



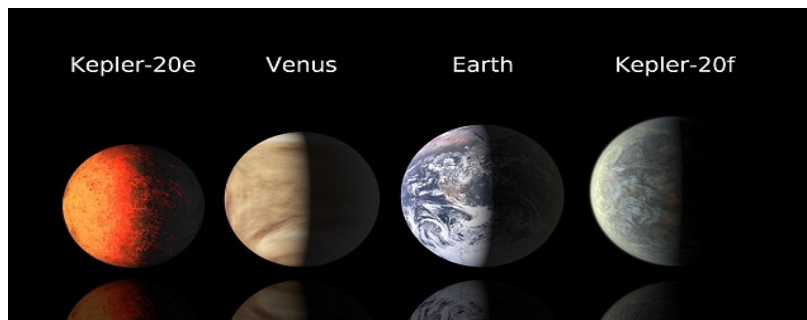
lambda Sci-fi DC Area Gaylaxians



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Earth-Sized Exoplanets Discovered

info passed along by Wayne #1 & Carl

NASA's Kepler Space Telescope has located a couple of Earth-sized planets orbiting Kepler-20, a star 945 light years away. This is the first time planets of this size have been detected in another solar system. Scientists have hailed the technical achievement of detecting Earth-sized "exoplanets" (planets outside our Solar System), as it increases the chances of finding life-bearing worlds.

However, neither of Kepler-20's Earth-sized planets is located within the "habitable zone" (where temperatures are warm enough to allow liquid surface water, which increases the prospects for life). Both planets are believed to be rocky, with a composition of iron and silicate. Kepler-20e (about 0.87 the size of Earth) has an orbital "year" of about 6 days and a surface temperature of 726 C. Kepler-20f (about 1.03 the size of Earth) has an orbital "year" of about 19 days and a surface temperature of 426 C; it might have a thick water-vapor atmosphere.

The Kepler-20 system is known

to contain 5 planets – the other three larger than either Kepler-20e or Kepler-20f. The system doesn't seem to be "set up" like our Solar System. In our system, small rocky planets orbit close to the Sun and large gas giants orbit farther out. In Kepler-20's system, however, the planets are "organized" in alternating sizes: big, little, big little, big. It's not believed that Kepler-20's planets formed in their current locations: they probably formed farther out from the star and then migrated inwards (probably due to interactions with other in-system materials).

The Kepler Space Telescope has located 28 confirmed extrasolar planets so far, as well as thousands of likely "candidate" planets. It identifies "objects of interest" by looking for stars that dim slightly, which can occur when a planet crosses a star's face. To confirm a transiting planet, astronomers also look for the star to wobble as it is gravitationally tugged by its orbiting companion(s).

For more information about the Kepler Mission, go to:

<http://kepler.nasa.gov> $\Lambda \Psi \Phi$



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 **February 23rd**.

Here are the details for the next several book discussions:

Feb. 23 - *Bob the Book*, by David Pratt; moderator: Rob.

March 22 - *Glasshouse*, by Charles Stross; moderator: John.

April 26 - *Order 66*, by Karen Traviss; moderator: Alex. $\Lambda \Psi \Phi$

February LSF Meeting

The next LSF meeting will be held on Sunday, **February 12th**. The meeting will once again be held 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 also bring some munchies or soft drinks, if you can. See you there! $\Lambda \Psi \Phi$

WHAT'S INSIDE?

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Minutes of the January 2012 LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

Business portion:

The existing four LSF officers were re-elected by acclamation – Teresa as First Speaker, Rob as Treasurer, Peter as Membership Coordinator, and Scott as Secretary.

Social portion:

Most attendees raved about the new *Sherlock Holmes* movie. Carl thought that Sherlock Holmes in drag in this film looked vaguely like the Joker in the new *Batman* movies.

