



# lambda Sci-fi DC Area Gaylaxians



PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044

(202) 232-3141 - Issue #267 - June 2012

E-MAIL: info@lambdascifi.org WEBSITE: www.lambdascifi.org



## LSF Gaming Party and DC Pride Parade Viewing (June 9th)

Come celebrate Pride Day at a Pre-Pride Gaming/Parade-viewing Party with the folks at LSF!

**What:** A gaming party – with a break to watch the Pride Parade. There’s plenty of room for gaming, so please bring your favorite table games (cards, board, RPG, etc.). We’ll start the party with a brief LSF meeting at 3:00 PM.

**When:** Saturday, June 9; 3:00 PM– ?? (Note: we’ll break to go watch the parade as a group and for everyone to get dinner on their own.)

**Where:** Home of Peter and Rob, 1425 “S” Street NW, Washington, DC.

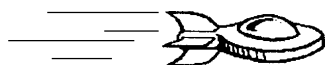
**Directions at:**

<http://lambdascifi.org/club/PeterRob.html>

**What to bring:** Bring your favorite table game or two. Also, please bring munchies and/or soft drinks.

**For more information:** Please contact Rob at: [robgatesdc@gmail.com](mailto:robgatesdc@gmail.com) or call him at 202-483-6369.

Λ Ψ Φ



## June 10th (Sunday) DC Capital Pride Festival

For the 22nd year in a row, LSF will staff a booth at the DC Pride Festival to promote LSF and queer fandom. Come join us and help to spread the word about Lambda Sci-Fi and LGBT-themed F&SF!

Feel free to drop by the LSF booth sometime during the day. As in previous years, we didn’t see the need to establish specific schedules for staffing the booth; we’ve always had lots of LSFers (both long-timers and newbies) show up and stick around. **[Ed. Note: Although I'm quite certain Rob would appreciate some help setting things up in the morning! Please give him a call to plan a meeting time!]**

**Time:** 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM

**Where:** Pennsylvania Avenue, somewhere between 4th and 7th Streets NW, Washington, DC

Λ Ψ Φ



## LSF's Post-Pride Video Party (June 16th)

Come celebrate DC Pride at a Post-Pride Video/Potluck Party with the folks at LSF!

**What:** A science fiction/fantasy/horror video and potluck party. We will watch the movies that receive the most votes.

**When:** Saturday, June 16; 3:30 PM - ??

**Where:** Julian’s home at 2462 Tunlaw Road NW, Washington, DC.

**Directions at:**

<http://lambdascifi.org/club/Julian.html>

**What to bring:** Bring science fiction, fantasy, and horror DVDs to watch and snacks, dinner food, and/or non-alcoholic drinks to share.

**For more information:** Please contact Peter at:

[Peter.P.Knapp@gmail.com](mailto:Peter.P.Knapp@gmail.com) or call him at 202-483-6369.

**On the day of the party,** call Julian at 202-306-1497.

Λ Ψ Φ



## June LSF Meeting

\*\*\*Special Date/Time\*\*\*



The next LSF meeting will be held in conjunction with a gaming party on Saturday, **June 9th**. The meeting and party will be held at **Peter and Rob’s home, 1425 “S” Street NW, Washington, DC. A short business meeting will be held at 3:00 PM; and the gaming party will begin shortly after that.** Please also bring some munchies or soft drinks, if you can. See you there!



Λ Ψ Φ



## WHAT'S INSIDE?

Minutes of the May LSF Meeting (pg.2); The LSF Book Discussion Group (pg. 2); The "Nightside" Stories of Simon R. Green (book reviews- pg. 2); About Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians (pg. 4); Con Calendar (pg. 4)

## Minutes of the May LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

Here is the list of LSF Pride Festival events and activities: Sat, June 9: Pre-Pride gaming party at Peter and Rob's place; Sun, June 10: LSF booth at the Pride Festival; Sat, June 16: Post-Pride video party at Julian's place. [Ed Note: For details, see articles on page 1 of this newsletter.] Carl passed along an assortment of bookmarks to be distributed at the LSF booth.

