



# Lambda Sci-Fi

## DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 348 – March 2019

E-MAIL: [info@lambdascifi.org](mailto:info@lambdascifi.org)

WEBSITE: [www.lambdascifi.org](http://www.lambdascifi.org)

### 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 March 28.

Here are the details for the next several book discussions:

**March 28** – *Full Fathom Five* by Max Gladstone (moderator: John).

**April 25** – TBD [Ed. note: *That's a first!*]

**May 23** – *Carry On* by Rainbow Rowell (moderator: Ben)

ΛΨΦ



### LSF March Gaming Party announced by Peter & Rob



**What:** It's a gaming party. There's plenty of room for gaming, so please bring your favorite games (cards, board, etc.).

**When:** Saturday, **March 2nd**; 2:00 PM to 11:00 PM

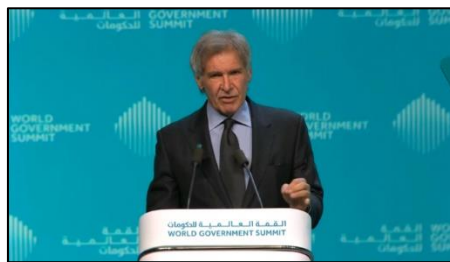
**What to Bring:** Bring your favorite table game (or two). Also, please bring munchies and/or soft drinks.

**Dinner:** For those who are interested, we'll order pizza at 6:30 PM. To get in on the pizza order, please bring \$10 in cash and put it in the pizza bucket with your name (it will be visible!). We'll order for as many people who put in money and any excess money will help support LSF's Pride table cost. If you don't want pizza, you can order take-out or go forage for food. There are a lot of food choices in the Midcity (14th and "U") Corridor. Also, delivery menus will be available at the party.

**Where:** Home of Peter and Rob, 1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC 20009-4181. Their home is in the Midcity (14th and "U") neighborhood between Dupont Circle and Logan Circle. Directions (with Metro & parking advice) at: <http://lambdascifi.org/club/PeterRob.html>

**Questions:** Contact Peter at:

ΛΨΦ [PeterPKnapp@gmail.com](mailto:PeterPKnapp@gmail.com)



**Harrison Ford**  
actor & conservationist

"Around the world, elements of leadership – including in my own country – to preserve their state and the status quo, deny or denigrate science. They are on the wrong side of history."

[during a speech in Dubai at the World Summit Government]

### <<<<< March 2019 LSF Meeting >>>>>

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, March 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 PM. The "group watch" will begin about 3:00 PM. Hope to see you there!



### What's Inside?

Page 2: Minutes of the Feb. LSF Meeting; Mobile Hotel Room; Happy Birthday!

Page 3: Ancient Myths Retold by Modern Authors, Part 1 (book review).

Page 4: Information About LSF: DC Area Gaylaxians and Con Calendar.

## Minutes of the February LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

It was a large meeting: 13 people attended; a mixture of new faces, “regulars”, and “rare appearances”.

**Movie News:** Carl and Gus both recommended *Glass*, the new M. Night Shyamalan movie. Rob said that *Into the SpiderVerse* is the best superhero movie ever; it even includes an animated appearance by Stan Lee. The sequel to the Finnish movie *Iron Sky* is now out; it’s called *Iron Sky: The Coming Race*.

**TV News:** Carl passed around a *TV Guide* article about *The Orville*. The Disney streaming service might roll out in 2020; the company is ending its streaming deal with Netflix, so that it can launch its own service as the exclusive streaming home for Disney movies and TV shows.

**Book News:** Rob thinks that *The City in the Middle of the Night*, a new book by Charlie Jane Anders, reminds him of Ursula K. LeGuin. Carl is currently reading *Black Leopard, Red Wolf*, an African-themed Fantasy novel by queer author Marlon James.

