



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 - Issue # 316 – July 2016

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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 round-table 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 July 28, 2016.

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

July 28 – *The Magicians*, by Lev Grossman (moderator: Carl).

Aug. 25 – *Nimona* (graphic novel), by Noelle Stevenson (moderator: Greg).

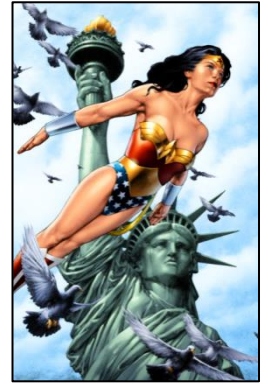
Sept. 22 – *The Scorpion Rules*, by Erin Bow (moderator: Claire).

Oct. 27 – *Luna: New Moon*, by Ian McDonald (moderator: Carl).

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Have a
super
4th of
July!



Star Trek Beyond Movie Outing (with Bonus Classic *Enterprise* Viewing) **July 23rd (Saturday)** announced by Peter

Come watch another *Enterprise* get blown up. This showing is in *3-D*. (Sorry, Rob.) Advance tickets can be bought at:

<http://www.si.edu/Imax/movie/1247/2016-07-23/#showtimes>

Where: Lockheed Martin Imax Theater, National Air and Space Museum, 6th Street and Independence Avenue, SW

Date: 7/23/2016 Time: 4:45 PM

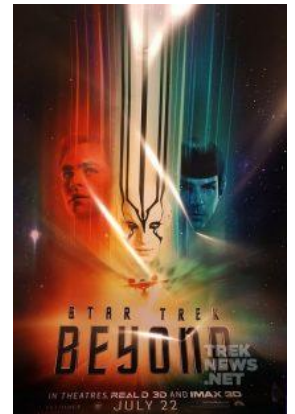
Dinner afterward in Chinatown at an eatery TBD.

I plan to be at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum at 2 PM to wander around the museum and gaze longingly at the original studio model of *Enterprise* that spent two years in "dry dock".

https://airandspace.si.edu/collection-objects/model-starship-enterprise-television-show-star-trek?object=nasm_A19740668000

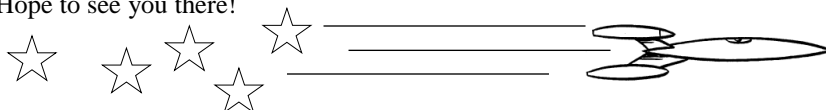
Questions? Drop me an email at: PeterPKnapp@gmail.com

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<<<<< July 2016 LSF Meeting >>>>>

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, July 10th**. The meeting will be held at Peter and Rob's home, **1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC**. The meeting will begin at 1:30 and the "group watch" will begin at 3:00 PM. Hope to see you there!



What's Inside?

Page 2: SF Books, Part 2 (book reviews).

Page 4: Information About Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians and Con Calendar.



SF Books (Part 2)

reviews by Carl

Back in May, I started this series of reviews, sparked by the sudden realization that I'd been reviewing a lot of Fantasy, Dark Fantasy, and Horror books lately. I figured it was high time to get back to Science Fiction.

Coincidentally, all of the SF books I've recently been reading are space operas (sort of) set in and around the solar system, between Mercury and the Oort Cloud (nothing interstellar). Last month, I reviewed the anthology *Mission Tomorrow* (Baen Books, 2015) and *Leviathan Wakes* (Orbit Books, 2011), the first novel in "The Expanse" series. And now on to a couple of classic SF books by John Varley: *The Ophiuchi Hotline* (Ace, 1993) and *The Golden Globe* (Ace, 1999).

