

****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.

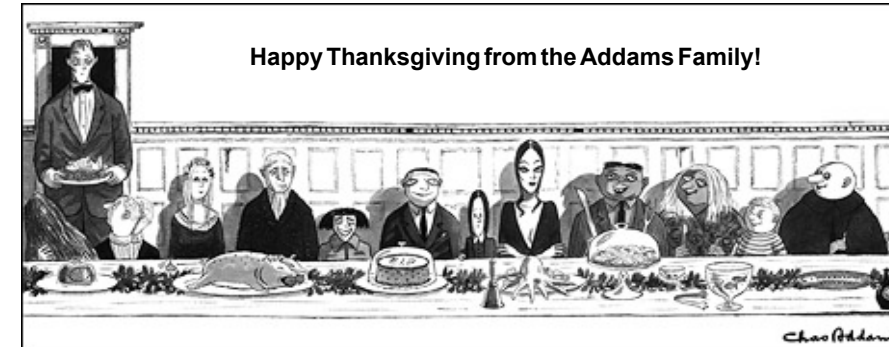
Meetings are usually held on the second Sunday of each month at a private residence. The next Lambda Sci-Fi meeting will be held on Sunday, **November 13th, at Peter and Rob's home, 1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC**. The business meeting will begin at 1:30 PM; and the social meeting will begin at 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.



lambda Sci-fi DC Area Gaylaxians

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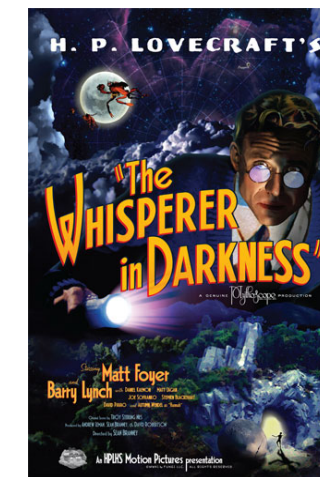
The Whisperer in Darkness

info passed along by Carl

You may have heard me raving about a short film I saw at Worldcon/Reno this year: *The Whisperer in Darkness*, a film version of the 1931 HP Lovecraft story of the same name. The film is a product of the HP Lovecraft Historical Society, the same folks who brought you the delightful silent/B&W film *The Call of Cthulhu* (2005), which we've shown at an LSF video party. *Whisperer* is also in B&W, although this time it's a "talkie" in the style of the 1930s (the era that brought you the early Frankenstein movies). As part of my Halloween Night celebrations, I re-read the Lovecraft story. The HPLHS folks made some interesting changes to certain elements of the story; but on the whole the film is pretty darn faithful to the source.

Whisperer was completed in February 2011 and has been shown at various venues (such as Worldcon); but it's apparently not yet available for purchase. The HP Lovecraft Historical Society website (www.cthulhulives.org) still shows its "anticipated release [DVD/BluRay] in the fall of 2011." Ah, the anticipation!!! (Stay tuned...)

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November LSF Meeting

*** Location Change!***

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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 **December 1st**.

Here are the details for the next couple of book discussion:

Dec. 1st - REMINDER: This is our traditional combined November/December book discussion. *Naked City: Tales of Urban Fantasy*, an anthology edited by Ellen Datlow; moderator: Carl
Important Note - Please bring some suggestions for books to discuss. We will plan out future book discussions for the first several months in 2012.

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Con Calendar

by Carl

Nov. 18-20, 2011 **ANIME USA** ("Of Otaku, by Otaku, for Otaku!"). Hyatt Regency Crystal City (Arlington, VA). Membership: \$48 from 9/1 thru 10/31/2011. Register on-line at: <https://www.animeusaregistration.org/>

Nov. 18-20, 2011 **PHILCON 2011** ("Celebrate 75 years of Fandom!"). The Crown Plaza Hotel (Cherry Hill, NJ). Principal Speaker: Cory Doctorow; Artist Guests of Honor: Boris Vallejo & Julie Bell. Membership: \$40 (higher at the door). Make checks payable to "Philadelphia Science Fiction Society" and mail to: Philcon Registration, PO Box 8303, Philadelphia, PA 19101. Or register on-line at www.philcon.org.