### Social Meeting

Teresa and Dan are looking forward to the new film *Prometheus*, which is officially being billed as "not a prequel to *Alien*."

Carl passed around a couple of recent *Science Illustrated* articles: "The 10 Supreme Computers" and a Russian company that plans to launch a hotel into space (capacity: 7 guests).

Speaking of space, Howard goes to the international space station on the season finale of *The Big Bang Theory*.

Scott commented that Tim Burton's new *Dark Shadows* movie appeals to both old-time fans and those with no previous expo sure to the old TV series. But Carolyn as a werewolf?

The new *Battleship* movie should appeal to *Transformers* fans. But

will it encourage anyone to go out and purchase the board game?

Carl reported that he enjoyed the new Ardmore Studios feature *Pirates! Band of Brothers*.

Teresa provided a round-up of genre-related TV shows. *Big Bang Theory*, *Grimm*, *Revenge*, *Once Upon a Time*, and *Mentalist* have all been renewed. *Fringe* has been renewed for another 13 episodes. *Awake* has been cancelled. *Alphas* is returning. The premise for a new NBC series entitled *Revolution* is a world 15 years after electricity stops. Rumor has it that the Starz Network is bringing back *Jericho*.

Filming for the next *Star Trek* movie has wrapped up.

The restoration of the old Beatles-related animated film *Yellow Submarine* is due out later this week and is reported to be quite a beautiful restoration.

LSF member Wes has an exhibit at the upcoming Artomatic in Crystal City.

Peter distributed the latest *PAR-SEC* newsletter from the Pittsburgh sci-fi group.

Jim W. described a clever (and disturbing) kids' book: *The Pop-up Book of Phobias*.

Carl reported that he will be conducting the guest of honor interview (Jody Lynn Nye) at Balticon.

Λ Ψ Φ



## 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 **June 28th**.

Here are the details for the book discussions for the next five months:

**June 28** - *God's War*, by Kamerron Hurley; moderator: Claire

**July 26** - *Welcome to Bordertown*, edited by Holly Black & Ellen Kushner; moderator: Greg.

**August 23** - *Hav*, by Jan Morris; moderator: Carl

**September 27** - *Beyond Binary*, edited by Brit Mandelo; moderator: Jack.

**October 25** - *Rule 34*, by Charles Stross; moderator: Dan

Λ Ψ Φ

## The "Nightside" Stories of Simon R. Green

a short review by Carl



I've said it before (probably at an LSF meeting, or in a previous article, or both) and I'll say it again: "I love noir fiction – particularly "hard-boiled crime fiction!" You know, the type of crime fiction where the tough, urbane, worldly-wise private investigator cracks wise all the time and the morality is rather... um... "grey." I'm a big fan of authors such as Dashiell Hammett (*The Maltese Falcon*), Raymond Chandler (*The Big Sleep*), Ross Thomas (*Chinaman's Chance*), Joe Lansdale (*Savage Season*), Walter Mosley (*Devil in a Blue Dress*), and Christa Faust (*Money Shot*). In fact, my love of cyberpunk is probably due to the inclusion of so many noir themes and motifs in the early cyberpunk stories. (It's sort'a like "those mean streets" become "those mean sci-fi streets.") And now, of course, there's the "new urban fantasy," which incorporates dark fantasy and horror elements and takes its readers down "those mean weird streets."

And that takes me to the works of Simon R. Green. I'd never heard of him until recently, when I read the urban fantasy anthology *Down These Strange Streets* (edited by George R.R. Martin and Gardner Dozois, ACE Books, 2011). The anthology includes Green's short story "Hungry Heart" (a clever variation on *The Maltese Falcon* set in Green's "Nightside" universe); and I was instantly hooked. I raced out and picked up the first two "Nightside" novels – and then the third – and "literarily" devoured them in short order. I'm trying to restrain myself; there are only six or so more out there at the

(continued on page 3)



## The “Nightside” Stories

continued from page 2

moment, and I want to spread the pleasure out as long as possible.

