Derkholm*, and *The Tough Guide to Fantasyland* – were favorite discussion topics both at monthly LSF meetings and at the LSF Book Discussion Group.

Diana Wynne Jones was born in London and was evacuated several times during WW II (to Wales, Yorkshire, etc.). She studied English at St Anne's College in Oxford, where she attended lectures by both C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien before graduating in 1956. In that same year she married John Burrow, a scholar of medieval literature, with whom she had three sons.

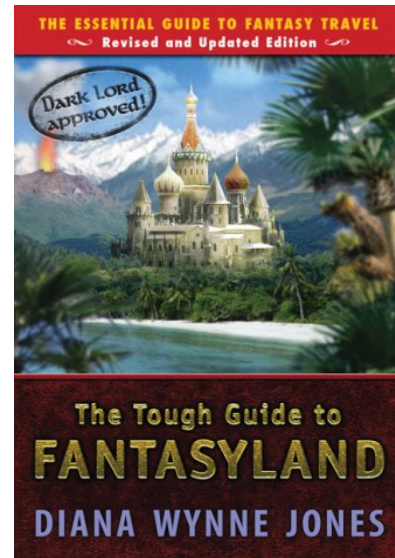
Diana principally wrote Fantasy novels for children, young adults, and adults. Some of her better-known works include: the "Chronicles of Chrestomanci" (*Charmed Life*, *The*

Lives of Christopher Chant, *Witch Week*, *The Magicians of Caprona*, *Conrad's Fate*, and *The Pinhoe Egg*); *Howl's Moving Castle* (1986); *The Tough Guide to Fantasyland* (1987); and *The Dark Lord of Derkholm* (1998). In 2004, *Howl's Moving Castle* was adapted into an animé feature by filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki. (An English-dubbed version was released in 2005, with the voice of Howl performed by Christian Bale.)

Diana Wynne Jones and Neil Gaiman were both fans of each other's work: Diana dedicated her novel *Hexwood* to Gaiman because something he said in a conversation inspired a key part of the plot; and Gaiman dedicated his 1991 four-part graphic novel *The Books of Magic* to "four witches" – one of whom was Diana Wynne Jones.

Over the course of her long career, Diana received much well-deserved recognition for her works, including: the Guardian Award for Children's Books (1977, for *Charmed Life*, first of the "Chrestomanci" novels); twice runner-up for the Carnegie Medal for Literature; the Mythopoeic Fantasy Award (USA, 1999; for *The Dark Lord of Derkholm*); the Karl Edward Wagner Award (UK, 1999; as an individual who made a significant impact on Fantasy); an honorary Doctorate of Literature (2006, University of Bristol); and the World Fantasy Award for Life Achievement (2007).

LSFer Rob Gates had this to say about her: "Even as an adult, I loved her work; it was accessible: at times subtle, at times delightfully playful, and always full of heart and reinforcements of the things that make us good people. She was never polemical, but there was always something to learn about right and wrong and



honor and wisdom and joy in her books. And *The Tough Guide to Fantasyland* is a constant source of spot-on humor, making me laugh at myself as a fan of traditional fantasy, and poking cheeky, playful fun at not just a genre...but her own genre."

SF writer Christopher Priest said of her (in the obituary he wrote for the UK *Guardian*): "Her intelligent and beautifully written fantasies are of seminal importance for their bridging of the gap between traditional children's fantasy, as written by C.S. Lewis or E. Nesbit, and the more politically and socially aware children's literature of the modern period, where authors such as Jacqueline Wilson or Melvyn Burgess explicitly confront problems of divorce, drugs and delinquency."

Diana was diagnosed with lung cancer in the early summer of 2009, for which she underwent both surgery and the rigors of chemotherapy. She passed away on March 26th. Λ Ψ Φ



This book will prove the following ten facts:



1. A Goon is a being who melts into the foreground and sticks there.
2. Pigs have wings, making them hard to catch.
3. All power corrupts, but we need electricity.
4. When an irresistible force meets an immovable object, the result is a family fight.
5. Music does not always sooth the troubled beast.
6. An Englishman's home is his castle.
7. The female of the species is more deadly than the male.
8. One black eye deserves another.
9. Space is the final frontier, and so is the sewage farm.
10. It pays to increase your word power.

