



# lambda Sci-fi DC Area Gaylaxians



PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044

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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 book discussion will be held on **August 23rd**.

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

**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

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## Sally Ride 1951 - 2012

Dr. Sally Ride died of pancreatic cancer on July 23rd. Ride was an American physicist and astronaut. At the age of 32, she became the first American woman to travel into space; and she is also the first known astronaut to have been in a long-term same-sex relationship.

Ride was one of 8,000 people to answer an advertisement in a newspaper seeking applicants for the U.S. space program; and she joined NASA in 1978. During her NASA career, she served as the ground-based capsule

communicator (CapCom) for the 2nd and 3rd Space Shuttle flights and helped to develop the Space Shuttle robot arm. Then, on June 18, 1983, Ride became the first American woman in space as a crew member of Space Shuttle *Challenger* (the 7th Shuttle flight). Her second space flight was in October 1984, also on the *Challenger*. In total, she spent more than 343 hours in space.

In 1987, Ride left her position in NASA headquarters to work at the Stanford University Center for Security and Arms Control. In 1989, she became a professor of physics at UC San Diego and Director of the California Space Institute. In 2001, she co-founded Sally Ride Science, a company that creates entertaining science programs and publications for upper elementary and middle school students, with a particular focus on girls.

Ride was private about her personal life. Ride's obituary revealed that her partner of 27 years was Tam O'Shaughnessy, a professor emerita of school psychology at San Diego State University. They became partners in 1985 and were together until Ride's death.

## ----- August LSF Meeting -----

The next LSF meeting will be held on Sunday, **August 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!

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## WHAT'S INSIDE?

LSF July Meeting Minutes (pg. 2); Leo Dillon (obituary - pg. 2); *Mythology Explored, Part 1* (book review - pg. 3); *About Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians* (pg. 4); *Con Calendar* (pg. 4)

## LSF July Meeting Minutes

minutes taken by Scott

Meeting location: Hall of Justice

Meeting guests: The Wonder Twins

[Editor's Note: Scott was late and missed the announcement about the LSF Gaming/Potluck Party on July 14 at Peter & Rob's.]

During a discussion of upcoming sci-fi conventions, Carl advised that Darkovercon has included a steampunk programming track in recent years.

The new *Spiderman* movie has opened. Rob said he was "underwhelmed" but thought that actor Andrew Garfield did a good job, even though he was the oldest high school student on Earth.

Carl liked the strippers in *Magic Mike*. [Editor's Note: Actually, he said he liked Matt Bomer.]

Did you know that the movie *Ted* (with the talking teddy bear) has genre content? [Editor's Note: Is it possible NOT to have "genre content" in a movie featuring a talking teddy bear?] The humor is similar to *Family Guy*. [Editor's Note: Same writer.]

The Pixar cartoon shown before *Brave* is cute. The storyline for *Brave* appears to be more "Disney" than "Pixar".

Yes, Harriet Tubman appears in the new summer blockbuster *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter!* But, no, she does not get bitten and become a vampire. Nice to know that the Underground Railroad aided in the vampire Battle of Gettysburg.

Some hesitation was expressed over the sci fi comedy *The Watch*. Would you be sitting in the theatre cringing in your seat for most of the movie?

There was banter about *The FP*, featuring a post-apocalyptic future where two rival gangs fight for control of Frazier Park by playing "Beat Beat Revelation" (a deadly version of "Dance Dance Revolution"). The what? This is what happens when children don't receive proper education.

How will the *Total Recall* remake (starring Colin Farrell) hold up?

Rob likes the overall concept of the TV series *Falling Skies*.

Neill Blomkamp, director of *Dis-*



### Leo Dillon 1933 – 2012

American illustrator Leo Dillon died on May 26th. He was one half of a husband-and-wife team of award-winning illustrators. Over the course of their 50-something-year collaboration, Leo and Diane Dillon produced hundreds of cover and interior illustrations in a wide range of genres. The interracial couple have described their work as incorporating motifs derived from their respective heritages.

In the F&SF field, the Dillons are famous for the dozens of covers they created for Ace Science Fiction

Specials. Their friendship with Harlan Ellison led to a number of cover illustrations for Ellison's short story collections, as well as cover and interior illustrations for Ellison's *Dangerous Visions* anthologies. The Dillons have won a Hugo Award for 1970 Best Professional Artist, a World Fantasy Life Achievement Award (2008), the prestigious Caldecott Medal (for children's books) for two consecutive years and an NAACP Image Award. You can visit a blog dedicated to the Dillons' magnificent body of work:

<http://leo-and-diane-dillon.blogspot.com/>



**Depiction of Harlan Ellison from the Dillon cover for *The Glass Teat***

*trict 9*, is bringing us *Elysium*, another sci-fi movie – this time about the ultra-rich who live on Elysium – a man-made space station – and the poor suckers living on a ruined Earth.

Rob mentioned *Splice*, a genre movie about the splicing of human and animal genes for medical use, producing a hybrid with parental issues.

Peter reported that there will be some sort of conclusion in the last episode of the SyFy series *Eureka*, which is wrapping up next week. It was noted that *Warehouse 13* will be returning and taking over the *Eureka* timeslot. And SyFy's *Alphas* is also returning.

Lots of chatter about Ridley Scott's film *Prometheus!* Too many inconsistencies.

Ang Le will direct a full-length movie of *Life of Pi*, a fantasy adventure novel published in 2001.

Peter reported that the new season of *Doctor Who* will commence after the Olympics. The Christmas special will

introduce a new companion. River Song will be in the new season; and Diana Rigg and her daughter Rachael Stirling will be cast in an upcoming episode.

The film version of *The Hobbit* (Part 1) will be released in December; it's being directed by Peter Jackson.

