



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – RE-Issue # 361 – April 2020

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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 April 23rd.

Here are the details for the next discussion:

NOTE: Due to Coronavirus concerns, the previously-scheduled March 26 book discussion has been cancelled.

April 23, 2020 – *Lovecraft Country* by Matt Ruff (moderator: Carl).

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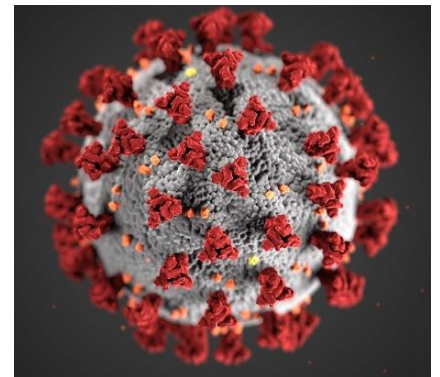
Cancellations of Upcoming LSF Events

Due to the current public health concerns, Lambda Sci-Fi has elected to cancel all of our scheduled events through mid-April. We, like all of you, hope the public health crisis abates as soon as possible; and we'll re-assess events beyond that point by mid-April. Please keep an eye out for any future updates.

The following events are cancelled:

- Thursday, March 26th Book Discussion (*The Night Circus*)
- Saturday, April 4th "404 Not Found" Gaming Party
- Sunday, April 12th Monthly LSF Meeting/Social

While many of us are spending additional time at home physically self-isolating, we encourage folks to use our Facebook group to chat and share thoughts on all the TV shows and movies we're all watching; the books and comics we're all reading; the games we're playing (and sharing gaming platform IDs to play together!) and so on. Physical self-isolation doesn't need to be social isolation!



We hope everyone stays safe and well and looks out for each other. We look forward to physically seeing you all soon!

- Rob (and the rest of the LSF gang) –

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Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/8534873403/>

"There are no absolute certainties in the universe. A man must try to whip order into a yelping pack of probabilities, and uniform success is impossible."

-- Jack Vance

quoted in *Science Fictionisms*
compiled by William Rotsler
(Gibbs-Smith Publisher, 1995)

<<<<< April 2020 LSF Meeting CANCELLED >>>>>

Due to Coronavirus concerns, the previously-scheduled April 12th LSF meeting has been cancelled. We'll keep you posted on the resumption of upcoming LSF meetings. Hope to see you there!



What's Inside?

Page 2: Roving Scoundrels, Part 2 (book review); Minutes of the March LSF Meeting.

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



Roving Scoundrels - Part 2 - book review by Carl

In last month's newsletter, I reviewed two F&SF books featuring major characters who are scoundrels: *Forays of a Fat Man* by Matthew Hughes and *Dr. Potter's Medicine Show* by Eric Scott Fischl. I pointed out that these works are part of a long literary tradition of popular scoundrels, although in these cases filtered through the lens of F&SF. *Forays* is a collection of short stories featuring the interstellar adventures of Luff Embry, described as "a thief, a forger and an adept at several of the varied arts of relieving the careless—or even those who were merely not quite careful enough—of the burden of owning precious goods." In contrast, *Dr. Potter's Medicine Show* is a Weird West novel featuring an itinerant medicine show whose apparent head – Dr. Alexander Potter – sells a typical phony cure-all; but there are sinister forces at work against which Potter is vainly struggling.

And here's another example...



The Sam Gunn Omnibus
by Ben Bova
(TOR Books, 2007)

Maybe you'd never heard of Mat-thew Hughes or Eric Scott Fischl, the authors whose works were featured in my previous review. But surely you've heard of the author of *this* collection: Ben Bova? He's been writing F&SF for over

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Minutes of the March LSF Meeting taken by Scott

Lots of chat about the Coronavirus (COVID-19). It was noted that EmeraldCon (Seattle) has been canceled. Will Awesome Con at the Washington Convention Center likewise be canceled?

