



Lambda Sci-fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 350 – May 2019

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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 May 23.

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

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

June 27 – *An Unkindness of Ghosts* by Rivers Solomon (moderator: Rob S.).



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Cthulhu Fossil?

info passed along by Richard M.

I think H.P. Lovecraft would have gotten a kick out of this!

On April 10, a team of researchers – from Yale, Oxford, University of Leicester, Imperial College London, and University College London – made a fascinating announcement in the prestigious Proceedings of the Royal Society B. They announced the discovery of a 430-million-year-old fossil in Herefordshire, England, and identified it as a “new species of echinozoan”, a distant ancestor/relative of sea urchins and sea cucumbers. In fact, it belongs to an extinct group called “ophiocistioids”.

And now for the fun part...



Artist's rendering of *Sollasina cthulhu*

The research team named this new species *Sollasina cthulhu*.

Why did they name this creature after Lovecraft's infamous creation? Well, *Sollasina cthulhu* had 45 tentacles that extended out in every direction. It used these armored (yes, armored) “tube feet” to propel itself along the ocean floor and capture food. But don't run off just yet to consult some unholy tome in the library of Miskatonic University. Unlike the massive Cthulhu of fiction, the *Sollasina* was rather *un*-massive – with the fossil measuring just about an inch across or, as reported by the discoverers, about the “size of a large spider”.

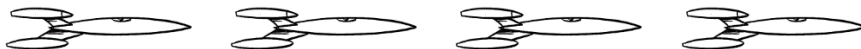
OK, so *Sollasina cthulhu* wasn't dreaming in the depths of sunken R'lyeh. Still, you've gotta love the fact that these scientists are Lovecraft fans. ΛΨΦ



Lovecraft's Cthulhu

<<<<< May 2019 LSF Meeting >>>>>

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, May 12th**. 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?

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My 2018 Hugo Nominations

by Peter Knapp



I plan to attend Dublin 2019: An Irish Worldcon and therefore can nominate candidates for the Hugo award. As I am primarily a media fan, I nominated the following works in two categories.

Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form

Doctor Who – I find that *Doctor Who* is a show people either love or are indifferent to. It is my all-time favorite SF show, which I have been watching since I was 13 years old.

“Rosa” – This is the best episode of *Doctor Who* I’ve seen in years. The Doctor and her companions have to stop the villain from preventing Rosa Parks from refusing to give up her seat on the bus, which acted like a catalyst for the Civil Rights Movement. “Rosa” is part history lesson and part modern day social commentary. My favorite part of the episode is a quiet moment, when the two younger companions, Ryan and Yasmin, talk about their experiences with racism in modern day U.K. Powerful stuff!

“Demons of the Punjab” – When I was a teenager, I learned about the Magna Carta from *Doctor Who*, much to the disgust of my Welsh friend, who was watching the episode with me and was horrified that I didn’t know about one of the source materials of the U.S. Declaration of Independence. I learned more history with “Demons of the Punjab”, from the term “partition of India” to the name of the border between India and Pakistan, the Radcliffe Line. What made the episode so powerful was showing the human cost of the Radcliffe Line, which literally separated families. More powerful stuff!

The Expanse – In my opinion, *The Expanse* is the best sci-fi show in TV right now. The book series it’s based on is amazing, too. Think *House of Cards* or *Game of Thrones* in space.

“Immolation” – This mid-season episode brings to a conclusion the war between Earth and Mars, shows the alien threat escape to threaten all human life another day, and brings two of the humans

who allowed the alien presence to become a threat to justice. While the scope of the action is broad, the characters we’ve been following for 2½ seasons really shine. At its heart, *The Expanse* is about the characters, not the epic space battles they find themselves in. The writing is top notch.

“Fallen World” – Drummer and Ashford, the captain and first officer a Mormon generation ship built by and stolen by Belters, have been at odds with each other on the role the Belters and Earth and Mars. They both become trapped and have to work together to escape and deal with larger threats than human political machinations. Most characters in *The Expanse* are not good or bad. Sometimes they do bad things for the best of intentions. Sometimes they behave contrary to expectations. “Fallen World” is full of characters behaving like real, fallible, unpredictable humans.

Star Trek: Discovery – While *Doctor Who* may be my favorite show of all time, *Star Trek* was my introduction to Science Fiction; and it changed my life forever. *Star Trek: Discovery*, the seventh show in the series, builds on the legacy of its predecessors.

“What’s Past Is Prologue” – It took me a while to warm up to the latest incarnation of *Star Trek*. The Klingon war that transpired through most of the season did not jazz me. But when the crew of the *Discovery* find themselves in the Mirror Universe, the show got good. “What’s Past Is Prologue” draws to a close several story arcs woven through most of the season, and it does so in an enjoyable way. I love, love, love Michelle Yeoh; and she steals the show every time she’s on screen and chews up the scenery as Empress Philippa Georgiou. This episode was a lot of fun!

Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form:

Ant-Man and the Wasp – While ensemble movies like *The Avengers* are fun, I prefer superhero movies that focus on a few characters and are often smaller in scope. *Ant-Man and the Wasp*, the follow-up to the delightful *Ant-Man*, continues and expands the story of the Ant-Man “family” and their struggles to do the right thing is an overly complex world. I walked out of the theater with a

warm fuzzy feeling in my heart.

Aquaman – Any movie that makes Aquaman cool deserves an award. Nuff said!

Black Panther – *Black Panther* blew my socks off. In addition to being a great superhero movie, it talked about what it means to be black in Africa, the U.S., and even the world at large. It doesn’t shy away from racism; and while the way the villain tries to address racism is misguided, his taking a stand against one of humanity’s worst aspects is powerful stuff.

Incredibles 2 – Picking up immediately after the end of the first *Incredibles* movie (released 14 years prior), *Incredibles 2* is another character-driven movie. Pixar yet again does a great job of tugging at my heartstrings, both with hysterical comedy and human drama. The youngest member of the family, Jack-Jack, steals every scene he’s in, along with Edna Mode, who has to design a suit for Jack-Jack and bonds with him, much to the chagrin of his father. *Incredibles 2* is Pixar storytelling at its best.

Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse – Somehow, I missed this movie when it first came out. At the recommendation of friends, I saw it in the theater and was blown away. Six Spider beings from different universes join forces to save the day. Each Spider character is animated in the style appropriate to their character, which somehow visually works really well. (Two additional Spider-Men appear in the end credits.) This may be the best superhero movie I’ve ever seen. It was that good!



Stop the Presses! The Hugo nominations have been announced. In the Best Dramatic Presentation categories, the nominees are:

Long Form - *Annihilation*; *Avengers: Infinity War*; *Black Panther*; *A Quiet Place*; *Sorry to Bother You*; and *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*.

Two of my nominations, *Black Panther* and *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*, were chosen. Of these two picks, I think *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* is the better movie, but I think

(continued on page 3)

Minutes of the April LSF Meeting taken by Scott

Teresa initiated a name circle, since a few new people were in attendance.

Karl chatted about Frederick Pohl's 1977 novel *Gateway* and how he discovered that the used paperback he purchased turned out to be an autographed copy. He also told a story of sending a letter to author Ursula K. LeGuin, complimenting her on her writing; she sent him a response via postcard, which he enjoyed. He passed around the postcard for us to see.

There was a long discussion about the comparative popularity and societal impact of *Star Wars* versus *Star Trek*, based on the concepts of *Star Wars* being more "visceral" and *Star Trek* being more "cerebral". And what about *The Orville*, with its heavy societal commentary (genocide, gender reassignment, drug addition, porn addition) and its frequent insertions of silliness?

Movie News

There is some question about whether the trailers for *Avengers: End Game* include scenes that will not actually be seen in the movie. Rob commented that other MCU movie trailers have included footage that did not end up on screen. Trailers for *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker* have also come out; and a movie outing is being planned for the December 2019 release. Peter and Rob were surprised that they loved the new movie *Shazam*; based on the trailers, they had feared that it would be stupider. Fox's *Dark Phoenix* is being released in June. *BrightBurn* falls into the category of "superhero horror" and sounds like the Clark Kent/Superman mythos gone bad: an infant from another world lands on Earth, discovers that he has superpowers – and goes bad. Awesome Con in two weeks at the Washington Convention Center; and Rob reported that he will be going to see *Avengers: End Game* on that Friday. Filming of Denis Villeneuve's *Dune* reboot has begun.

TV News

HBO's *Game of Thrones* (the final season) resumes tonight; lots of

speculation about which characters will get killed off this season. (A prequel to the book series is currently in bookstores.) Carl reported that he is binge-watching Season One of *American Gods*; he noted that it does not directly mirror the book. And Teresa noted that she does not recognize all of the gods referenced in the TV show. Rob suggested that Disney Plus will have an impact on streaming services: \$6.99/month for the first year; and they will be creating original shows. *The Star Trek: Discovery* finale is this Thursday; but Peter noted that *ST:D* has been renewed. There are reported to be a couple of new *Star Trek* series in the planning stages: one centered on Jean-Luc Picard and one centered on Section 31. DC has created a couple of new TV series – *Titans* and *Doom Patrol* – and DC Universe has now made available a huge set of its earlier content.