**Other News:** Peter solicited suggestions for nominees for this year’s **Hugo Awards** for Dramatic Works (Long and Short formats). He likes “Rosa” (the Rosa Parks episode) of *Doctor Who* Season 3 for the Short Dramatic Work. Scott reminded everyone that Washington, DC is the only bidding city for **2021 WorldCon** (with the decision to be made at WorldCon 2019 in Dublin, Ireland); and he asked if anyone wants to volunteer to help put on WorldCon right here in DC.

**Upcoming LSF Events:** Rob reminded everyone about **upcoming LSF book discussions:** *Mongrels* by Stephen Graham Jones (Feb. 28); and *Full Fathom Five* by Max Gladstone (March 28). He also announced an **LSF gaming party** on Saturday, March 2.

Then it was time for the 2019 blind book exchange! →

Finally, we watched preview videos for both *Iron Sky* and its sequel, *Iron Sky: The Coming Race*, plus “Brother”, the first Season 2 episode of *Star Trek: Discovery*.

ΛΨΦ

## Mobile Hotel Room

[from *American Way*, the American Airlines onboard magazine]



Imagine this: A driverless mobile suite rolls up to your home; you get in; and off you go on your vacation. The solar-powered suite contains a sleeping area, an entertainment center, shower, and mini-bar. You can have snacks or meals delivered via drones through the suite’s roof intake system. When you reach your destination, the mobile suite docks with your hotel, like a capsule docking with a space station; and it then opens into your larger hotel quarters.

The concept of the Autonomous Travel Suite (combining transportation and hospitality) was designed by Steve Lee (Aprilli Design Studio); it won the top prize at the recent Radical Innovation Awards in New York.

ΛΨΦ

## Happy Birthday, LSF!



Lambda Sci-Fi turns twenty-nine this month! The first meeting was held on March 14, 1990, at the home of Loree and Marcelle Cook-Daniels. There were nine attendees. The minutes of that first meeting include the following information:

“As for ‘business,’ we decided to circulate and read the Gaylactic Network’s Principles and By-Laws, with an eye toward sooner or later deciding if we want to join as a subsidiary group; not to decide now about officers, name, structure, etc...”

When Al Weiner created the first issue of the club newsletter a month later, he called it “Lambda Sci-Fi” – and everyone thought that sounded like a great name for the club, too!

ΛΨΦ



From	To	Item(s)
Peter	Wess	DVDs of 4 genre movies, including <i>Blade Runner</i> , <i>Galaxy Quest</i> and <i>The Fifth Element</i>
James	Rob	<i>Brief Cases</i> , a collection of “Harry Dresden” short stories by Jim Butcher
John	Karl	Marjorie Liu’s <i>Monstress, Vol. 1</i>
Carl	Scott	<i>Hammered</i> , <i>Scardown</i> and <i>WorldWired</i> by Elizabeth Bear
Joe	Carl	The complete DVD set of the <i>Star Trek</i> animated series
Wess	Peter	DVDs of the last three JJ Abrams “Kelvin Universe” <i>Star Trek</i> movies
Rob	Joe	Nine paperbacks – including works by Katherine Kurtz, Pat Murphy, Elizabeth Lynn (“a sampler of Fantasy by women over the last several decades”)
John	Karl	Ursula K. LeGuin’s <i>Left Hand of Darkness</i>
Scott	Peter	Geoff Ryman’s <i>Was</i> , David Gerrold’s <i>With a Finger in My I</i> , Charlaine Harris’s <i>Living Dead in Dallas</i>
Randy	James	DVD of <i>Dark Shadows</i> episodes & <i>Dark Shadows</i> memorabilia (including a werewolf bobblehead)

## Ancient Myths Retold by Modern Authors (Part 1)

a couple of reviews by Carl

*Circe* by Madeline Miller  
(Little, Brown & Co., 2018)

Back in 2012, Madeline Miller's first novel debuted: *The Song of Achilles*. It's the story of Achilles as told through the eyes of his lover Patroclus: an impressive retelling of the Greek myth, with solid, positive LGBTQ content throughout. Besides really enjoying the story itself, I was especially impressed by Miller's depictions of Greek divinities – primarily through the character of Thetis, the sea-nymph who was the mother of Achilles. The novel won several awards, including the Gaylactic Spectrum Award for Best Novel (2013).

