



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 365 – August 2020

E-MAIL: info@lambdascifi.org

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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.

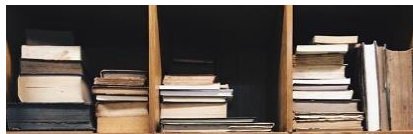
Before the COVID-19 shut-down orders, the LSF Book Discussion Group usually met on the 4th Thursday of every month, starting at 7:00 PM, at Peter & Rob's home: 1425 "S" St., NW – for directions or more details, call 202-483-6369. Now, book discussions are held virtually (same "4th Thursday" schedule). The next book discussion will be held on August 27th ([via Zoom](#)).

Here are the details for the next couple of discussions:

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

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

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Fossil Evidence of Dinosaur Molting?

info passed along by Carl

[Ed. Note: This information was taken from an article by Carolyn Gramling in sciencenews.org.]

Microraptor was a nonbird feathered dinosaur that lived about 120 million years ago. New analysis of a *Microraptor* fossil shows indications of sequential molting: the shedding of only a few feathers at a time, just like modern songbirds. This, in turn, suggests that *Microraptor* was a frequent and adept flyer capable of more than just gliding from tree to tree.

As reported on July 15 in *Current Biology*, an odd gap in the fossil plumage on the right forelimb could have been created by molting, with three new feathers coming in. The different lengths of the new feathers suggest sequential molting – with the longest feather being fully grown and the other new feathers at different

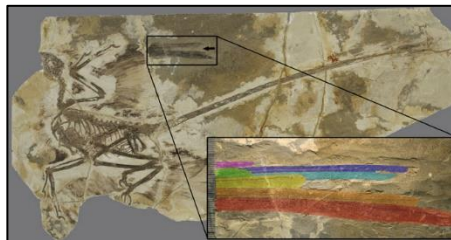


stages of growth. This would have enabled *Microraptor* to fly year-round.

Genetic reconstructions have previously suggested that sequential molting has existed in birds for at least 70 million years and was a trait of the common ancestor of all modern birds. This new *Microraptor* find could push back the estimated origins of sequential molting by another 50 million years.

Steve Brusatte, a vertebrate paleontologist at the University of Edinburgh, said that this new find suggests "that not only could *Microraptor* fly, but could fly well, and [that] flying was an indispensable part of its lifestyle."

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The *Microraptor* fossil showing indications of sequential molting. In the enlargement, the "new" feathers are highlighted using different colors.



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

Due to Coronavirus concerns, we plan to hold the August 9th 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!



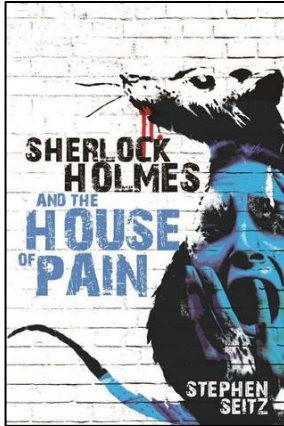
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**Sherlock Holmes and
the House of Pain**
by Stephen Seitz
(MX Publishing, 2015)
reviews by Carl



I'm sure you all know that I'm a big fan of all things "Sherlockian" – or is that "Holmesian"? Over the years I've occasionally written short reviews of novels and anthologies where the Great Detective has wandered over into F&SF Territory. Here's another one.

Sherlock Holmes and the House of Pain is written like a rollicking adventure story from the era of Pulp Magazines, rather than a true pastiche in the style of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Still, it's a lotta fun.

The novel purports to be the *true* story behind the (untold) adventure of the "Giant Rat of Sumatra" (mentioned in passing in Doyle's "The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire"). Seitz has cleverly woven elements of HG Wells's *The Island of Dr. Moreau* into the storyline. It is revealed that a much-younger Holmes had thwarted Moreau's horrific researches in London many years before. Now, Moreau is back; and his giant, intelligent rats are infesting the Spitalfields district in London. When Holmes and Watson are called in to locate a missing young missionary, they discover that she has been abducted by Moreau's rats. Meanwhile, another of Doyle's characters, George Edward Challenger (many years before the events described in *The Lost World*) is also attempting to locate Moreau. However, the ambitious young Challenger wants to *prevent* Holmes and Watson from once again foiling Moreau's research. The

**Minutes of the
July LSF Meeting**
taken by Scott

The meeting was once again held via Zoom due to COVID-19 concerns.

Movie News: The premiere of the genre movie *Tenet* has been announced for August 12, with the live-action *Mulan* announced for an August 21 release. Rob thinks that Denis Villeneuve's *Dune* will not be released in 2020, but rather in 2021. Did you know that first two episodes of the original *Battlestar Galactica* TV series had also been released as a feature film (including a "rumble-rama" soundtrack)?