Do you recall *28 Days Later*, about a deadly virus that overtakes the UK within 28 days? Now there is *28 Months Later*, about the US Army starting reconstruction of the destroyed British Isles with returning refugees. But is the virus still around...?

Will NBC's new series *Revolution* – about the end of electricity and the society that emerges – be successful? Compare the premise against William Forstchen's novel *One Second After*.

*Safety Guaranteed* is a comedy genre film about time travel – screened at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival.

*Oz the Great and Powerful* (a prequel movie from Disney) will have a black-and-white opening in Kansas.

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## Mythology Explored, Part 1

book reviews by Carl

It's been a number of years since I last reviewed F&SF novels based on mythology—primarily Greco-Roman mythology. I recently ran across a couple of fascinating new examples on the shelves of my local Barnes & Noble.

### *Unholy Night*

by Seth Grahame-Smith

(Grand Central Publishing, 2012)

Surely you've heard of Seth Grahame-Smith? His first novel, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (2009), kicked off the massive "mash-up" craze, in which F&SF plots are added to classic works of public domain literature. In *P&P&Z*, Grahame-Smith cleverly alters Jane Austen's original *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) by turning the Bennet sisters into zombie-slayers. (The LSF Book Discussion Group discussed this book a couple of years ago.) Grahame-Smith's second novel, *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Slayer* (2010) has become a summer blockbuster film from 20th Century Fox.

And—not content with re-writing classic English literature or turning a beloved American icon into a "Buffy surrogate"—Grahame-Smith has written *Unholy Night*. It deals with one of the most well-known aspects of Christian mythology: the birth of the Christ Child and the visitation of the Three Magi. And I'm here to tell you that I think *Unholy Night* is a pretty darn good novel!

I know what you're thinking: "How could anyone write anything interesting and new about the Epiphany? Besides, isn't it—literally—*gospel*?" I'll deal with those issues in reverse order. Break out your Bibles, folks, and I think you'll see that there's precious little in there about the entire "Three Wise Men" incident. In fact, the Book of Matthew is the only one of the four Canonical gospels to even mention those camel-riding guys "from the East" (Matthew 2: 1-12). Everything you *think* you know about the Wise Men is based on a millennium of speculation and mythologizing and religious extrapolation—and probably influenced by Menotti's 1951 opera *Amahl and the Night*



*Visitors*, "We Three Kings" (the Christmas carol), and the opening scenes of *Ben-Hur* or something like that. But *Unholy Night* doesn't tell *that* story—not hardly, not nohow. What "actually" happened (according to Grahame-Smith) is just a tad different—well, rather *more* than a tad different.

First off, the "Wise Men" aren't especially wise—crafty maybe, but not wise. Neither are they Magi. They're thieves. Balthazar—the primary narrator—is known throughout the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire as "the Antioch Ghost," a notorious and previously uncatchable thief, murderer, and general all-around ne'er-do-well. Unfortunately, his luck seems to have run out and he's captured and thrown into a dungeon cell beneath King Herod's palace in Jerusalem. His new cellmates—Gaspar (an Ethiopian) and Melchior of Samos ("the finest swordsman in the empire")—were captured while trying to rob the Great Temple. All three are condemned to die horribly, per King Herod's explicit wishes; and Balthazar surprisingly requests (as his last wish): "Three priests. One to comfort each of us." (I think you can see where this is going.) In the course of their wild escape, the threesome end up hiding out in a certain stable in Bethlehem. (Cue the Heavenly choir in the background.) Following the Slaughter of the Innocents, the so-called Magi decide to help the Holy Family (and themselves) escape the clutches of Herod and his Roman backers by fleeing to Egypt. More adventures ensue.

At first, I thought this was going to be straightforward historical fiction—especially with the author's lead-in:

*The magic of Old Testament times is coming to an end.*

*Great floods, mystical beasts, and parting seas have given way to the empires of man. Many believe that God has abandoned the world—most of which is ruled by Rome and its new emperor, Augustus Caesar.*

In fact, except for a couple of out-of-body experiences by Balthazar—and the (unexplained) Star of Bethlehem—the Fantasy element starts out a little slow. (Hey, *nobody*—least of all Balthazar—seems to believe Joseph's and Mary's stories of Angelic pronouncements about the nature of their child.) But then Herod goads Augustus into backing his play. The Emperor sends Pontius Pilate and a large contingent of troops to hunt down the prophesied newborn Messiah—accompanied by the Emperor's own personal magus ("the last of his kind"). The Fantasy factor really revs up after that: magical storms, magical serpents, a plague of locusts, an army of the undead. Oh, yeah! Now we're talkin' Fantasy! And all that stands between the Child and these evil forces is the Antioch Ghost and his friends—and the Power of God.

OK, OK, so you've got a pretty darn good idea which side is going to win in the end. But I still think it's an exciting and satisfying read. And I certainly was fascinated to learn the fates of Balthazar, Gaspar, and Melchior (as devised by the author). *Unholy Night* is rather different from the other novels of Seth Grahame-Smith. I don't know if it'll be as popular as his first two novels, but I think it's just as ground-breaking. And I quite enjoyed it.

### Part 2 in Next Month's Newsletter

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Mansa Musa, by Leo & Diane Dillon

**\*\*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, **August 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



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 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. 9-12, 2012 **PHILCON 2012** ("The Philadelphia Area's Conference of Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror" - est. 1936). Crowne Plaza Hotel (Cherry Hill, NJ). Principal Speaker: Catherynne M. Valente; Artist Guest of Honor: Phil Foglio. Membership: \$40 for the weekend. Register on-line (with PayPal) or send membership request (with check payable to "Philcon 2012") to: Philcon 2012, PO Box 8303, Philadelphia, PA 19101-8303 Website: [www.philcon.org](http://www.philcon.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)