And now comes Miller's second novel: *Circe*. It's another *tour de force*, says I! As the title implies, it tells the story of Circe, daughter of the sun god Helios and the sea nymph Perse. You probably know of her from Homer's *Odyssey*: she's the "sorceress" who turns Odysseus's men into pigs, is then outsmarted by wily Odysseus, and finally becomes his lover for a year. But if that's all you know about Circe, then let me assure you that there's a *lot* more to her life; and Miller has deeply researched Greek and Roman mythology, poetry, and drama to bring together all the various strands of Circe's life story.

Circe's early life among the gods is difficult. She's the daughter of the glorious, golden Helios (Titan god of the sun) and the coldly beautiful Perse (a sea nymph, daughter of the Titan Oceanos). Although beautiful by human standards, Circe is just "so-so" when it comes to the shining beauty of her family. And (except for being non-mortal) she doesn't seem to have inherited any of the magical powers that run in her family. Her brother Aeëtes ("the eagle") becomes the sorcerer-king of Colchis and owner of the Golden Fleece. Her sister, the beautiful but sinister Pasiphaë, is married off to King Minos of Crete (a son of Zeus) and eventually gives sorcerous birth to the Minotaur. Even her mortal niece, Medea, daughter



Circe, by Wright Barker (1889)

of Aeëtes, is renowned as a sorceress in the story of Jason and the Argonauts. To all intents and purposes, Circe would appear to be "the runt of the litter".

Miller's novel follows Circe's life through her difficult childhood, her discovery of her own type of herbal-magical witchcraft (*pharmakeia*, the use of medicine, drugs, or spells), her earliest love affair with a beautiful sea-god that ends in disaster, her solitary exile to the Mediterranean island of Aiaia, and her eventual meeting with Odysseus – as well as what comes after *that*. It's the story of a woman struggling against life's challenges and her own very difficult family background to ultimately achieve powerful self-agency. Along the way, Miller shows how Circe's legend intersects with hosts of other characters from Greek myth and legend, including her meetings with Daedalus, Ariadne, Jason, Medea, and Odysseus.

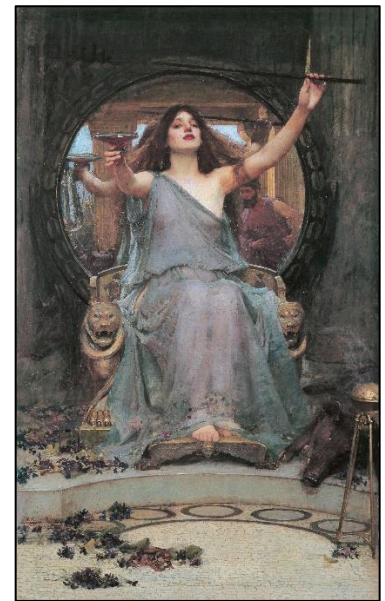
As I said earlier, I was impressed by Miller's depictions of Greek divinities in the earlier *Song of Achilles*, which tended to center around the frightening sea-nymph Thetis (mother of Achilles). Now, in *Circe*, Miller provides her readers with a far wider view of the Greek pantheon. There is, of course, the whole host of minor "oceanic" deities and nymphs that live in her grandfather's court. In addition to her own Titan ancestors – such as Helios, Oceanos, and Tethys – many of the major Olympian deities come "on stage", too. Through Circe's contacts with Apollo, Athena, Hermes, and Zeus, the reader is shown that "Olympian" doesn't always equate with "heroic" or "praise-worthy". In fact, with the possible exception of Circe's long-time friend Hermes, the members of the Greek pantheon mostly come across

as vain, selfish, self-centered, jealous, scheming, spoiled, and frighteningly powerful beings. (Greek mythology never exactly hides this fact; but Miller skillfully brings this to her readers' attention.) *Circe* doesn't afford as many opportunities as *Song of Achilles* for Miller to depict the stunning effect of "the divine" on mortal humans – a major attraction for me in the previous novel. In *Circe*, most of the "action" occurs within the "mythological community", with relatively few scenes involving mortal-divine interactions. Plus, of course, Circe herself (as noted earlier) may be "beautiful" but she's not "divinely beautiful" like all her relatives – it takes a while for humans (such as Odysseus) to realize that they're dealing with a semi-divine woman.