Nov. 25-27, 2011 **DARKOVERCON GRAND COUNCIL 34**. (A very LGBT-friendly convention.) Crowne Plaza Baltimore (Timonium, MD). Guests of Honor: Ellen Kushner & Delia Sherman; Special Guests: Katherine Kurtz, Melissa Scott. Membership: \$55 after 11/1 & at the door. Make checks payable to "Armida Council" and send to: Armida Council, PO Box 7203, Silver Spring, MD 20907. Website: www.darkovercon.org Info at: jaelle@darkovercon.org

April 13-15, 2012 **RAVENCON 2012**. Holiday Inn Select Koger Center (Richmond, VA). Guests: TBA. Membership: \$30 before 12/31/2011; \$35 after that; \$40 at the door. Make checks payable to "Ravencon" and send to: RavenCon, PO Box 36420, Richmond, VA 23235. More info online at: <http://www.ravencon.com>

Aug. 30 - Sept. 3, 2012 **CHICON 7** (70th World Science Fiction Convention). Hyatt Regency Chicago (Chicago, IL). Guests of Honor: Mike Resnick (author), Rowena Morrill (artist), John Scalzi (toastmaster), Story Musgrave (astronaut). Membership: \$175 until 09/30/2011. (Will go up after that!) Make checks payable to "Chicon 7" and send to: Chicon 7, PO Box 13, Skokie, IL 60076. (You can also register on-line.) Website: www.chicon7.org Info: info@chicon.org

Oct. 5-7, 2012 **GAYLAXICON 2012**. Doubletree Hotel Minneapolis-Park Place (Minneapolis, MN). Guests: Gary Russell (writer/producer), Wendy Pini (*Elfquest*), Lyda Morehouse (author), Kyell Gold (furry author). Membership: \$70 - 2011 registration. Register on-line (via Eventbrite). Website: www.gaylaxicon2012.org

WHAT'S INSIDE?

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

Teresa initiated a name circle to welcome new attendees.

Is the latest remake of *The Thing* worth it? The previews indicate thumbs down. Oh, it's actually a prequel—but it is still thumbs down.

Teresa liked the *Doctor Who* season finale with River Song's wedding. Rob like the "two-Amy's ti"me line" episode. Rob is also enjoying the 6-episode *Bedlam*—about a former asylum that is renovated into high-end apartments aptly named Bedlam Heights. One of the characters can see ghosts. AMC's *Walking Dead* second season premieres this Sunday evening. It was noted that six *Walking Dead* webi-sodes are available. Rob doesn't quite know what to make of FX's *American Gothic*'s first episode.

Rob led a discussion about the two new fairy-tale-world TV shows—*Once Upon a Time* and *Grimm*—both premiering in October. The "evil Will Wheaton" returns to *The Big Bang Theory*. Despite it's inclusion of SFX dinosaurs, Carl is unenthusiastic about Fox's new *Terra Nova* series—sometimes described as *Lost* with dinosaurs.



Julian will host a video party on Saturday, Oct. 22nd. The subject of the October LSF Book Discussion will be Sarah Rees Brennan's *Demon's Lexicon*.

The Darkovercon in November (Thanksgiving weekend) will include an announcement of the Spectrum Award winners. Carl reported that authors Melissa Scott, Ellen Kushner, and Delia Sherman will all be attending

David suggested that CW's *Secret Circle* series, about a town full of witches, is similar to *Point Pleasant*.

Carl advised that Sarah Monette's *The Bone Key* is being reissued in trade paperback format.

SyFy's *Being Human* is returning in January. There is talk about a new *Star Trek* TV series based upon the JJ Abrams movie reboot.

It's reported that the hotel for Gaylaxicon 2012 (Minneapolis) should be available to accept reservations in the next few weeks. Stay tuned to the G'con 2012 Facebook page. David reported that he will be attending the Gallifrey convention in Los Angeles.

