



lambda Sci-fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 363 – June 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 June 25th (to be held via Zoom).

Here are the details for the next several discussions:

June 25 – *This Is How You Lose the Time War* by Amal El-Mohtar and Max Gladstone (moderator: Rob G.)

July 23 – *Clouds End* by Sean Stewart (moderator: Claire)

Aug. 27 – *Upright Women Wanted* by Sarah Gailey (moderator: Carl)

Sept. 24 – *The Devourers* by Indra Das (moderator: Conrad)

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Postponement of Pride Events in Washington DC

taken from the Capital Pride webpage: <https://www.capitalpride.org/postponement-of-june-2020-pride-events/>

The Board of Directors of the Capital Pride Alliance (CPA) has voted to postpone their annual June events, including the Pride Parade and Festival, in addition to the previously announced postponements of Capital Trans Pride and API Pride. Also, events produced by partnering Pride organizations, Youth Pride, Silver Pride, DC Leather Pride, DC Latinx Pride, and DC Black Pride will be similarly postponed or cancelled. New dates for these events, if applicable, will be announced in the coming weeks. In addition, the annual *Guide to Pride in the Nation's Capital* will be online only. CPA will offer free ad space to support local small businesses that have been supportive of our LGBTQ+ community, and will create a virtual Pride exhibition, for all the registered organizations, businesses, and advocates.

"Like our fellow Pride organizers around the world, the Capital Pride Alliance has been monitoring the escalating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and has determined that the safest course of action will be to postpone all planned Capital Pride events in May and June," said Ryan Bos, Executive Director of CPA. "Throughout, we have



worked and will continue to work closely with our federal, state, and local partners as we make decisions to ensure the safety of the entire community," emphasized Bos. "We will collaborate with all the agencies and our partner Prides to identify new dates and potentially new ways that our community can come together in Pride," Bos explained.

"Our theme this year, #StillWe, resonates with all of us under the current circumstances and also in what will surely be new and uncharted territory for Pride organizers," said Ashley Smith, Board President of the Capital Pride Alliance. "I know the LGBTQ+ community is always determined and resilient in the face of a challenge," expressed Smith. "Our history is one of struggle, and with the care and support of the hundreds of thousands of people who participate in Capital Pride events, I can say with confidence that we will persevere and be there for each other in these unprecedented times," concluded Smith.

[This announcement was also made on March 30 in the on-line *Washington Blade*.]

< < June 2020 LSF Meeting TO BE HELD VIRTUALLY > >

Due to Coronavirus concerns, we plan to hold the June 14th LSF meeting virtually. Anyone who would like to participate can contact Rob at robgatesdc@gmail.com for virtual meeting information. Hope to "see" you there!



What's Inside?

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Really Small Dinosaur Discovered

info passed along by Carl

As reported in the March issue of *Nature*, the discovery of a small, bird-like skull encased in amber reveals a new species that could represent the smallest known Mesozoic dinosaur in the fossil record. This species has been named *Oculudentavis khaungraae*. The fossil measures about 1.5 centimeters from the back of its head to the tip of its snout. The skull's proportions suggest that the animal was about the same size as the modern bee hummingbird, which would have made the newfound dinosaur lighter than a dime. It lived about 99 million years ago.



While working on fossils from northern Myanmar, Lars Schmitz (associate professor of biology at the W.M. Keck Science Department) and a team of international researchers discovered the seemingly mature skull specimen preserved in Burmese amber. Schmitz said: "Amber preservation of vertebrates is rare, and this provides us a window into the world of dinosaurs at the lowest end of the body-size spectrum. Its unique anatomical features point to one of the smallest and most ancient birds ever found."

The team studied the specimen with high-resolution synchrotron scans to determine how the *Oculudentavis* skull differs from those of other bird-like dinosaur specimens of that era. The shape and size of the eye bones suggest a diurnal lifestyle, with surprising similarities to the eyes of modern lizards. The skull also shows a unique pattern of fusion between different bone elements, as well as the presence of 40 sharp teeth

in its upper jaw. It's tiny size and unusual form suggest a combination of features never seen before. This find demonstrates the extreme miniaturization of avian body sizes early in the evolutionary process. It also highlights the potential of amber deposits to reveal the lowest limits of vertebrate body size. Said Schmitz: "This discovery shows us that we have only a small glimpse of what tiny vertebrates looked like in the age of dinosaurs."

