



Lambda Sci-fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 353 – August 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 August 22.

Here are the details for the next several discussions:

Aug. 22 – *A Spectral Hue* by Craig Laurance Gidney (moderator: Rob G.).

Sept. 26 – *All Systems Red* by Martha Wells (moderator: Greg).

Oct. 24 – *The Ballad of Black Tom* by Victor Lavalle and "The Horror at Red Hook" by H.P. Lovecraft (mod.: Carl).

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Gaylaxicon 2019
from Don Kaiser, Chair
www.gaylaxicon.org



Gaylaxicon is returning to Minnesota on October 18-20, 2019; and we would like you to join us! We are once again at the DoubleTree Minneapolis Park Place and once again have two ballrooms for three tracks of programming, an art show, and a dealer's room. Gaming will again be in the Season Suites and will be open throughout the con and stocked with lots of games for you to enjoy throughout the convention.

We have a great lineup of Guests of Honor: Gregory Maguire (author of several dozen crossover books for adults and children; his best-known work is *Wicked*); Yoon Ha Lee (writer and game designer whose debut novel, *Ninefox Gambit*, won the Locus Award for best first novel and was a finalist for the Hugo, Nebula, and Clarke awards); Matt Baum (writer, podcaster, and video-maker whose work focuses on queer culture, geeks, and all things strange and wonderful); Michael Dahl (author of many books for young readers, including the bestselling *Bedtime for Batman* and

Be A Star, Wonder Woman picture books); and Samantha R. Crossland (fashion designer and costumer, author and illustrator of *Steampunk and Cosplay Fashion Design and Illustration*).

We also have a long list of additional professional authors and artists, both local and not, who are attending the convention and I hope that you will also have a chance to talk with them during the convention.

Our fabulous con suite will be filled with good food, hot and cold beverages and conversation, as well as the annual Chocolate Symposium.

Registration for the convention is available at our web site. Hotel rooms are also available linked from our web site.

We are looking forward to seeing you all and please be sure to spread the word about what a great convention Gaylaxicon is.



<<<<<< August 2019 LSF Meeting >>>>>>

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, August 11th**, 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?

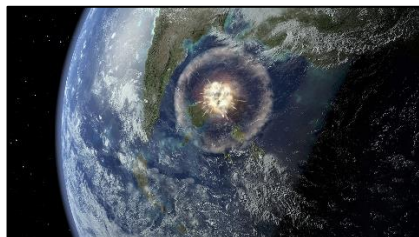
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Fossil Evidence from the K-T Extinction

info passed along by Carl



About 66 million years ago, a massive asteroid crashed into a shallow sea near what is now Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, carved out a 90-mile-wide crater, and blasted mega-tons of vaporized debris into space. This planetary catastrophe is believed to have been responsible for killing off about three-quarters of all then-extant species, most famously dinosaurs. It was originally known as the K-T (Cretaceous-Tertiary) Extinction.

The interstellar nature of the extinction was proposed in the 1980s by Luis and Walter Alvarez (UC Berkeley); they pointed to the surprisingly iridium-rich geologic boundary capping off Cretaceous deposits world-wide. (Iridium is rare in Earth's crust; but not in asteroids.)

Now comes Robert DePalma (doctoral student, U Kansas) who began his excavations of the Hell Creek Formation in North Dakota in 2013. The well-researched Hell Creek Formation sits right at the K-T boundary and has been described as "the first mass death assemblage of large organisms anyone has found." Since 2013, DePalma and other paleontologists have uncovered (among other things) lots of fossilized sturgeon and paddlefish with tiny glass spheres embedded in their gills.

"So what?" you ask. OK, let's go back to the asteroid collision. Debris from the crash fell back to Earth as droplets of molten rock and glass. At the time, the Hell Creek area was a river valley that fed into the great Western Interior Seaway, which bisected North America and connected the Arctic Sea and the Gulf of Mexico. Thirty-foot surges quickly sloshed around the inland sea. Marine life was splashed ashore and pressed into the mud. It's estimated that

(continued on page 3)

Minutes of the July LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

TV News: Rob enjoyed the first season of *Krypton*. Season 3 of *Stranger Things* has openly queer content; and Rob reported that the John Carpenter film *The Thing* has influenced Season 3 of *Stranger Things*. There is more LGBTQ+ content in the current season of *The Handmaid's Tale*. David described how JJ Abrams has had fun with coma-induced themes in the animated series *Archer* – deliberate anachronisms, etc. Forthcoming series from Disney+: *WandaVision*, *Loki*, *Hawkeye*, *Falcon/Winter Soldier*, and a live-action *Star Wars* limited series called *Mandalorian*.