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Spock Is Gay?



Vulcan Human

Well, not exactly... But one of the actors who has portrayed the famous Vulcan apparently is. In October, 34-year-old Zachary Quinto (who played Spock in JJ Abrams's 2009 *Star Trek* "reboot") publicly revealed that he is gay. Previously, Quinto—a longtime gay rights advocate—had been reticent about discussing his sexuality when interviewed.

So, live long and gaily prosper, Sp... um, I mean, Zach!!

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Beware the Turkey Mecha!



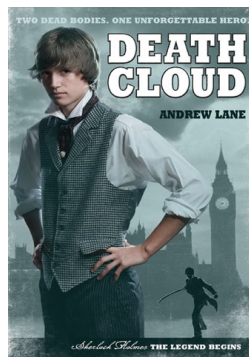
"Lego Turkey Mecha" from <http://gizmodo.com>



Before They Were Famous
two reviews by Carl

Origin stories are one of the mainstays of Superhero comic books. These origin stories are often told, revised, and re-told. (Why does Superman have powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal men? How did Peter Parker become the Amazing Spider-Man? How did Captain America become the First Avenger?) Fans have also avidly read about the origins of such Pulp Era adventure heroes as Zorro, Doc Savage, the Shadow, and the Lone Ranger. Ah, but are fans interested to learn the "secret origins" of more literary figures? The answer to that is, of course: Yes! Hence, the popularity of such works as Philip Jose Farmer's "Wold Newton Family" stories (recounting the familial relationships between such characters as Sherlock Holmes, Tarzan, Prof. George Edward Challenger, and Fu Manchu) or the 1985 film *Young Sherlock Holmes*.

Recently, a couple of authors have written entertaining YA novels that purport to reveal the hitherto unknown youthful adventures of two of literature's most well-known figures: Sherlock Holmes and Victor Frankenstein. And, in both cases, these novels are only the first in a projected series.



Death Cloud
by Andrew Lane
(Farrar Straus Giroux, 2010)

Author Andrew Lane is a British civil servant. He has previously written a number of spin-off novels and audio dramas based on the *Doctor Who* and *Torchwood* TV series. *Death Cloud* is the first novel in his series "Sherlock Holmes: The Legend Begins". It's also interesting to

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Before They Were Famous
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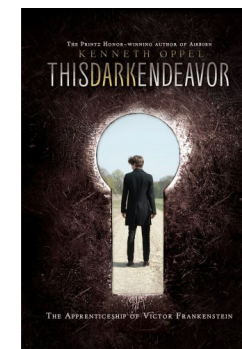
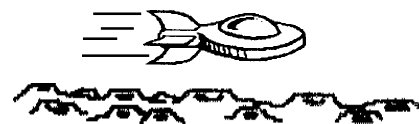
note that this series is the first Teen series to be endorsed by the Conan Doyle Estate. Lane has, in fact, written his stories with an eye toward being faithful to the Holmes canon. For example, he doesn't incorrectly show Sherlock Holmes and John Watson meeting as boys (which is what the 1985 film *Young Sherlock Holmes* did).

It is the summer of 1868, and 14-year-old Sherlock Holmes is on break from Deepdene School for Boys. His father's regiment is being sent out to India to strengthen British military forces along the North West Frontier; his mother is "unwell"; and his older brother Mycroft has a new job at the Foreign Office and can't invite him down to London. So young Sherlock is sent off to stay with Uncle Sherinford and Aunt Anna Holmes for the school holidays. He quickly runs afoul of the strict old housekeeper, Mrs. Eglantine, and thus spends as much time as possible in the surrounding countryside just to stay out of her way.

In the nearby village of Farnham, Sherlock meets a young street urchin named Matty Arnatt; and together they stumble across a couple of mysterious deaths. The bodies of both victims exhibit signs resembling the plague; but in both cases a smoke-like cloud was observed to be either leaving the scene or moving about in a very unnatural fashion.