Oculudentavis appears to be most closely related to feathered dinosaurs like *Archaeopteryx*; and researchers suspect that this small dinosaur also had feathery wings. Without more fossils, they can't determine how well it flew. Based on how much its bones had fused together, researchers determined that this tiny creature died at or near adulthood, which makes its tiny size all the more unusual. Its eyes appear to have been so large that they would have bulged out of the sides of its head.

Oculudentavis actually first came to light in 2016, when a Burmese amber collector acquired two specimens from a mine in northern Myanmar, including the tiny skull. The collector later donated the fossil to the Hupoge Amber Museum in Tengchong, China.

Scientists are on the lookout for more pieces of *Oculudentavis*. The amber piece containing its tiny skull reportedly came from a bigger lump with preserved feathers – but the two pieces were subsequently separated, cut, and polished.

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An artistic rendering of *Oculudentavis* preying on an insect, by Han Zhixin

ConFABulous III

Oct. 9-11, 2020

info from Don Kaiser, Con Chair



The North Country Gaylaxians present ConFABulous 2020! Join us October 9-11, 2020, for a weekend of gaming and socializing for LGBTQ geeks and gamers, at the Crowne Plaza AiRE (Minneapolis Airport – Mall of America), Three Appletree Square, Bloomington, MN 55425! We'll have a large game room, a hospitality suite, a dealer's room, a Chocolate Symposium, and a track of programming. The fun starts at 1:00 PM on Friday (Oct. 9) and continues to 4:00 PM on Sunday (Oct. 11). Weekend registration is currently \$55.

Our mailing address is: Gaylaxicon Minnesota, Inc., 5541 Clinton Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55419. For more information or on-line registration, visit our website:

<http://confabulous.org/>



Peter's latest Lego project: a model of the droid D-O (from *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker*)

PrideBundle

info passed along by Bob Angell

[Ed. Note: At the May LSF meeting, Bob Angell announced that his novel *Best Game Ever* will be included in StoryBundle's upcoming PrideBundle, which will be available during Pride Month. Bob supplied us with the following information for the June newsletter.]

The PrideBundle will be available during PRIDE MONTH (from June 3 - July 2) at:

<https://storybundle.com/>

When you land on that URL during the month, you will be able to buy a small number of titles for whatever you wish to pay; but if you spend \$20 you get all the e-books in the bundle! As with all StoryBundles, part of the proceeds will be donated to a nonprofit. PrideBundle will donate to the Rainbow Railroad:

<https://www.rainbowrailroad.org/>

Rainbow Railroad is a nonprofit that helps LGBTQ people escape persecution and violence all around the world and gives them support until they get settled.

This year's PrideBundle is being curated by author/editor Catherine Lundo. Here are the titles in this year's PrideBundle:

- *Best Game Ever* by R R Angell
- *The Counterfei Viscount* and *The Hollow History of Professor Perfectus* (2 novellas) by Ginn Hale
- *Grilled Cheese and Goblins* by Nicole Kimberling
- *The Voyages of Cinrak the Dapper* by A.J. Fitzwater
- *Capricious: The Gender Diverse Pronouns Issue* edited by Andi C. Buchanan
- *A Spectral Hue* by Craig Laurance Gidney
- *Catfish Lullaby* by A.C. Wise
- *Floodtide* by Heather Rose Jones
- *Armor of Light* by Melissa Scott and Lisa A. Barnett
- *Will Do Magic for Small Change* by Andrea Hairston

[Ed. Note: There's lots'a good reading there for only \$2 per title!]



Minutes of the May 2020 LSF Meeting

(held via Zoom)

taken by Scott

This was LSF's first virtual meeting. Approximately 16 people attended – including a person from the UK!

Our UK attendee was Trevor Barton, author of the “BroBots” trilogy: *Brobots*, *Red Gods Sing*, and *Balance of Esturbia*. (“Rod burners. Scaff dawgs. Lagers. Bucket dumpers. Lerps. Duct monkeys. Tin knockers. Lumbergs. Artificial big guys. Product of a troubled firm. Brobots.”)

Bob Angell advised that his novel *Best Game Ever* will be part of the Pride Bundle Package. Rob will share the details at the LSF Facebook page. [Ed. Note: Also see article on this page.]

Movie News: The *New Mutants* movie rollout in theaters has not been announced. Maybe it will go directly to video rather than appear in the theaters. *Avatar II* is supposed to come out in 2021.