Here’s the set-up: John Taylor is a tough, urbane, worldly-wise (and *otherworldly*-wise) private detective with special powers: he can find anything by using his “Private Eye.” His father was human, but his mysteriously-missing mother seems to have been something quite *non*-human—hence, his paranormal abilities. Unfortunately, Taylor’s special abilities only work in the Nightside, “where the laws of reality aren’t as strictly nailed down as they might be” – and, when activated, Taylor’s thoughts “blaze like a beacon in the night,” so that any of his very deadly, very mysterious enemies might be able to home in on him.

“Ah, but just where is the Nightside?” you ask. Good question; it’s somehow connected to London. Here’s how Taylor explains it to a human client in *Something from the Nightside*:

“...*The Nightside is a square mile of narrow streets and back alleys in the centre of the city, linking slums and tenements that were old when the last century was new. That’s if you believe the official maps. In practice, the Nightside is much bigger than that, as though space itself has reluctantly expanded to fit in all the darkness and evil and generally strange stuff that has set up home there...*

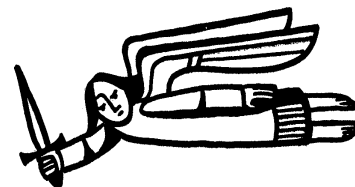
*“It’s always night in the Nightside. It’s always three o’clock in the morning, and the dawn never comes. People are always coming and going, drawn by needs that dare not speak their names, searching for pleasures and services unforgivable in the sane, daylight world. You can buy or sell anything in the Nightside, and no-one asks questions. No-one cares. There’s a nightclub, where you can pay to see a fallen angel forever burning inside a pentacle drawn in baby’s blood. Or a decapitated goat’s head, that can tell the future in enigmatic verses of perfect iambic pentameter. There’s a room where silence is caged, and colours are forbidden, and another where a dead nun will show you her stigmata, for the right price...*

*“Everything you ever feared or dreamed of is running loose somewhere in the shifting streets of the Nightside, or waiting patiently for you in the expensive private rooms of patrons-only clubs. You can find anything in the Nightside, if it doesn’t find you first. It’s a sick, magical, dangerous place. You still want to go there?”*

In the first “Nightside” novel – *Something from the Nightside* (ACE, 2003) – John Taylor is returning to the Nightside for the first time after a long absence. About 5 years previously, he’d fled the Nightside (“fleeing imminent death and the betrayal of friends”) and hoped to set up as a finder-of-lost-things/people in London, where he wouldn’t need to be constantly on the lookout for supernatural assassins. (Taylor has never been really sure why all these creatures and entities are out to get him – but he’s pretty sure it has something to do with his mysterious un-human mother, who disappeared when he was born.) But one day he reluctantly accepts a *very* lucrative assignment from a wealthy woman, even though it will take him back into the Nightside. Seems as how Ms. Barrett’s stubborn and independent-spirited daughter found a way into the Nightside and willingly (indeed, happily) disappeared into Blaiston Street, one of the deadliest sinkholes in the Nightside. Yes, Taylor will be risking his life (and soul?) by returning to the Nightside, where his enemies are probably lying in wait for him to return – but he *really* needs the money (his London detective biz hasn’t been all that successful) and he can’t seem to turn down a “damsel in distress” story. Adventures ensue.