Peter showed off his latest toy acquisitions: Robbie the Robot and Iron Giant, plus some Lego dinosaur skeletons. He also passed around a flyer for the July Confluence Con 2020 in Pittsburgh.

Peter and Rob shared their experience at the new Star Wars Galaxy Edge exhibit at Disneyland – a totally immersive experience. Rob loved the Rise of the Resistance, Smuggler's Run, and Guardians of the Galaxy rides.

Movie News: The new "James Bond" movie, *No Time to Die* (starring Daniel Craig) has had its release date pushed out to November, thanks to box office concerns due to the Coronavirus. Carl talked about *The Color Out of Space*, a film based on an HP Lovecraft story, starring Nicholas Cage ("alpaca farmer"). Christian Bale has been cast as an unspecified villain in the *Thor: Love and Thunder*. Teresa announced that *Quiet Place II* and *New Mutants* are coming out soon; *New Mutants* will include a lesbian couple.

TV News: Peter enjoyed the final episodes of the current season of *Doctor Who*. Some members of the fan community are upset because of perceived continuity changes. (Eight earlier Doctors? Heresy!) *The Magicians* has been canceled after five seasons. (Sad faces.) Netflix has released the entire 2nd season of *Altered Carbon*; Anthony Mackie is taking over the lead role of Takeshi Kovacs. *WandaVision*, *Loki*, and *Falcon and the Winter Soldier* will be the first Marvel films to be shown on the new Disney Plus channel. Netflix's *Lock and Key* suspense fantasy features a family (including three children) that inherits an estate with magical keys; there is also a demon searching for these keys. Teresa likes *Dispatches from Elsewhere* (starring Jason Segal): four people stumble across a world of possibility and magic; one of the characters is a trans woman. Teresa also watched the first episode of FX's *The Devs*, about a Silicon Valley software en-

gineer who believes her company is responsible for her boyfriend's disappearance.

Other News: Carl is jones-ing for a new book: *The Visual History of Science Fiction Fandom Volume I: The 1930's*; it costs about \$30 in e-version and \$150 in hardback.

Upcoming LSF Events: Upcoming LSF Book Discussions: *Night Circus*, by Erin Morgenstern (March 26); *Lovecraft Country*, by Matt Ruff (April 23). And Rob reminded everyone about the LSF Gaming Party to be held on April 4th (see article on page 1 of this newsletter).

Then we celebrated LSF's 30th Birthday. Carl brought a delicious strawberry ice cream cake for the celebration; and we all sang "Happy Birthday". Thanks to everyone who helped found LSF thirty years ago!

Then we watched the first two episodes of Netflix's *I Am Not Okay With This*.

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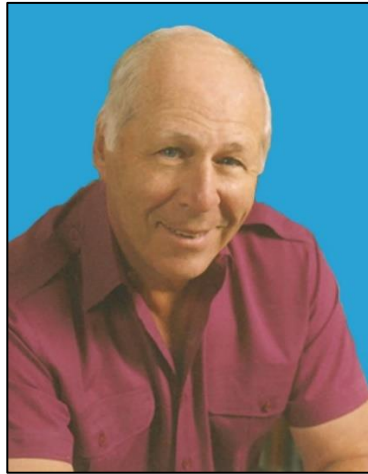
**Photos of LSF's
30th Birthday Celebration
(photographer: Wess)**



Roving Scoundrels, Part 2

continued from page 2

half a century, and he's still going strong. Following the death of John Campbell, Bova became the editor of *Analog* (1972 – 1978), where he won 6 Hugo Awards for Best Professional Editor; after that, he served as fiction editor for *Omni Magazine* (1978 – 1982). From 1990 to 1992, he served a president of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America (SFWA); and he is currently President Emeritus of the National Space Society. In 2008, Bova was awarded the Robert Heinlein Award for his work in science fiction.