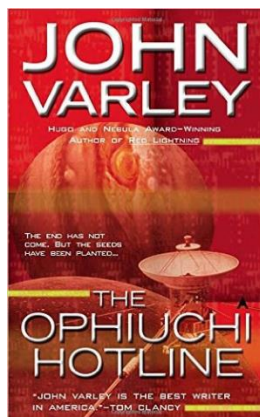
Both of these novels are set in what is known as Varley's "Eight Worlds" universe, which includes *Steel Beach* (1992, Hugo and Locus Awards nominee), a featured novel of the LSF Book Discussion Group several years ago. I've also read several "Eight Worlds" short stories (such as "The Barbie Murders") in *The John Varley Reader* (Ace, 2004). I'm a big fan; and I decided to finally read these two novels before asking Varley to autograph them at this year's Balticon.

Here's the back story: In 2050, "the Invaders" came to the Solar System. They seemed to have some kind of relationship with unknown life forms inhabiting Jupiter's upper atmosphere, and then they came to Earth. On behalf of what they considered the truly intelligent species of Earth (dolphins and whales), the Invaders quietly destroyed all traces of human technology – and then left. Ten billion humans starved to death in the next two years. Fortunately, there were human colonies on the Moon and elsewhere in the Solar System. Several centuries later, with the help of advanced technologies gained by eaves-dropping on alien communi-

cations, human civilization thrives on various planets, moons, and asteroids throughout the Solar System and even has minor colonies in the Oort Cloud – but Earth and Jupiter remain off-limits.

Many of the "Eight Worlds" stories deal with the ways in which technology (and necessity) shape morality and society. Cloning and genetic manipulation (within certain limitations) are fairly common. For example, instant sex changes are considered a matter of fashion by many segments of human society; and other biological modifications are a matter of necessity, depending on where one lives. Many of our current (and long-standing) sexual taboos no longer exist. Governments and entrepreneurs design vast cavernous underground environments – known as "disneylands" – as resorts or living spaces simulating times and places on Old Earth (such as 1930s Louisiana, or the Wild West of the 1880s). It is against this fascinating background that Varley has set his "Eight Worlds" stories.

Be warned that you'll be disappointed if you expect absolute consistency between and among all the "Eight Worlds" novels and stories. Varley himself readily admits that inconsistencies pop up every now and then. Minor quibbles, say I. Sit back and enjoy the ride.



The Ophiuchi Hotline (1977, Locus Award nominee) kind of sets the scene for all the other "Eight Worlds" stories. It's five centuries after the Invaders evicted humanity from Earth; and, with nowhere else to go, human civilization has settled in

on various moons, asteroids and planets (such as Mars and Pluto). Humanity didn't manage this all on their own, however. Seems as how someone (or something) out there in deep space – apparently somewhere near the star 70 Ophiuchi – has been transmitting a very helpful one-way data-stream toward the Solar System, for reason or reasons unknown. And this so-called "Ophiuchi Hotline" has provided humanity with the advanced technologies (biological and medical) needed to survive and thrive in their straitened circumstances. Alas, the Hotline contains no information on anything related to FTL technology, so humanity just has to make the best of it *within* the Solar System – being careful not to piss off whatever Invader presence remains on Jupiter.

And then there's the case of Lunar scientist Lilo-Alexandr-Calypto... She'd been caught data-mining the Hotline and convicted of using the information to conduct wildly illegal research. Her crimes?

"The State charges that Lilo-Alexandr-Calypto... did willfully and knowingly conduct experiments upon human genetic material with the intent of artificially inducing mutations in said material... reflecting potential structures atypical to the permitted spectrum of Humanity, in violation of the Unified Code of the Eight Worlds Confederation, Article Three (Crimes Against Humanity) Section Seven (Genetic Crimes). The State asks the penalty of permanent death."

Why was she doing this? Ah, that's part of the unfolding mystery.

At the last possible minute, Lilo (or maybe her clone?) is rescued from permanent execution by forces loyal to "Boss" Tweed, the jolly ex-Lunar President. Unknown to the Confederation, Tweed is rabble-raising and power-mongering behind the scenes; and Lilo's knowledge and skills are essential to his plans. His goal? To attack the seemingly invincible Invaders and win back the Earth! But stuff seems to keep going wrong. Lilo eventually learns that she has been cloned *number* of times and that her clones have been killed off one after the other when they apparently don't live up to Tweed's expectations or follow his orders.