Movie News: Everyone loved the new *Spiderman* movie! Rob liked the way Mysterio messed with Spiderman's head, and he feels that Tom Holland is a perfect actor to play Spiderman. Carl is looking forward to Pixar's forthcoming feature *Onward* (sometime later this year). *Star Wars: Rise of Skywalker* will be released in December. Rob talked about the recent *Godzilla: King of the Monsters*, which he described as horrible. Rob reported that he likes the Chinese 2019 film *Wandering Earth*, about a group of astronauts guiding the Earth away from an expanding sun.

Book News: Teresa recommends *The Power* by Naomi Alderman, about women who can generate electricity from their hands. ("What would happen if women suddenly possessed a fierce new power?") She'll also be suggesting Edgar Cantero's *Meddling Kids* for the LSF book club; it's about a former group of young detectives, reminiscent of the Scooby Gang. Rob wants to pick up a copy of *How to Win the Time War* by Amal El-Mohtar and Max Gladstone. ("Two time-traveling agents from warring futures, working their way through the past, begin to exchange letters.")

Other News: Carl watched the classic *The Day the Earth Stood Still* last week; he discussed comparisons with the short story upon which it was based: "Farewell to the Master" by Harry Bates and noted that the movie still seems relevant, while the short story seems somewhat "clunky". Rob & Peter will be going up to Manhattan to see the two

Harry Potter plays – they're getting excited! Teresa introduced us to Sun Cinema, located in Mount Pleasant, which shows classic genre films: www.suncinema.com Carl passed around a promotional flyer for the ConneXions 2019, a slash fiction convention being held in Arlington this October; the flyer includes a Kirk/Spock image, of course.



LSF Book Discussion: The title for discussion at this month's LSF Book Discussion Group is *Abbott*, a graphic novel by Saladin Ahmed.

Then we watched the first episode of *Swamp Thing*, a new series from the DC Universe channel.

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It crawled out of the darkness and hot damp mold into the cool of a morning. It was huge. It was lumped and crusted with its own hateful substances, and pieces of it dropped off as it went its way, dropped off and lay writhing, and stilled, and sank putrescent into the forest loam.

- "It" by Theodore Sturgeon - (1940)

quoted in
Science Fiction Quotations: From the Inner Mind to the Outer Limits
edited by Gary Westfahl
(Yale University Press, 2005)

New Feathered Dinosaur Discovered

info passed along by Carl



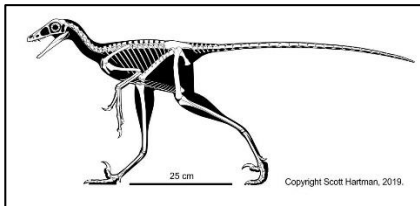
Artist's conception of *Hesperornithoides miessleri*

Back in 2003, paleontologist Bill Wahl was excavating the bones of an enormous *Supersaurus* (nicknamed “Jimbo”) in the 150-million-year-old rocks of the Morrison Formation in Wyoming, when he noticed something peculiar a few inches above the main bone layer: an accumulation of tiny bones. At first the bones seemed like they might belong to a flying pterosaur of some kind. Further examination revealed that the partial skeleton instead might belong to a tiny new species of raptor-like dinosaur, the oldest yet found in North America.

Since its discovery, rumors have abounded about the specimen; and experts have been waiting to hear more about it. On July 10 of this year, in the journal *PeerJ*, the new dinosaur was named: *Hesperornithoides miessleri*. It's categorized as an early member of the small sickle-clawed dinosaurs called troodontids – a group of dinosaurs that includes the famous *Velociraptor* as well as the forerunners of birds. Paleontologist and artist Scott Hartman described its Jurassic Wyoming habitat as “a semi-wet area with herbaceous plants, but no trees to speak of.” Hartman and colleagues are confident that the little dinosaur (less than three feet long) was extensively feathered. But, based on the habitat and details from its skeleton, it appears that *Hesperornithoides* ran along the ground, rather than fluttering through the air

