



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 364 – July 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.

Before the COVID-19 shut-down orders, the LSF Book Discussion Group usually met 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. Now, book discussions are held virtually (same "4th Thursday" schedule). The next book discussion will be held on July 23rd (via Zoom).

Here are the details for the next several discussions:

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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Uncle Hugo's Science Fiction Bookstore (1975 – 2020) Uncle Edgar's Mystery Bookstore (1982 -2020)

It was with great sadness that I read the May 30th reports about the complete destruction of two fabulous independent bookstores in Minneapolis. Uncle Hugo's Science Fiction Bookstore and neighboring Uncle Edgar's Mystery Bookstore were burned out during the destructive riots that accompanied protests over the senseless death of George Floyd when he was arrested by Minneapolis police.

The two stores have existed at several locations over the years; but 31 years ago, they moved to their latest (and, as it turned out, final) location – co-located under one roof but still in independent spaces.

Here's how the bookstores were described in February 2019: "The

Cities are home to the geekiest twin bookshops in the Midwest—and that's a compliment. At age 45, Uncle Hugo's Science Fiction Bookstore is the oldest indie sci-fi and fantasy bookshop in America. Its 38-year-old neighbor, Uncle Edgar's, sells the widest variety of mystery books in the state. True crime, suspense, military fiction, alternative history, folk tales, manga, game manuals, three-in-one detective novels, paranormal romance—the Uncs have it all."

I made irregular pilgrimages to "the Uncs" over the years, usually while attending a Gaylaxicon hosted by North Country Galyaxians. My credit card always took a sizeable hit. I will truly miss Uncle Hugo's and Uncle Edgar's; and I'm quite sure I'm not alone in this.

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

Due to Coronavirus concerns, we plan to hold the July 12th 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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Minutes of the June LSF Meeting
(conducted via Zoom)
taken by Scott

About 8 people attended.

[Ed. Note: Before Scott arrived, Carl asked if anyone had watched any of the episodes of the new TV series *Space Force* (starring Steve Carell and John Malkovich). Reactions were mixed: uneven humor – occasionally funny, generally not as funny as hoped for; some good acting.]



TV News: What’s everyone watching? Answers: *Harley Quinn*, *Rick and Morty*, and *Z Nation*. The trailer for Season 2 of *DOOM Patrol* aired this week on the DC Universe. The new trailer for the second *Spiderverse* movie has also aired. Peter did not care for the new *Artemis Fowl* TV movie (Disney+ Channel – based on the novels by Eoin Colfer) – it’s about a 12-year-old genius and descendant of a long line of criminal masterminds; Peter liked the fantastical elements but felt there was little world-building.



Movie News: Rob likes *Emma and the Apocalypse*, the zombie apocalypse movie, and described it as delight-

ful. Upcoming movie release dates: *Wanda Vision* and *Falcon in Winter* are still scheduled to be released in 2020; no word about *New Mutants*; *Mulan* (live action) = July 24; *Wonder Woman 1984* = Nov. 2; *Black Widow* = Nov 6; *No Time to Die* (newest “James Bond” film, starring Daniel Craig) = Nov. 20. Dan & Teresa led an interesting discussion about how the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the nostalgic resurgence of drive-in outdoor movie theaters and talked about a nearby drive-in theater in Maryland.

Comics News: Carl said he’d heard an announcement that Alan Moore has “retired” from graphic novels. (Some doubt was cast on Moore’s follow-through on this.) Teresa noted the passing of Dennis O’Neal, editor for Marvel Comics and DC Comics from the 1960s through the 1990s. It was also noted that DC has severed its relationship with Diamond Comic Distributors. (The comic book industry is upset: “Image Comics Publisher Slams DC’s ‘Sociopathic Decision’ to Leave Diamond.”)

Other Discussions: There was some discussion about preferences for the length of science fiction novels, with comparisons between the rather “shorter” classic SF novels (from Heinlein, Van Vogt, Asimov, etc.) and the rather “longer” SF novels of current vintage. The discussion included such concepts as “need plenty of room to explore” and “need an editor”. Carl mentioned “The Rocky Side of the Sky”, a short story by Melissa Scott that included a new space travel technology and its physiological and social consequences, meanwhile providing commentary on our current LGBTQ situation – and all within 11 pages. (The story is included in the anthology *Periphery: Erotic Lesbian Futures* (Lethe Press, 2008) and is the most recent winner of the Spectrum Award in the Short Fiction category.) There was also much discussion of author JK Rowling’s recently-shared position against trans rights (and her follow-up attempts at “explanation”), which has baffled her fans worldwide. Carl asked if anyone else watched the launch of Space X “live” (rather than recorded). Some comments: While everyone is excited about a US-based space launch, there is

little support for Elon Musk, who apparently believes that we are living in a simulation.

Upcoming LSF Events: Rob announced that the July and August LSF monthly meetings will continue to be held virtually.

Upcoming LSF Book Discussions: *This is How You Lose the Time War* by Amal El-Mohtar and Max Gladstone (June); *Clouds End* by Sean Stewart (July); *Upright Women Wanted* by Sarah Gailey (August); and *The Devourers* by Indra Das (Sept.).

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Superhero Wall Mural at the Swift Fit Gym (Philadelphia PA)

- screen shot of ESPN’s coverage of the announcement of the NFL Detroit Lions draft pick - (April 24, 2020)



← another wall mural from the Swift Fit Gym

You’ve got to have something to eat and a little love in your life before you can hold still for any damn body’s sermon on how to behave.