And then a new message comes down the Hotline (which I'll paraphrase): "OK, you've been taking advantage of all the information we've been sending you for a very long time now. It's time to pay up. We're on our way and will expect full payment when we arrive...or else!"

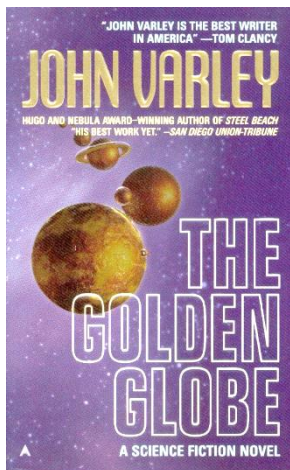
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SF Books (Part 2)

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What's Lilo up to? What's happening to her and her clones? Who's behind the Ophiuchi Hotline? And how will the Invaders react to all this? *The Ophiuchi Hotline* is a great read!



The Golden Globe (1998, Locus Award nominee) is a follow-up to *Steel Beach*. OK, there are definite links between the two, especially in the later chapters – but, trust me, *The Golden Globe* is also a satisfying stand-alone novel.

Kenneth Valentine is a 100-year-old down-on-his-luck actor making the rounds of small-time venues in the outer reaches of the Solar System. He's had a long and checkered career. As a little boy, he was a child prodigy, understudy to his father, John Valentine, an ambitious, itinerant Shakespearean actor. (There's another, darker side to young Kenneth's relationship with his father, which slowly comes to light over the course of the novel.) Kenneth Valentine takes advantage of a series of unexpected opportunities to become "Sparky" Valentine, a popular child star whose hit show becomes famous throughout the Eight Worlds Confederation. But at the height of his popularity, Sparky murders his father and disappears, spending the bulk of his life on the run. Using a series of aliases – and aided by the magnetic implants that allow him to alter his appearance – Valentine wanders the

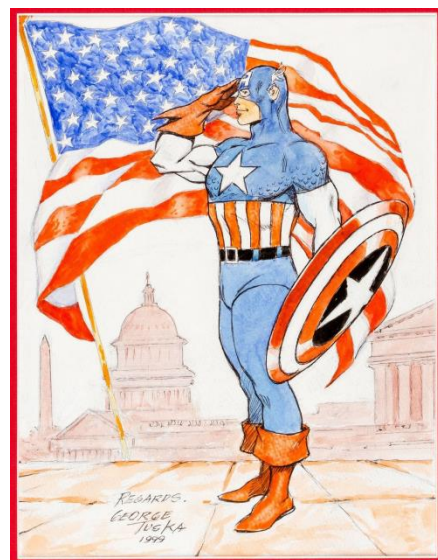


Coming in October! For more details, see page 4.

Eight Worlds, sometimes acting and sometimes running small-scale con games. He is accompanied by his faithful, genetically-augmented dog Toby and his amazing, mechanically-augmented theater trunk. But during a little breaking-and-entering affair on Pluto, he runs afoul of the powerful Charonese Mafia. And as he's running for his life, he learns of a once-in-a-lifetime acting opportunity: famous director (and old friend) Kaspara Polichinelli is mounting a production of *King Lear* on Luna. The lead belongs to Valentine IF he can get to Luna in time and IF he can keep from getting killed by a seemingly-unstoppable Mafia hitman and IF he can keep from being arrested for his father's murder or any of the other minor warrants he's accumulated over the years. The race is on!

But *The Golden Globe* isn't just a rollicking SF adventure story. I can't help but think of it as an extended, witty, and loving tribute to (and send-up of) Show Biz in its many guises: legitimate theater, children's TV, vaudeville, road show companies, Punch-and-Judy shows, theatrical extravaganzas, and so on. In its darker moments, it's also an exploration of child abuse survivors. I found it to be a very satisfying read – one more example of why I'm such a big John Varley fan.