TV News: Teresa reported that actress Ruby Rose, who plays the lead in *Batwoman*, is leaving the show; new lead actress Javicia Leslie is joining as a character named Ryan Wilder. (Will Ryan Wilder become the new *Batwoman*?) The animated *Star Trek: Lower Decks* series will premiere in August on the CBS All Access channel. Season 2 of *Umbrella Academy* – a superhero web series based on the Dark Horse comic book series – comes out in a few weeks. Rob enjoys the storytelling in DC Universe's *Doom Patrol*. Teresa likes *The Boys*, but it is very bloody – a deconstruction of the superhero genre. Season 5 of *The Expanse* was originally planned for release in December or January. Now? Wayne described the BBC series *The Tripods*, which is now on You-

Tube – it is based upon the YA book series written by John Christopher. Scott publicly admitted that he has watched all five seasons of *Z Nation*.

Streaming Services: Peacock (NBC's streaming service) is set to launch soon. Rob reviewed the failed rollout of Quibi – "quick bites, big stories" – quality content is small bites – the April launch flopped. However, their *Princess Bride* episodes have attracted named actors. Dan suggested using Pluto TV under Roku for your streaming services.

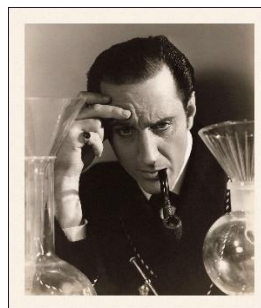
Other News: It was noted that Disney World in Florida has re-opened (during the pandemic). ComiCon San Diego is going "virtual". Carl said that the August LSF newsletter will include an anthology review by Joe Parra. Peter displayed his recent Lego acquisitions – the women of NASA. Bob reported that he enjoyed watching *Avatar* in 3-D in his basement man-cave. This was followed by a long discussion about 3-D movies (past and recent).

Upcoming LSF Events: Rob advised that LSF events through year-end will likely be virtual. The next few LSF Book Discussion meetings will feature: *Clouds End* by Sean Stewart (July 23); *Upright Women Wanted* by Sarah Gailey (Aug. 27); and *The Devoours* by Indra Das (Sept. 24). ΛΨΦ

adventure leads everyone from the subterranean lairs beneath London, across the Channel to France, and finally to a mysterious island hidden in the middle of the South Pacific

Sherlock Holmes and the House of Pain is not great literature, but I found it enjoyable.

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Basil Rathbone as Sherlock Holmes

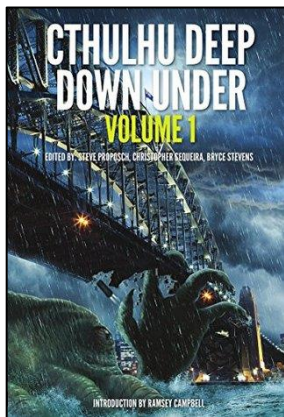


Ed. Note: Here's a cool picture sent to me by one of my co-workers who knows I like "dinosaur stuff".

***Cthulhu Deep Down Under,* Vol. 1**

**edited by Steve Proposch,
Christopher Sequeira, and Bryce
Stevens**

(IFWG Publishing International, 2017)
a review by Joseph Parra (Unca Joe)



♪ Tie me Yog-Sothoth down,
Sport... ♪

Ah, My Dear Cthulhu... H.P. Lovecraft was perhaps a tad off with his general thinking – and certainly in his ridiculous bogtories and such – but if there was one thing the old boy knew, it was how to capture the imagination of those of us who love horror, fantasy, and science-fiction. How wonderful that it occurred to him to create a whole new world of wonder set oddly enough on our own globe, save for beings in a separate dimension/reality for the most part and the group of them being something profoundly other than human. We know the bulk of the names, at least the more popular ones, due not only to Mr. L’s fiction but also to Mr. August Derleth, who is largely responsible for the organization of the works, as well as his own otherworldly adventures with these beings. Today’s peoples might know them best from popular media. Cthulhu, Yog-Sothoth, Dagon, the witches and warlocks of the Wheatley clan, and others who might peer through a rift in the barriers or from deep in the ocean where perhaps there are no barriers that are steadfast.

In his Intro, the always sublime author and horror enthusiast Ramsey Campbell tells us of the mind workings of both Mr. Lovecraft and Mr. Derleth, and how the seemingly (to them) mundane worlds of what we take for black magic, white magic, demons and monsters, and

the supernatural in general were at best trifling and piffle. No, on to further “utopias” where The Old Ones (who ruled our world before mankind usurped their power and forced them into dimensions and dark depths) and where in their wonderful tales, these new monsters make their presence known in our world. Mr. Campbell also tells us of Mr. Lovecraft’s fascination with both Australia and Antarctica. Could the very different fauna and flora of said continents be the engaging factor, or perhaps the lack of them in Antarctica’s case, at least to a degree? Unknown—and perhaps best as these wonderful tales by other authors may make things clearer...