-- Billie Holiday (1915-1959) --

quoted in *Women Know Everything: 3,241 Quips, Quotes, and Brilliant Remarks* compiled by Karen Weekes (Quirk Books, 2007)

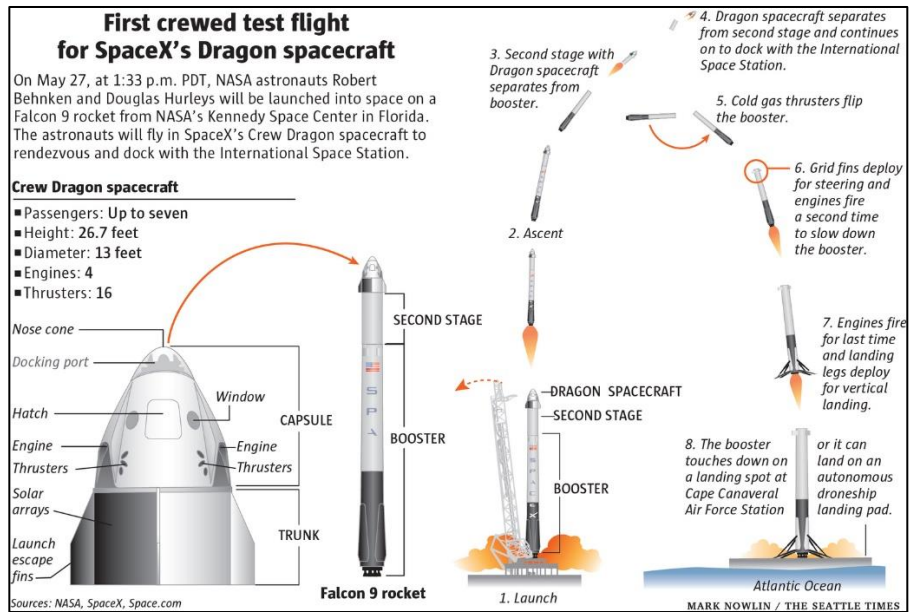
SpaceX Manned Launch from Carl



On the afternoon of Saturday, May 30, I was glued to the CSPAN channel watching the live broadcast of the SpaceX launch from Cape Canaveral. It was the first time in almost a decade that American astronauts were launched into space from U.S. soil; and I was actually excited during the count-down. It reminded me of watching the launches during the early days of the US manned space program in the 1960s (Project Mercury). I kind of missed listening to the gravitas of someone like Walter Cronkite reporting on it all. However, as Peter noted recently, the SpaceX launch had more sophisticated media coverage and much better graphics.

The Demo-2 Mission is the first time SpaceX is has taken astronauts into space. In the words of a CNET report, Demo-2 is “part of NASA’s Commercial Crew Program, which involved two commercial spaceflight companies, SpaceX and Boeing, building and launching crew capsules designed to ferry astronauts to and from the ISS [International Space Station].” The launch had originally been set for Wednesday, May 27; but it needed to be delayed until May 30 due to weather concerns. The weather was also a bit iffy on the 30th, but it improved enough for the launch to take place. It went off without a hitch.

Atop the Falcon 9 rocket was SpaceX’s new Crew Dragon capsule, an upgraded version of their original Dragon capsule, which has been used many times to carry cargo (but not people) to the ISS. Crew Dragon actually has room for up to seven people but will only have four seats for NASA missions. For this launch, there were only two passengers – veteran astronauts Robert L. Behnken and Douglas O. Hurley. With the suc-



cess of the Demo-2 launch, a Crew Dragon capsule is scheduled to ferry four astronauts to the ISS later this year. Behnken and Hurley named their capsule *Endeavor*.



Besides demonstrating the feasibility of successfully carrying astronauts to the ISS, Demo-2 also successfully demonstrated SpaceX’s concept of a re-usable first stage booster rocket. After separation from the second stage booster and the capsule, the first stage returned to Earth. It performed a “flip” and deployed legs for a vertical landing; but instead of landing at the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, it landed on a drone recovery ship out in the Atlantic: the delightfully named *Of Course I Still Love You*.

Unfortunately, the touchdown on the recovery ship wasn’t visible due to a glitch in the camera system. I’d looked forward to seeing the landing; but when the glitch was cleared up and coverage resumed, the first stage was already sitting contentedly on the deck

of the recovery ship. (I’m sure the conspiracy theorists will make much of that camera glitch. Even I must admit that it was a curiously-timed glitch.)

The *Endeavor* capsule successfully docked with the International Space Station on Sunday morning, May 31.

One final note... As I looked at the pictures of the Crew Dragon capsule, I couldn’t help but be reminded of Doctor Zarkov’s single-stage spacecraft from the 1980 *Flash Gordon* movie (the one with the Queen soundtrack). You be the judge.

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SpaceX’s Crew Dragon Capsule



Doctor Zarkov’s Spacecraft

* * 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, July 12th, 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 - CANCELLED.**
For details, go to their 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: \$60 until July 31; then \$65 until registration closes Sept. 30. 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: \$55 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/>

April 16-18, 2021 **RAVENCON 15.** Virginia Crossings Tapestry Collection by Hilton (Glen Allen, VA – just north of Richmond). Guests of Honor: Terry Brooks (Author), Rhiannon’s Lark (Music). Membership: \$35 before 12/31/2020; \$40 before 3/27/2021; \$50 at the door. Website: <https://www.ravencon.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: <https://www.shore-leave.com/info/update-2020-04-25.htm>