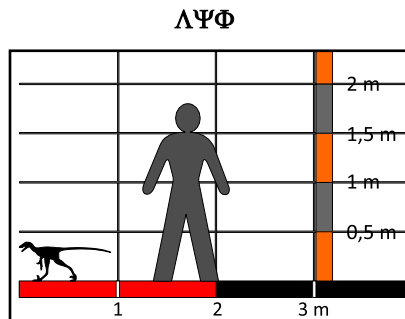
The *Hesperornithoides* skeleton has traits associated with the origin of flight in other dinosaurs, such as a curved wishbone (an important site for muscle

attachments used for flight in early birds) and a “semilunate carpal” (a wrist bone that allows for bird-like folding of the hand under the arm). The remains of *Hesperornithoides* and related species indicate that many of the features that would eventually allow small dinosaurs to fly evolved on the ground first. Indications are that flight wasn't a matter of straight-line evolution, but that dinosaurs with aerial abilities evolved multiple times from ancestors who lived on the ground. Thus, species such as the famous *Archaeopteryx* and *Microraptor* may represent multiple origins of aerodynamic skills like fluttering or gliding; and birds are likely to have evolved from a dinosaur closer in form to *Hesperornithoides*.



Skeletal reconstruction of *H. miessleri*

Hartman says: “I think it definitely gets us closer to what the forerunners of birds looked like, but not because *Hesperornithoides* itself was that animal.” What the new fossil seems to indicate is that the origin of flying birds might have occurred later than researchers had expected – and in a more specific group of dinosaurs with a body plan like that of *Hesperornithoides*. Says paleontologist Darla Zelenitsky: “Regardless of the exact phylogenetic position of *Hesperornithoides* among bird relatives, the discovery of a well-preserved specimen from North America that is so close to the ancestry of birds and Jurassic in age is unusual to say the least.”



Fossil Evidence from the K-T Extinction

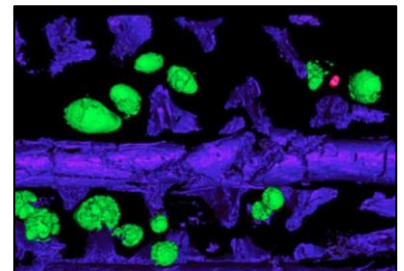
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tektites (glass beads) rained down on the Hell Creek area within 15 minutes of the impact, despite the fact that Hell Creek is over 2,000 miles from the impact site. Fish (such as sturgeon) were eventually fossilized in the sediment; and their fossils are remarkably well-preserved, including the tiny glass beads embedded in their gills. (There's also lots of iridium in the deposits.)

Penn State paleoceanographer Timothy Bralower has called the recently-published Hell Creek discoveries “the equivalent of finding people in life positions buried by ash after Pompeii” and has said that these fossils take us “back to the day that the dinosaurs died.”

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X-ray images showing glass beads embedded in fossilized fish gills

There is no reason whatever to believe that the order of nature has any greater bias in favour of man than it had in favour of the ichthyosaur or the pterodactyl.

- *The Fate of Homo Sapiens* -
by H.G. Wells (1939)

quoted in
Science Fiction Quotations: From the Inner Mind to the Outer Limits
edited by Gary Westfahl
(Yale University Press, 2005)

**** 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, **August 11th, 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

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

August 16-18, 2019 **CONNEXIONS 2019** ("Slash, the Final Frontier" – a media convention for slash). Holiday Inn (Arlington VA). For more information, visit their website: www.connexionssouth.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/>

October 18-20, 2019 **CAPCLAVE 2019.** Hilton Washington DC/Rockville (Rockville MD). Guests of Honor: Martha Wells, Robert J. Sawyer. Membership: \$60 through July 31; \$65 from Aug. 1 thru Sept. 30; \$70 at the door. Make checks payable to "CAPCLAVE" and send to: Capclave 2019 Registration c/o San Scheiner, 1518 North Edison Street, Arlington VA 22205-2638.

Website: www.capclave.org

For information: info@capclave.org

Nov. 1-3, 2019 **ANIME USA 2019** ("Of Otaku, By Otaku, For Otaku"). Washington Marriott Wardman Park (Washington DC). Guests: various voice actors and others. Pre-registration: \$70 for the weekend (daily rates available).

Website: www.animeusa.org

Registration site: animeusaregistration.org

Nov. 8-10, 2019 **PHILCON 2019.** Crown Plaza Hotel (Cherry Hill NJ). Guests: Tim Pratt (Principal Speaker), Stephanie Pui-Mun Law (Artist GoH). Membership: \$45 through 5/31/2019 (will go up after that). On-line registration.

Website: www.philcon.org

Facebook: www.Facebook.com/Philcon.PSFS



Flash Gordon & Dale Arden
illustration by Al Williamson