Book News

Air Logic, the long-awaited fourth (and final) book in Laurie Marks's "Elemental Logic" series is coming out soon. *A Brightness Long Ago*, a new novel from Gay Gavriel Kay is coming out in May – Rob is excited! Max Gladstone's *Emerald Goddess* is also coming out soon. *Luna: Moon Rising*, the third book in Ian McDonald's "Luna" series, is currently in bookstores. Carl said that he was interested in finding a copy of Andy Lane's novel *All-Consuming Fire*, an original *Doctor Who* adventure featuring Sherlock Holmes and Cthulhu, but that he was having no luck finding it. Big surprise! – Rob knew that Peter has a copy.

Upcoming LSF Events

Rob announced this-coming-Saturday's LSF gaming party (2 PM). LSF will also host a DC Pride gaming-and-parade-viewing party (Sat., June 8) and a table at Capital Pride (Sun., June 9). Upcoming LSF Book Discussions: *Temper* by Nicky Drayden (April); *Carry On* by Rainbow Rowell (May); and *An Unkindness of Ghosts* by Rivers Solomon (June).

Finally, we group-watched Episode #1 of DC Universe's *Doom Patrol*. (There are definite changes from the original comic book series – including some surprising Queer content.) ΛΨΦ



My 2018 Hugo Nominations

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Black Panther would win the Hugo if it were a two-way competition.

Short Form - *The Expanse*: "Abaddon's Gate"; *Doctor Who*: "Demons of the Punjab"; *Dirty Computer*; *The Good Place*: "Janet(s)"; *The Good Place*: "Jeremy Bearimy"; and *Doctor Who*: "Rosa".

Two of my nominations in this category, "Demons of the Punjab" and "Rosa", both from *Doctor Who*, made the final ballot. And while neither of the two episodes of *The Expanse* that I nominated were chosen, the crowd-pleasing season finale, "Abaddon's Gate", made the cut. I hope "Abaddon's Gate" wins. ΛΨΦ

New Moon Discovered Near Neptune

info passed along by Carl

The planet Neptune is now known to have 14 moons. A small moon – about 20 miles in diameter, about the size of Chicago – has been discovered near the inner orbit of Neptune. Originally known as S/2004 N 1, it was named Hippocamp in February 2019 – named for a half-horse, half-fish sea monster from Greek myths.

Hippocamp is so dim that it was not seen during the Voyager 2 fly-by in 1989. Mark Showalter (SETI Institute) found it by analyzing archived Neptune photographs made by the Hubble Space Telescope between 2004 and 2009. Showalter describes its surface as being as dark as "dirty asphalt".

Tiny Hippocamp orbits between the much-larger moons Larissa (5th closest moon) and Proteus; and its small size runs counter to a trend among other regular Neptunian satellites: increasing diameter with increasing distance from Neptune. Showalter theorizes that Hippocamp is "shrapnel" left over from an ancient collision between Proteus and a comet or other passing object. The massive Protean crater known as "Pharos" could be the site of the impact and the birthplace of Hippocamp.

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**** 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, **May 12th, 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

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). Artist GoH: Charles Vess. Membership: \$74 until 5/15/2019; \$77 at the door. Website: <https://www.balticon.org/wp53/> E-mail at: balticoninfo@balticon.org

July 4-7, 2019 **NASFiC 2019/WESTERCON 72/1632 MINICON**. Davis Conference Center & Hilton Garden Inn (Layton UT). Guests include: Laurell 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 ("pricing might change after that"). On-line registration at: registration@spikecon.org Website: <https://www.spikecon.org/>

July 12-14, 2019 **SHORE LEAVE 41** (a fan-run media SF convention). Hunt Valley Inn/Delta Marriott (Hunt Valley MD). Guests: "will be announced as soon as they're confirmed". Membership: \$95 for the weekend; per-day memberships available (deadline for registration = 7/15/2019) thereafter, registration limited to 1,500; at-the-door memberships will be higher. Website: <http://www.shore-leave.com> E-mail: information@shore-leave.com

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 For general inquiries: info@dublin2019.com

Aug. 30 – Sept. 2, 2019 (Labor Day Weekend) **TCEP 26** ("Gaming A to Z"). Hampton Inn & Suites (Washington-Dulles Airport, Sterling VA). Membership: \$40 (25% discount if you register by 7/31/2019). On-line registration available at: <https://tcep-barkingmad.org> (their website).

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> Homepage: <https://www.facebook.com/MNGaylaxicon/>

Nov. 29 – Dec. 1, 2019 **CHESSIECON 2019**. Red Lion Inn North Baltimore (Timonium MD). Guests of Honor: Charlie Jane Anders; Music GoH: Cathy McManamon; Special Guest: Tom Smith. Membership: \$55 thru 11/15/2019; \$60 after that and at the door. Website: www.chessiecon.org Info at: info@chessiecon.org

Feb. 21-23, 2020 **FARPOINT** ("Your fan-run convention for 27 years!"). Delta Hotel by Marriott (Hunt Valley, MD). Guests: To be announced in Spring 2019. Website: www.FarpointCon.com "Instagram & Twitter for all the news!"