(Rumor has it that for the past decade Varley has been working on *Irontown Blues*, a follow-up to both *Steel Beach* and *The Golden Globe*. Shades of George RR Martin!)
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“My country right or wrong” is a thing that no patriot would think of saying, except in a desperate case. It is like saying “My mother, drunk or sober.”

G.K. Chesterton
British novelist and critic
1874 – 1936



quoted in *The Cynic's Lexicon*,
by Jonathan Green
(St. Martin's Press, 1984)

* * 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 copy of 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, **July 10th, at Peter and Rob's home, 1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC.** 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



July 15-17, 2016 **SHORE LEAVE 38**. (Celebrating Star Trek's 50th Anniversary.) Hunt Valley Inn (Hunt Valley, MD). Membership: \$90 for the weekend (daily memberships available) – deadline for pre-registration 6/15/2016; prices higher at the door. Send a membership form, self-addressed stamped envelope, and check payable to "Shore Leave" to: Shore Leave 38, PO Box 6809, Towson, MD 21285-6809 Website: www.shore-leave.com E-mail: information@shore-leave.com

Aug. 17-21, 2016 **MIDAMERICON II, the 74th Worldcon**. Kansas City Convention Center & Bartle Hall (Kansas City, MO). GoHs: Kinuko Craft; Patrick & Teresa Nielsen Hayden; Tamora Pierce; Pat Cadigan. Membership: \$185 "until Spring 2016" (will go up after that). Registration is on-line (via PayPal). Website: <http://midamericon2.org/>

October 7-9, 2016 **CAPCLAVE 2016**. Hilton Washington DC North/Gaithersburg (Gaithersburg, MD). Membership: \$55 thru 7/31; \$60 from 8/1 thru 9/30; \$65 at the door. Author GoHs: Sarah Beth Durst, Tim Powers. On-line registration. Website: www.Capclave.org

Oct. 7-9, 2016 **GAYLAXICON 2016**. Doubletree by Hilton Hotel Minneapolis-Park Place (Minneapolis, MN). Guests of Honor: Eleanor Arnason (author); David Maxine (Hungry Tiger Press); Eric Shanower (*Age of Bronze*). Registration: \$65 thru Sept. 12th; \$80 at the door. Registration is on-line. Website: <http://www.gaylaxicon2016.org/>

Nov. 18-20, 2016 **PHILCON 2016**. Crown Plaza Hotel (Cherry Hill, NJ). Principal Speaker: CJ Cherryh; Artist GoH: Dave Seeley; Special Guest: LE Modesitt. Membership: \$45 through 7/31/2016. Checks payable to "Philadelphia Science Fiction Society" and send to: Philcon Registration, PO Box 8303, Philadelphia PA 19101 Website: www.philcon.org

Nov. 25-27, 2016 **CHESSIECON 2016**. Radisson North Baltimore [formerly North Baltimore Plaza Hotel] (Timonium, MD). Membership: \$55 until 11/15; \$60 at the door. GoH: Sarah Pinsker; Artist GoH: Tabitha Ladin; Music GoH: S.J. Tucker; Special Guest: Elizabeth Schechter. On-line registration via PayPal; or make check payable to "Thanksgiving Science Fiction Society" and send (with membership form) to: TSFS, Inc., PO Box 83032, Gaithersburg, MD 20883-3032 Website: <http://chessiecon.org/> Information: info@chessiecon.org

Feb. 17-19, 2017 **FARPOINT 2017**. Radisson Hotel North Baltimore (Timonium MD). Membership: \$80 pre-registration for the weekend (daily rates available). Guests: Enver Gjokaj ("Agent Daniel Sousa" from *Agent Carter*), more TBA. Checks payable to "Farpoint Enterprises" and send to: Farpoint Enterprises, 11708 Troy Ct., Waldorf, MD 20601. Register and pay on-line at: www.FarpointCon.com/register Website: www.FarpointCon.com