And, of course, there's queer content. How could there *not* be queer content in a story about the Greek pantheon? But it's mostly minor background details and relationships mentioned in passing. This novel is, after all, Circe's story; and Circe herself is demonstrably heterosexual. Perhaps the most endearing (and unexpected) gay content comes way toward the end of the novel – but I don't intend to include any "spoilers" in this short review.

I loved every minute of *Circe*. I certainly hope to see more of this kind of novel from Madeline Miller.

ΛΨΦ



Circe, by John William Waterhouse (1891)



**\* \* INFORMATION ABOUT LAMBDA SCI-FI: DC AREA GAYLAXIANS \* \***

**Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians** (LSF) is an organization for gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and trans-gendered (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, **March 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

March 9, 2019 (10 AM to 8 PM) **RETRIEVERCON** ("25 years of celebrating the art of Japanese animation"). UBMC Commons, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor (1000 Hilltop Circle, Baltimore). Panels, Vendors, Showings, and More! Admission is free!

Website: <https://sites.google.com/view/retrievercon>

March 29-31, 2019 **(RE)GENERATION WHO 5**. Bethesda North Marriott (Rockville MD). Guests: Paul McGann, Yee Jee Tso, Daphne Ashbrook, Frazer Hines. More info available at: [www.regenerationwho.com](http://www.regenerationwho.com)

April 5-7, 2019 **RAVENCON 14** (Virginia's Science Fiction & Fantasy Convention of Opportunity). Doubletree by Hilton Williamsburg (Williamsburg VA). Author GoH: Melinda Snodgrass; Music GoH: Library Bards (more to come). Membership: \$40 until 3/9/2019; \$50 at the door (daily rates available). Membership on-line through the website.

Website: <http://www.ravencon.com/>

May 24-27, 2019 **BALTICON 53**. Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel (Baltimore MD). Guests of Honor: Elizabeth Bear, Scott Lynch, Nicky Drayden (2018 Compton Crook Award Winner). Membership: \$71 from March 1 until April 15; \$74 beginning April 16; \$77 at the door.

Website: <https://www.balticon.org/wp53/>

E-mail at: [balticoninfo@balticon.org](mailto:balticoninfo@balticon.org)

July 4-7, 2019 **NASFiC 2019/WESTERCON 72/1632 MINICON**. Davis Conference Center & Hilton Garden Inn (Layton UT). Guests include: Laurel K. Hamilton, David Weber, John & Bjo Trimble, Jim Butcher, Eric Flint, Vincent Villafranca (artist & designer of the new World Fantasy Award). Membership: \$70 thru 03/31/2019 (will go up after that).

On-line registration at: [registration@spikecon.org](mailto:registration@spikecon.org)

Website: <https://www.spikecon.org/>

August 15-19, 2019 **DUBLIN 2019: AN IRISH WORLDCON**. Convention Center Dublin (Dublin, Ireland). Guests of Honor include: Jocelyn Bell Burnell, Diane Duane, Steve Jackson, Ian McDonald.

Current membership pricing and on-line registration: <https://dublin2019.com/join-us/>

Website: [www.dublin2019.com](http://www.dublin2019.com)

For general inquiries: [info@dublin2019.com](mailto:info@dublin2019.com)

October 18-20, 2019 **GAYLAXICON 2019**. Doubletree Hotel by Hilton Minneapolis-Park Place (Minneapolis MN). Membership: \$65 (ends 10/1/2019).

On-line registration via EventBrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/gaylaxicon-2019-registration-51438596226>  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/gaylaxicon-2019-registration-51438596226> Homepage: <https://www.facebook.com/MNGaylaxicon/>