With the help of Sherlock's American-born tutor Amys Crowe, the boys investigate a sinister murder mystery and run afoul of a criminal mastermind worthy of a "James Bond" adventure or an episode of *The Avengers*! The game's afoot!

Quite entertaining! And I think Lane has done a fine job of explaining the origins of Holmes's contradictory character—scientific/analytical on the one hand and moody/artistic on the other. I look forward to reading Lane's forthcoming "Young Sherlock Holmes" novels (*Red Leech*, *Black Ice*, and *Fire Storm*).



This Dark Endeavor: The Apprenticeship of Victor Frankenstein
by Kenneth Opiel
(Simon & Schuster, 2011)

Kenneth Opiel takes on the task of exploring the formative years of an earlier literary creation: Victor Frankenstein, the troubled protagonist of Mary Shelley's 1818 novel *Frankenstein; or The Modern Prometheus*. And, in my opinion, Opiel does a fine job!

No dates are given in the novel; but at one point it's mentioned that "The Reign of Terror" is raging in Revolutionary France, so that the events in *This Dark Endeavor* must take place about 1793-1794. Opiel obviously relied on the information about Victor's young life as revealed in Shelley's novel: wealthy family in Geneva; two younger brothers; young cousin Elizabeth Lavenza adopted into the family; Victor's childhood friend Henry Clerval. Ah, but then Opiel introduces a couple of BIG differences.

First: he gives Victor a twin brother, Konrad. Konrad is more accomplished, more socially adept, and generally better liked by everyone; and Victor both worships and is deeply jealous of Konrad. In comparison, the most credit that people will give Victor is that he is "clever". To make matters worse, both brothers fall in love with cousin Elizabeth—and, of course, she seems to favor Konrad.

Second: while exploring the cellars beneath the Frankenstein chateau, the teens discover a hidden *Biblioteka Obscura* ("Dark Library"), the secret legacy of Wilhelm Frankenstein, a 15th-Century alchemist. When they ask Victor's father about the mysterious volumes in the hidden library, he forbids them to go

down there again. Why has Victor's father, a well-respected and "modern" citizen of Geneva not destroyed the contents of his ancestor's *Biblioteka Obscura*? As he explains to Victor, "... because they are artifacts of an ignorant, wicked past—and it is a good thing not to forget our past mistakes. To keep us humble. To keep us vigilant." Uh huh... the plot thickens.

Konrad falls ill with some sort of mysterious (apparently blood-related) illness, and neither the family doctor nor Dr. Murnau (a visiting specialist) is able to discover a cure. Meanwhile, young Victor is wracked with guilt. His love for his brother is tainted by a secret happiness: maybe Elizabeth will come to like him better now. Eventually, Elizabeth and younger brother Ernest talk Victor into trying to find a cure amongst the mysterious volumes of the *Biblioteka Obscura*. ("You'll find a cure, Victor. You're almost as clever as Konrad.")

With the help of a family servant, Victor contacts a shady character in Geneva, Julius Polidori, a crippled apothecary who reportedly tried to save a young girl's life some years ago with some sort of miraculous potion. Polidori, as it turns out, is a clandestine alchemist; and, based on his translation of an alchemical text the teens steal from the *Biblioteka Obscura*, he sends Victor, Elizabeth, and Henry off on a series of perilous quests to retrieve several arcane ingredients he needs to recreate an alchemical cure—all that will supposedly save Konrad's life. This is Teen Adventure fiction at its finest. But, as Victor discovers, Polidori has his own dark motives for helping them. Bwa-ha-ha-ha!

This Dark Endeavor is fun; it's ingenious; it's an enjoyable read. And Opiel just can't resist dropping literary tributes into the story. For example: Dr. Murnau (Friedrick Murnau, the German film director of *Nosferatu*, 1922); and Julius Polidori (John Polidori, author of *The Vampyre*, and friend of Mary Shelley). I quite enjoyed *This Dark Endeavor*, and I look forward to reading future novels in which Opiel shows young Victor Frankenstein gradually becoming "the man who created the monster." (Sort'a like seeing how Anakin Skywalker turned into Darth Vader, I suppose.)

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