TV News: Dan loves the DC Universe animated *Harley Quinn* series. The new *Stargirl* series will be premiering this month. Dan also shared his passion for an HBO/BBC genre production titled *Years and Years*: a six-episode mini-series covering future history with social changes. Rob described the fairy tale-like alternative history Netflix series *Hollywood*. Teresa mentioned that one of her favorites is the 16-episode series *For All Mankind*, which explores what would have happened if the global space race had never ended. Teresa said she also enjoyed the first season of *Altered Carbon*; the AI that appeared in the first season returns in the 2nd season. Teresa is watching the just-released *Upload* (Amazon Prime), a comedy satire about virtual afterlives – Dan loves it, too. Production of Season 5 of *The Expanse* has been completed. Who's excited? The next season of *Star Trek: Discovery* will be released later this year. The long-awaited *WandaVision* series should be premiering on DisneyPlus later this year. Teresa briefly reviewed movies scheduled to come out: *Black Widow*, *Godzilla vs. Kong*, *Tenet*, *Wonder Woman*, *Antebellum*. Rob reported that a reboot of *Battlestar Galactica* is in the

works for the upcoming Peacock streaming service. Steve Carell will be starring in Netflix's *Space Force*, which is set to premiere later this year. There is as yet no consensus on the new season of *Penny Dreadful* (set in 40s/50s Los Angeles). There was lots of random discussion about *Doctor Who*; Rob said he loved the “Kablam” episode, which had the feel of the 1970's *Doctor Who*. The trailer for the new series *Lovecraft Country* looks appealing – this new series is set to air in the late summer.

Book News: Dan is currently reading John Brunner's 1968 classic *Stand on Zanzibar*, which he finds is a difficult read. Carl said he really enjoyed it (having read it when it was first published) and recommended another Brunner novel: *The Sheep Look Up*. Trevor (our English visitor) plugged Maureen McHugh's *China Mountain Zhang* – which the LSF book discussion group read a few years ago – with a big thumbs up!

Other News: Peter showed off his latest Lego project: a model of the droid D-0 (from *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker*). [Ed. Note: See photograph on page 2.]

Upcoming Events: This coming Thursday, there will be a bonus LSF book discussion (to be held via Zoom): *House of X/Powers of 10*, an epic compilation of a total of 12 comics issues. The subject of the next LSF book discussion (to be held May 28 via Zoom) will be Cameron Hurley's *The Stars are Legion*. John promoted the Phantom Comics nerds trivia game night (next session: May 16th):

<https://www.facebook.com/events/287575382241997/>

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One fact can change your whole point of view. For instance, did you know that King Kong was a lesbian?

– David Gerrold –

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

*** * 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. Due to Coronavirus concerns, the Lambda Sci-Fi meeting for Sunday, June 14th, will be held virtually. We will keep you informed of the status of future 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

July 29 – August 2, 2020 **CONZEALAND, the 78th World Science Fiction Convention.** Changed to a “virtual convention”. For details, visit their 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. 9-11, 2020 **CONFABULOUS III.** Hosted by North Country Gaylaxians; for LGBTQ geeks and gamers; featuring discussion panels, game rooms, Chocolate Symposium, dealer’s room, con suite. Crown Plaza Aire (Mall of America - Bloomington MN). Weekend registration is currently \$55 (will go up). Mailing address: Gaylaxicon Minnesota, Inc., 5541 Clinton Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55419. On-line registration available. Website: <http://confabulous.org/>

Oct. 16-18, 2020 **CAPCLAVE 2020.** Rockville Hilton & Executive Meeting Center (Rockville MD). GoH: Peter S. Beagle and Troy L. Wiggins (editor/blogger); Connie Willis. 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

Dec. 11-13, 2020 **AWESOME CON** (delayed from May 2020). Walter E. Washington Convention Center (Washington, DC). Guests include: Mario Lopez, Mark-Paul Gosselaar, & Elizabeth Berkley (*Saved by the Bell*); 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). Various selected “add-ons”. Limited tickets – on-line purchase advised via their Tickets Page. Website: <https://awesome-con.com/>

July 9-11, 2021 **SHORE LEAVE 42** (rescheduled from July 2020). Delta Hotels Marriott Baltimore Hunt Valley (Hunt Valley MD). Actor GoH: Denis Lawson (*Star Wars* “Wedge Antilles”); Brandon Routh (Superman & The Atom); Robert Duncan McNeill (Lt. Tom Paris); Brent Spiner (Data); Alex Kingston (River Song). 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