Ben Bova



Portrait of Sam Gunn from the cover of *Sam Gunn, Unlimited*

Sam Gunn first appeared in print in the October 1983 issue of *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* – included in this Omnibus as “The Supervisor’s Tale”). *The Sam Gunn Omnibus* collects all of Sam Gunn’s adventures to the date of publication (2007) – over 40 of ‘em (including 3 never before collected in book form). I’ve been a big fan of Bova’s “Sam Gunn” stories, catching them whenever possible over the years when they appeared in *Analog*, *F&SF*, *Omni*, or *Science Fiction Age*. It was a delight to get them all gathered up in one big collection. As an added treat, I even got Bova to autograph my copy at Balticon in 2011!

So, who is “Sam Gunn” and how does he qualify as a “scoundrel”? The *Omnibus*’s blurb makes Gunn’s qualities quite clear. He’s described as “a hero without peer or scruples”, with “a nose for trouble, money, and women—though not necessarily in that order” and with “the ego (and stature) of Napoleon, the business acumen of P.T. Barnum, and the ra-

ging hormones of a teenage boy.” But... “more than money, more than women, Sam Gunn loves justice.” In virtually every story, Gunn takes on “the powers that be” – whether in the form of interplanetary corporations, governments, or religious authorities – to fight on the side of individual rights, entrepreneurial spirit, and “the little guy”. And, of course, to make a few bucks whenever he can. The collection’s dedication – and accompanying quote – give you a pretty good idea of Bova’s guiding spirit for Sam Gunn. The *Omnibus* is “dedicated to the entrepreneurs who are striving to open the space frontier for all humankind—and make a few bucks in the process.” This dedication is followed by a quote attributed to W.C. Fields (a lovable scoundrel if there ever was one): “A thing worth having is a thing worth cheating for.”

The stories in the *Omnibus* are loosely strung together in a rough chronological order (based on the content of each adventure, rather than date of publication) and connected by a frame story. In his Preface, Bova admits: “It isn’t easy to put all the tales of Sam Gunn together in any sequence that even vaguely resembles chronological order.” Little inconsistencies were bound to creep in. (I’m sure that fans of Robert E. Howard’s “Conan the Barbarian” stories understand this.) All of the Sam Gunn adventures are “near future SF”. With each story, you’ll follow Sam Gunn as he – and humanity – moves further and further out into the Solar System. From Earth-based space tourism to orbital sta-

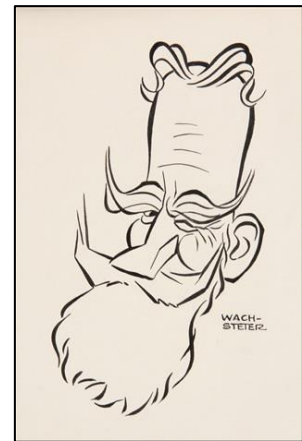
tions (where Gunn takes a hand at developing space hotels featuring “zero gravity sex”); to the surface of the Moon (where Gunn’s attempts at lunar tourism run hand-in-hand with lunar settlement), to Mars (ditto), to the Asteroid Belt and the moons and atmosphere of Jupiter (featuring extraterrestrial mining operations – and, oddly enough, the “virtual sex trade”); to the outer rim of the Solar System and (possibly) Gunn’s contact with an alien race via a “star gate” of some kind.

I can’t say as I have a favorite Sam Gunn story. I like ‘em all. In addition to providing a real romp through the Solar System, Bova uses Gunn to explore the challenges that humanity will probably face in colonizing (and exploiting) the Solar System. A very satisfying combination, says I. A couple of the stories even include positive portrayals of Queer characters – for example, Frederick Mohammed Malone, Sam’s partner in the space hotel business.

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Better to be thought
a scoundrel
than a clown.

- George Bernard Shaw -



quoted in
*Cassell's Book of
Humorous Quotations*,
selected by A.K. Adams
(Cassell & Co Ltd., 1969)

*** * 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. Newsletter submissions are always welcome.

Meetings are usually held on the second Sunday of each month at a private residence. The previously-scheduled Lambda Sci-Fi meeting for Sunday, April 12th, has been cancelled due to public health concerns. We will keep you informed of the status of future LSF monthly meetings.