The Doctor Who Christmas Special received mixed reviews. Rumor has it that the characters of Amy and Robby won't be returning in the next *Doctor Who* season. Matt Smith, who portrays the most recent Doctor, also portrays Christopher Isherwood in the recent film *Christopher and His Kind*. ("In 1931 budding author Christopher Isherwood goes to Berlin at the invitation of his friend W. H. Auden for the gay sex that abounds in the city.")

The *Alcatraz* mid-season replacement looks promising. The American paranormal/adventure/horror series, *The River* – purported to be quite violent – should be debuting this season. The new season of *Archer*, which Rob describes as "wrong in so many ways," is returning this month. Both *Once Upon a Time* and *Grimm* continue to be enjoyable.

Rob is enjoying the new *Star Wars: The Old Republic* on-line game. He is also reading the YA *Hunger Games* series, which features a Battle Royale theme; and he wonders how on Earth a film on the series can be made and targeted towards the *Twilight* audience.

Tokyo Gore Police! Tokyo Gore Police! Mutants with weapons! Sex, blood, and gore! [Ed. Note: I have no idea what this sentence means!]

The *Enders Game* movie (starring Harrison Ford) is slated for a 2013 release. John thinks that the *Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* film reminded him of a *Scooby Doo* episode.

The main character of the upcoming *Lost Girl* TV series is a detective

Secrets of Hunky Werewolves Revealed!

info passed along by
Wayne #1 and Carl



OK, now that I've got your attention... A current exhibit at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) brings together rare works of Quileute art. And the Quileutes are the Washington State tribe that served as the inspiration for the shape-shifters (including Jacob) in Stephenie Meyer's "Twilight Saga." (See? There is a connection!)

The exhibit is called "Behind the Scenes: The Real Story of Quileute Wolves" and runs at the NMAI through May 9th in the museum's second-level Sealaska Gallery. Entry to the museum and to the exhibition is free.

No, Quileute tradition does NOT include werewolves (hunky or otherwise). However, the Wolf Society (for warriors) is one of their five secret societies meant to maintain the balance between the human and spirit realms.

The exhibit offers an intimate look into the tribe's artwork and wolf creation stories, which are central to the

by day and a succubus by night – or something like that.

And then on to the annual LSF Book Exchange. [Ed. Note: Scott got the following "sort'a right," I think.]

Dan received from Carl two Michael Flynn novels: *January Dancer* and *Up Jim River*. Teresa received from John the Salman Rushdie YA novel *Luka and the Fire of Life*. Rob received from Dan a copy of HP Lovecraft's *At the Mountains of Madness* (with a creepy cover). Jeff received from "Randy" (actually Peter & Rob) a copy of the YA superhero novel *Invincible*. Jonathan received



Wolf Headdress from the Exhibit

Quileute world view. Amongst the artifacts on display are two wolf headdresses from different regions, depictions of wolf ritual dances and shamanistic performances, as well as replicas of items used during various *Twilight* films. It also includes a map of Quileute language place names throughout the Pacific Northwest, a timeline of Quileute history, and a 12-minute video that describes the history and Quileute oral/cultural traditions through interviews with tribal members and teens as they describe the phenomenon and effect of the *Twilight* films in their own words.

NMAI is located at the east end of the National Mall, at 4th Street and Independence Avenue SW (between the Air & Space Museum and the Capitol Building). For more information about NMAI, go to: www.americanindian.si.edu

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from Julian two Robin Hobb novels: *Assassin's Apprentice* and *Assassin's Quest*. Scott received from Teresa a copy of Richard Morgan's gritty fantasy novel *Steel Remains* (a Spectrum Award winner). Alex received from Jonathan a DVD of the *X-Men: First Class* video. John received from Teresa the following books: *Forever War* by Joe Haldeman, *Maphead* by Ken Jennings, and something by Robert Heinlein. Peter received from Scott a set of books from Laurell K. Hamilton's "Anita Blake" series. Carl received from Peter the three-pack of the "extended version" of

(continued on page 3)

**Mister Creecher:
A Novel in Three Parts
by Chris Priestley
(Bloomsbury, 2011)**
reviewed by Carl

A couple of months ago, I reviewed a YA novel related to Mary Shelley's classic *Frankenstein* – Kenneth Oppel's *This Dark Endeavor: The Apprenticeship of Victor Frankenstein* (Simon & Schuster, 2011). Imagine my surprise when I ran across another YA novel based upon the famous Mary Shelley tale. This time, it's not Victor Frankenstein who is the central character, however; now it's the monster's turn. And, unlike Oppel's novel, the events in Chris Priestley's novel *Mister Creecher* take place some years after the Frankenstein saga has already begun.