The action in the second novel – *Agents of Light and Darkness* (ACE, 2003) – takes place shortly after the conclusion of *Something from the Nightside*. Taylor has decided to remain in the Nightside. He’s been pretty successful at keeping a low profile, until an agent of the Vatican asks him to undertake an assignment with (literally) Apocalyptic implications. A powerful missing artifact, the Unholy Grail (the cup from which Judas drank at the Last Supper), has unexpectedly turned up again. It’s hidden somewhere in the Nightside; and the Vatican wants John Taylor

to find it and deliver it to them so that it can be hidden away safely and permanently. Unfortunately, Angels – from both Above and Below – have sensed the Unholy Grail’s presence (although not its precise location); and both Sides are willing to violate the Nightside’s neutrality in order to retrieve it for their own ends: an immediate and very *final* victory in the Great Conflict. And woe to anyone or anything that stands between Angels and their goals! All Angels – even the ones from Above – are powerful, determined creatures with little or no concern for the rights or continued health or lives of lesser beings. (Think about a flaming sword barring re-entry to Eden, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the fate of Lot’s wife.) And if any of the Angels get their hands on John Taylor, they might be able to convince him to use his paranormal skills (*i.e.* do nasty things to him until he agrees) to locate the Unholy Grail for either Light or Darkness. Yikes!



As I said, I’ve found Simon Green’s “Nightside” tales to be an absolute joy to read. Besides John Taylor himself, they’re chock full of other fascinating characters. Here are a few examples: Alex Morrissey (descendant of Merlin Satanspawn and owner/operator of Strangefellows, the oldest bar in the history of Mankind); Razor Eddie – Punk God of the Straight Razor; Shotgun Suzie (aka Shooter Suzie, aka “Oh, God, it’s *her* – run!”); the Collector (the name says it all); and Walker (the immaculately-dressed representative of the secretive Authorities, the Powers-that-Be in the Nightside). In my opinion, Simon Green rivals Mike Resnick (another of my favorite authors) in his ability to create iconic and compelling secondary characters.

If you enjoy the “new urban fantasy” sub-genre – or if you’re looking for something new in hard-boiled crime or *noir* fiction – then give Simon Green’s “Nightside” stories a try. I’m hooked! Maybe you will be, too? **Λ Ψ Φ**

**\*\*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 in conjunction with a Pre-Pride Gaming Party on Saturday, **June 9th, at Peter and Rob's home, 1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC**. A short business meeting will begin at 3:00 PM; and the gaming party will begin shortly after that. 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



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](mailto: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](http://www.chicon7.org) Info: [info@chicon.org](mailto: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. Register on-line (via Eventbrite). Website: [www.gaylaxicon2012.org](http://www.gaylaxicon2012.org)

Oct. 12-14, 2012 **CAPCLAVE 2012**. ("A small relaxed literary convention with a program that usually focuses on the short fiction form.") Hilton Washington DC North/Gaithersburg (Gaithersburg, MD). Author GoH: John Scalzi; Author/Editor GoH: Nick Mamatas. Membership: \$50 from 5/31 to 7/30; \$55 from 7/31 to 9/29; \$60 from 9/30 to 10/7. Register on-line (with Paypal) or print PDF of membership form, make check payable to "Capclave", and send to: Capclave 2012 Registration, c/o Barry Newton, PO Box 53, Ashton, MD 20861. Website: [www.capclave.org](http://www.capclave.org)

Nov. 23-25, 2012 **DARKOVERCON GRAND COUNCIL 35**. (A *very* LGBT-friendly convention.) Crowne Plaza Baltimore (Timonium, MD). Guest of Honor: Nalo Hopkinson; Artist GoH: Samantha Press; Special Guest: Katherine Kurtz. Membership: \$50 until 11/1/2012; \$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](http://www.darkovercon.org) Info at: [jaille@darkovercon.org](mailto:jaille@darkovercon.org)

**Where, she wondered, would the darkness go?  
She knew. It would retreat to the edge of the world,  
and into the people she knew, and into her;  
she could feel it lurking there even now,  
hiding in her mind's shadows with her fears.**

Pamela Sargent  
"The Old Darkness" (1983)  
quoted in *Science Fiction Quotations*  
edited by Gary Westfahl  
(Yale University Press, 2005)