-- Diana Wynne Jones, *Archer's Goon* --

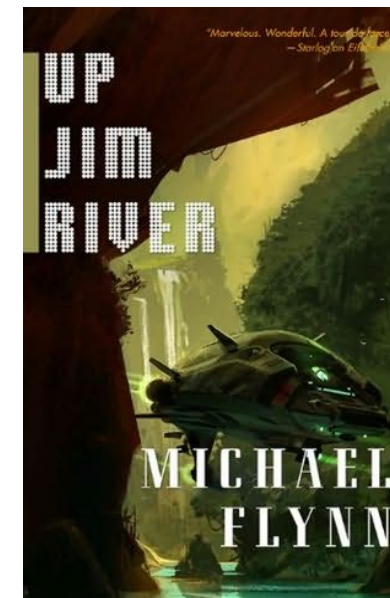
Up Jim River
By Michael Flynn
a review by Carl

I'm a biiiiiig fan of SF author Michael Flynn. I've read *all* his novels – including *Fallen Angels* (1991), which he co-wrote with Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle. I almost invariably pick up an issue of *Analog* or *F&SF* if it includes one of his short stories. (Oddly enough, I haven't read either of his short-story *collections* yet.) I particularly recommend Flynn's near-future, humanity-into-space "Firestar Cycle" of novels (*Firestar*, *Rogue Star*, *Lodestar*, *Falling Stars*).

About a year ago, I reviewed Flynn's latest space opera: *The January Dancer* (2008); and now I've had the pleasure of reading his follow-up novel, *Up Jim River* (2010).

In *The January Dancer*, Méarana ("the Harper") walks into the Bar on Jehovah (apparently the crossroads for all of human space) and asks Donovan ("the Scarred Man") for the story of "the Dancer," a powerful pre-human artifact discovered (and subsequently lost) by Captain Amos January and his rag-tag crew of spacers. The action (Old School space opera) is told as a series of flashbacks in the time-honored SF tradition of "the bar story", as the Dancer is lost and found and stolen and traded and schemed for and fought over all across human space.

Up Jim River picks up where *The January Dancer* left off. Méarana returns to the Bar on Jehovah looking for help. Her mother, the secret-agent Bridget Ban, has disappeared. Bridget had been sent on a Top Priority mission by the Kennel (sort of like the CIA for the United League of the Periphery) to locate and acquire *another* powerful and mysterious artifact that could reputedly tip the scales in the interstellar rivalry with the Confederacy of Central Worlds. But Bridget simply disappeared; and, after what seemed to Méarana like only a cursory investigation, the Kennel gave up looking for her and officially wrote her off. Méarana doesn't accept this; she hopes that Donovan – one of Bridget's former lovers – can help her track down her mother.



But is Donovan up to it? Granted, he was once a secret agent for the Confederacy of Central Worlds; but when a botched experiment by Those of Name (a shadowy agency within the Confederacy) splintered his mind into six or seven competing personalities, he was unceremoniously dumped to live out the rest of his life in the Bar on Jehovah as a colorful but confused drunk.

Finally, Méarana convinces Donovan (well, *most* of Donovan) to help her. And then, for its own mysterious reasons (red flag! red flag!), the Kennel agrees to finance their search. So off Méarana and Donovan go, through the back alleys and hidden byways of several different planets, tracking down clues that might lead them just one step further on the trail of Bridget Ban. But Donovan (well, *parts* of Donovan) can't help but ponder some serious questions: Why is the Kennel helping them? And, if they do in fact manage to track her down, will a harper and an aging drunken ex-agent be able to survive whatever possibly took down a top Kennel agent like Bridget Ban? To make matters worse, they soon discover that Those of Name have kept Donovan under surveillance and have set one of their trained assassins on the hunt, too.

About two-thirds of the way through the novel, the action changes from a space opera to a planet-bound trek in the primitive outback of the planet Enjrun. But it's still good! I couldn't help

but think of this portion of the novel as a cross between H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* and the classic "Planet of Adventure" novels of Jack Vance (*City of the Chasch*, *Servants of the Wankh*, *The Dirdir*, and *The Pnume*).

Up Jim Hill consists of an exciting quest with plot-twists-and-turns throughout; it's classic space opera coupled with fascinating world-and-society-building on planet after planet. Flynn is also really good at what one reviewer has called "extrapolations of linguistic drift." In his own words: "It's a big Spiral Arm and the human stew has been thoroughly mixed. Languages have changed and blended along with the cultures they once supported." Every now and then, you'll run across terms such as "jeepyese" (sound it out: G-P-S) and "jawharry" (referring to a jeweler; apparently based on the Arabic *al-Johara*, jewel). And there are mind-boggling cultural mixtures, such as the combination of ancient "Yurpan and Nipny" cultures on the planet Sigg O'Hara. Very clever!

Wow! I can hardly wait for the next novel in this series. (And, yes, there are indications that there could be another "Harper and the Scarred Man" book in the offing.)

Oh, and in case you were wondering, the novel's title is based on a saying from Méarana's homeworld denoting a journey further into the dangerous unknown. (Sort'a like "up Sh*t Creek," I suppose.) Λ Ψ Φ

Customs tell a man
who he is,
where he belongs,
what he must do.
Better illogical customs
than none;
men cannot live together
without them.

-- Robert A. Heinlein --
Citizen of the Galaxy (1957)

Science Fiction Quotations
edited by Gary Westfahl
(Yale University Press, 2005)