“A Pearl Beyond Price” by Jan-reen Webb tells us of an adventurous young woman from a seacoast village on the Kimberley Coast (which is primarily comprised of people of Japanese descent) and her search for the most beautiful pearl and the perhaps awful (perhaps wonderful) monster Akkorokami, with lessons to be learned by all... before it is too late... Wonderful tale!

“Haunting Matilda” by Demetri Kakmi tells of a young girl’s fascination with the land and her parents’ unhealthy fascination with her. The family’s encounters with dreadful humans who might well have been monsters is riveting, as is the final encounter of Matilda and her uncle. “Haunting” is the right word – don’t read before bed!!!!

“Wife to Mr. Lovecraft” by Lucy Sussex is a very short and very, very funny tale told by postcards that Mrs. L sends to H.P. while on a very odd vacation, and how she encounters things her husband might well understand better, but not nearly with her humor and grace!!!

“Darkness Beyond” by Jason Franks is a very eerie tale of just desserts and then some, as told from a prisoner’s found diary in Port Arthur Prison. It deals with a prisoner’s account of terrible mistreatment by the guards and how through the calling of The Old Ones, a type of retribution may be achieved... but what price glory? Nicely laid out!!!

“The Diesel Pool” by Kaaron Warren tells us of how a guard at Old Parliament House encounters ghosts both good and evil and how both try to warn her off of a horror to be found in the basement and lower levels of the old sort of haunted building, where an ancient

monster might (or might not) be trapped... Nice cat-n-mouse tale well done!!!

“Dreamgirl” by Stephen Dedman tells us of a man contacted to be a mortal vessel, but through his dreams, and by a girl who may well need his help to get away from... or is it TO a horror led by Cthulhu itself. Very, very unnerving and subtle – nicely dished up!!!

“The Thing in the Bidet” by William Tevelein is a delicious, very darkly humored tale that takes place in an area near Massachusetts slowly set upon by a horror brought back from space, but with odd ties perhaps to Australia... Much fun with a wink-nudge!!!

“The Return of...” by Christopher Sequeira (who also helped edit this volume) is very much fun and would make for a wild mini-series or decent budgeted movie. This wild one tells of a young lawyer in a small town on the Eastern coast of the continent and his “adventures” dealing with a man who claims to be H.P. Lovecraft’s son and how he wants a movie company stopped from making one of his father’s works into a film, or a film roughly based on the work – he is very unclear here. The wild and wooly tale’s conclusion of modern technologies meeting ancient sorceries and the emergence of Cthulhu in a somewhat different form is a hoot and a half!!!! YAY!!!

“The Elder Things” by B. Michael Radburn takes place on Antarctica and tells us of the dangers of helping out friends when no one knows what is at stake and how the Elder Gods may be out there but not totally visible at all times – but still there, nonetheless... Very well told tale of mental disintegration.

“Vanguard” by Aaron Sterns is a wonderful blend of cops-n-robbers and supernatural terrors, all working in tandem after a fashion. Nicely layered and spilled forward like a noir detective story, never forgetting the monsters either. A must read, or too much can be given away in description!!!

This is the first volume, and I, for one, am looking forward to the next volume. Watch out, Coober Pedy!!! You have been warned!!!

Enjoy!!!! Thanks for reading/listening, everyone!!! BIG KISS!!!

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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. 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, August 9th, 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

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). "Please note, Barking Mad Productions and the Hampton Inn are working together to monitor the potential impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on TCEP 27. We are concerned for the health and safety of our members and recognize that the situation is evolving rapidly, and like many other large events planned to take place this year, TCEP could be cancelled, though no decisions have been made at this time." 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. 17-18, 2020 **CAPCLAVE 2020**. "Due to the novel coronavirus, the Capclave team has made the decision to be virtual this year. We will be holding Capclave October 17-18. Yes, this is two days, but we will run longer on Sunday than is typical. We will be focused on presentations, panels, and small group activities such as author readings or discussions. Keep an eye on our website and social media for news regarding new participants. We plan to use Zoom for most activities, but we are looking at adding a text chat area via Discord as well." Website: <https://www.capclave.org/capclave/capclave20/>

Nov. 27-29, 2020 **CHESSIECON 2020**. "Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Chessiecon 2020 will be online only. The Lord Baltimore Hotel has been postponing room reservations to November 2021. Official announcement forthcoming. Do you have a Discord account? We have an official Chessiecon server where you can keep up with friends, ask questions, and get announcements straight from the staff! Contact videogames@chessiecon.org for the invite link!" Website: <http://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>