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

April 24-26, 2020 **RAVENCON 15**. DoubleTree by Hilton Williamsburg (Williamsburg VA). GoH: Terry Brooks. Membership: \$40 until 4/3/2020; \$50 at the door. (Daily rates also available.) On-line registration.

Website: www.ravencon.com

May 1-3, 2020 **AWESOME CON**. Walter E. Washington Convention Center (Washington, DC). Guests include: Zachary Levi ("Shazam!"); Ron Perlman ("Hellboy"). Includes "Pride Alley, a celebration of queer creators and fans curated by GeeksOUT." Membership: 3-day passes = \$80; 1-day passes = \$40-\$55 (depending on the day). "Tickets on sale soon." Limited tickets – on-line purchase advised via their Tickets Page. Website: <https://awesome-con.com/>

May 22-25, 2020 **BALTICON 54**. Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel (Baltimore MD). GoH: Wen Spencer; Artist GoH: Lee Moyer; Musical GoH: Cheshire Moon; 2019 Compton Crook Award winner: R.F. Kuang. Membership: ~~\$66 until Feb. 29, 2020~~. On-line registration. Website: <https://www.balticon.org/wp54> Info at: balticoninfo@balticon.org

July 10-12, 2020 **SHORE LEAVE 42**. Delta Hotels Marriott Baltimore Hunt Valley (Hunt Valley MD). Actor GoH: Denis Lawson (*Star Wars* "Wedge Antilles"); more TBA. Membership: \$105 for the weekend (\$120 at the door); daily rates available. Printable registration forms & on-line registration available through the Registration Page.

Website: www.shore-leave.com

July 29 – Aug. 2, 2020 **CONZEALAND, the 78th World Science Fiction Convention**. TSB Arena, Intercontinental Hotel *et al* (Wellington, New Zealand). GoH: Mercedes Lackey & Larry Dixon; Artist GoH: Greg Broadmore; Toastmaster: George RR Martin. Membership: currently \$452NZ (approx. \$272US); it will go up! On-line registration. Website: <https://conzealand.nz>

Aug. 20-23, 2020 **COLUMBUS NASFiC 2020, the North American Science Fiction Convention**. Sheraton Columbus Hotel at Capitol Square (Columbus, OH). GoH: Brian Herbert & Kevin J. Anderson; Artist GoH: Stephanie Law; Science GoH: Marc Millis (NASA). Membership: currently \$100 (will go up!). Make checks payable to "Columbus 2020 NASFiC" and sent to: Columbus 2020 NASFiC, c/o Kim Williams, 4227 Beechrun Rd., Whitehall, OH 43213. On-line registration also available.

Website: <http://columbus2020nasfic.org/>

Sept. 4-7, 2020 **TCEP 27** ("Ted and Craig's Excellent Party"). "A relaxed gaming convention." Hampton Inn & Suites Washington Dulles Airport (Sterling VA). Membership: \$30 for the weekend. Website: <https://www.barkingmad.org/>

Oct. 16-18, 2020 **CAPCLAVE 2020**. Rockville Hilton & Executive Meeting Center (Rockville MD). GoH: Peter S. Beagle and Troy L. Wiggins (editor/blogger). Membership: \$55. On-line registration.

Website: <https://www.capclave.org/capclave/capclave20/>

Nov. 27-29, 2020 **CHESSIECON 2020**. Lord Baltimore Hotel (Baltimore MD). GoH: Charlie Jane Anders; Music GoH: Tom Smith. Membership: until October 31; \$60 at the door. Make check payable to "Thanksgiving Science Fiction Society" and send to: TSFS, Inc., PO Box 83032, Gaithersburg, MD 20883-3032. On-line registration also available via PayPal.

Website: <http://chessiecon.org/> Info at: info@chessiecon.org