It's now 1818. Victor Frankenstein and his friend Henry Clerval have fled from the Continent to England, doggedly followed by Frankenstein's monstrous creation. The monster plans to ensure that his creator lives up to his promise to create a mate for the monster.

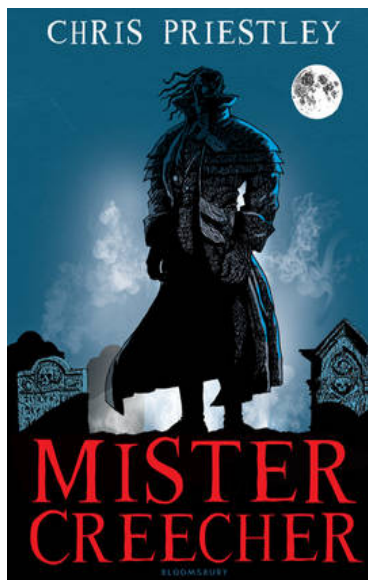
One dark night in the bad, bad streets of London, young Billy – orphan, pickpocket, and petty thief – discovers what he believes to be the corpse of a huge and powerfully-built man. As he gets ready to rifle through the man's pockets, Billy is set upon by a gang of murderous street toughs. But, just as Billy is about to be seriously maimed, the "corpse" rises to its feet and tears into the young toughs. Billy is saved. And thus begins his novel-

January LSF Minutes

continued from page 2

the *Lord of the Rings* DVDs. Julian received several books from Rob: something by Charles Grant, something by Ben Mezrick, and something by Kevin Somebody-or-Other. Randy received from Jeff a copy of Eric Flint's time-travel, alternate history novel *1632*. Barrett received the following from Randy (actually Peter & Rob): *Kushiel's Dart* by Jacqueline Carey, *Order 66* (a *Star Wars* "Clone Wars" novel), and *Glasshouse* by Charles Stross.

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long relationship with the frightening man he mistakenly calls "Mister Creecher."

Mister Creecher nurses Billy back to health. What begins as a relationship of convenience becomes a tentative friendship between two outcast misfits. And Mister Creecher convinces the youngster to help him keep track of a mysterious stranger through the streets and alleys of London – and later to accompany Mister Creecher as he trails this stranger across the English countryside, heading toward Scotland. As the story progresses, Billy gradually learns what's going on and discovers the identity of "Mister Creecher" and the reason for his obsession with Victor Frankenstein. Good and evil, truth and lies, "hero" and "villain" – young Billy learns that nothing is ever quite as simple as it seems.

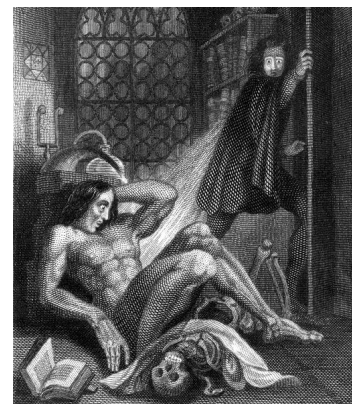
Don't be surprised if Part I of *Mister Creecher* – which takes place in London – seems to have a rather "Dickensian" flavor. This is deliberate. It's eventually revealed that young Billy is, in fact, Billy Sikes. Does that name ring a bell? Yes, young and naïve Billy grows up to become the murderous Bill Sikes of Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist*. (Even Fagin makes an appearance in *Mr. Creecher*.) In fact, in his "Author's Note" at the end of the novel, Priestley even encourages his readers to turn to *Oliver Twist* "if you want to know what became of Billy Sikes." I know one particular Amazon reviewer has derided the ending of *Mr. Creecher* as "rushed, forced, and unfinished." But I think that reviewer ignores the fact that

Priestley never intended to tell the *whole* story about either Billy or the Monster in the first place. I think he only intended to fill in that "*terra incognita*" of their lives during which Shelley's and Dickens's characters supposedly "met" – and then to direct his YA readers to the novels *Frankenstein* and *Oliver Twist* "if you want to know what happens next."

Oh, and you're in for a disappointment if you're expecting to see the bolts-in-the-neck, shambling, monosyllabic version of Frankenstein's creation portrayed by Boris Karloff in the classic Universal films. Priestley's "Mister Creecher" is very much the powerful, athletic, vegetarian, well-spoken, and philosophic "Modern Prometheus" originally envisioned by Mary Shelley – with almost translucent skin and a whiff of decaying meat about him. In fact, Priestley has obviously based his novel on a *lot* of research into the Shelley story. While I don't think it's necessary to have read *Frankenstein* in order to enjoy *Mister Creecher*, I can't help but think that a certain amount of knowledge of the original 1818 novel will allow you to appreciate just how ingeniously Priestley has woven that background into his novel. (Even the subtitle of Priestley's novel – *A Novel in Three Parts* – is a subtle nod to Mary Shelley's novel, which was originally published in three volumes.)

I really enjoyed *Mister Creecher*. If you're a fan of the Frankenstein legend, then I'll just bet you'll enjoy it, too. If you've got a "thing" against hardbacks, then you'll be glad to know it's also available in Kindle – and I'm bettin' it'll come out in a paperback edition sometime in 2012.

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Frontispiece (by Theodor von Holst) to the 1831 edition of *Frankenstein*

****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, **February 12th, 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.



Con Calendar

by Carl



Feb. 17-19, 2012 **FARPOINT 2012**. Crowne Plaza Baltimore North (Timonium, MD). Guests: Kristin Bauer (*True Blood*, *Once Upon a Time*), Michael Hogan (*Battlestar Galactica*), Kate Vernon (*Battlestar Galactica*), Peter David, Mark Okrand. Membership: \$80 pre-registration for the weekend (daily rates available). Make checks payable to "Farpoint Enterprises" and send to: Farpoint Enterprises, 11708 Troy Ct., Waldorf, MD 20601.

Register on-line at: www.farpointcon.com E-mail Group: Farpointcon@yahoo.com

April 13-15, 2012 **RAVENCON 2012**. Holiday Inn Select Koger Center (Chesterfield, VA). GoH: Glen Cook; Artist GoH: Matthew Steward. Membership: \$30 before 12/31/2011; \$35 to 3/30/2012; \$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>

Register on-line at: <http://ravencon.com/registrationPAYPAL.php>

May 25-28, 2012 **BALTICON 46**. Marriott Hunt Valley Inn (Hunt Valley, MD). GoH: Jody Lynn Nye, Artist GoH: Jim Odbert, Scientist GoH: William D. Phillips (Nobel Prize in Physics 1997). Membership: \$50 to 2/28/2012, \$55 to 4/30/2012, \$62 at the door. Make checks payable to "Balticon" and send to: Balticon 46 Registration, PO Box 686, Baltimore, MD 21203-0686.

Website: www.balticon.org Registration form at: www.balticon.org/bconreg.html

Aug. 3-5, 2012 **SHORE LEAVE 34**. Marriott's Hunt Valley Inn (Hunt Valley, MD). Guests: TBA. Membership: \$80 pre-registration for the weekend (daily rates available). Make checks payable to "Shore Leave" and send to: Shore Leave 34, PO Box 6809, Towson, MD 21285-6809. Website: <http://www.shore-leave.com> E-mail: information@shore-leave.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: \$195 until 03/31/2012. (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

