



# Lambda Sci-Fi

## DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 381 – December 2021

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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 meet on the 4th Thursday of every month, starting at 7:00 PM, at Peter & Rob's home. *Until at least February 2022, book discussions will continue to be held virtually (same "4th Thursday" schedule).* **The next book discussion will be a combined Nov/Dec event, held on December 2<sup>nd</sup> via Zoom.**

Here are the details for the next several discussions:

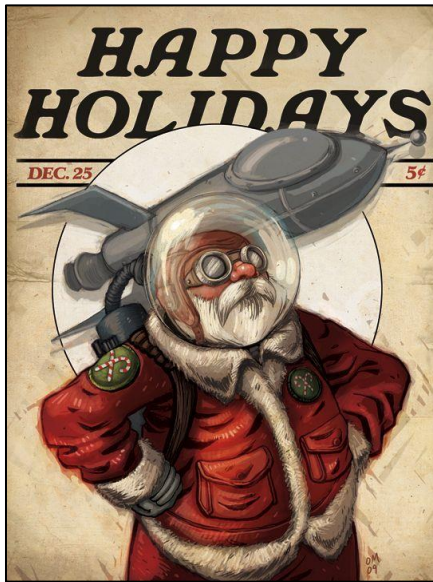
**Dec. 2** (combined Nov/Dec discussion) – *Finder*, by Suzanne Palmer (moderators: Bob A & Carl).

**Jan. 27, 2022** – *Far Out: Recent Queer Science Fiction & Fantasy*, anthology edited by Paula Guran (moderator: Carl)

**Feb. 24, 2022** – *A Memory Called Empire*, by Arkady Martine (moderator: Judy).

**March 24, 2022** – *Architects of Memory*, by Karen Osborne (moderator: Bob A)

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### Prototypes of US Space Force Dress Uniforms

info passed along by Wayne #1



Every now and then, we've been providing short updates about the US Space Force (aka "the Guardian Service"). Here's the latest news.

On Sept. 21<sup>st</sup>, during an Air Force Association conference, General John W. Raymond (Chief of Space Operations) unveiled prototypes for Space Force dress uniforms (see above).

They certainly don't look similar to anything worn by other US Armed Forces, do they? Speculations have been voiced about possible influences from such sources as *Star Trek* Starfleet uniforms and *Star Wars* Imperial uniforms. As an SF fan, I'm quite certain you're already making your own comparisons to uniforms you've seen elsewhere.

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### > December 2021 LSF Meeting TO BE HELD VIRTUALLY <

Due to Coronavirus concerns, we plan to hold the December 12<sup>th</sup> LSF meeting virtually. Anyone who would like to participate can contact Rob for virtual meeting information at [robgatesdc@gmail.com](mailto:robgatesdc@gmail.com). Hope to "see" you there!



### What's Inside?

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## Jupiter's Great Red Spot info passed along by Carl



Jupiter's Great Red Spot is a vast storm; and it's lasted for centuries. New data from NASA's Juno space probe has been published in the journal *Science* and gives the first accurate estimate of the depth of the Great Red Spot.

Even though it's deeper than expected, the Great Red Spot doesn't extend very far into Jupiter's atmosphere. Scott Bolton (principal investigator for the Juno mission and lead author of one of the studies) says: "It's much, much wider than it is deep — it's like a pancake to some extent. The surprising part was most of the models that people have played around with had it being much shallower." It's shaped like a thin lens, over 10,000 miles wide, and might be fed by upwellings of deeper gas.

The Spot is often brick-red; but its color varies over weeks and months to salmon, yellow, gray and even white. Scientists think its color may be the result of sunlight changing the chemical composition of the clouds of the ammonia, ammonium hydrosulfide, and water that it's probably made of. Similar storms have been seen between Jupiter's stripes; but none of them have lasted as long as the Great Red Spot, which was first documented in the 1800s.

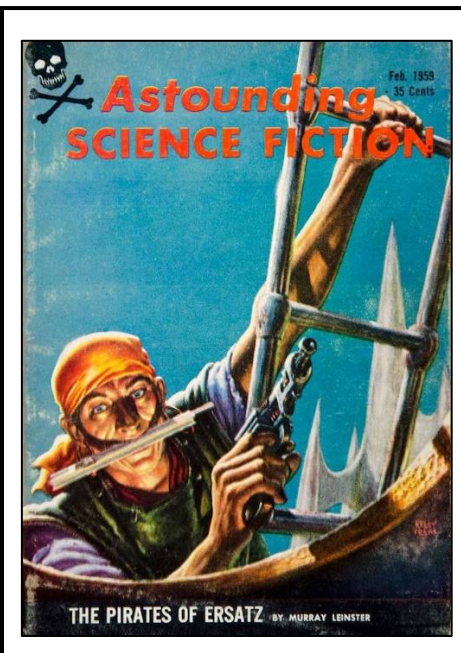
The Juno space probe has been in orbit around Jupiter since 2016. (See the article in the August 2016 LSF newsletter.) Juno has been evaluating Jupiter's chemical composition, measuring its gravitational and magnetic fields, and taking photographs of the planet and its moons (79 as of last count). Juno has also examined two other huge storms in Jupiter's atmosphere — one rotates coun-

ter-clockwise (like the Great Red Spot) and the other rotates in the opposite direction.

The second study used minute variations in Juno's orbit as it crossed over the Great Red Spot to determine its mass. According to lead researcher Marzia Parisi (at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena CA), data indicates that the bulk of the Spot could not extend deeper than about 300 miles below its visible surface. Information from the combined studies confirm that the Great Red Spot is roughly shaped like a pancake but doesn't reach deep into Jupiter's interior.

Recent research has discovered that the winds in the Great Red Spot are getting faster. There's always the possibility that the Great Red Spot could some day break apart, but all indications are that it's likely to last for a very long time — perhaps hundreds or thousands of years. Says Timothy Dowling (professor of dynamic meteorology at the University of Louisville, Kentucky): "It's much simpler than a hurricane, and it has absolutely no reason to fall apart — it just goes on and on."

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I couldn't pass up sharing this classic *Astounding Science Fiction* cover (February 1959), featuring a space pirate illustration by Kelly Freas, (Notice the slide rule in his mouth!)

## Cosmic Corsairs edited by Hank Davis & Christopher Ruocchio (Baen Books, 2020) a short review by Carl

Do you long for the days when the Pulps were filled with shoot-'em-up space opera action — and many of those stories included space pirates? Well, yo ho, me hearties! Here's an anthology for you! As Hank Davis says in his Introduction: "However many objections can be raised against space piracy becoming a reality, the idea is undeniable *fun*."

This anthology contains 15 short stories that feature various interpretations of piracy in deep space. Some of the stories have been reprinted for the first time since their original appearance in the Pulps; and several of them appear in print for the first time. There are works from the 1940s to the 1960s, as well as a number from the early 2000s. And a number of "classic SF" authors are represented, including: Larry Niven, Fritz Leiber, James Blish, Robert Silverberg, and James Schmitz.

I'm pretty sure this anthology won't be everybody's cup of tea. Frankly, I wasn't fond of many of the "classic" stories — I found the writing to be pretty "clunky" (lack of characterization, definite "political correctness" gaffes, etc.). To my mind, this is the kind of stuff that contributed to the bad rep that classic space opera got.

On the other hand, there are a few *really* good stories in here. "Boojum" (by Elizabeth Bear and Sarah Monette) is a brilliant story with living spaceships, strong female lead characters, and clever Lovecraftian overtones. Katherine MacLean's "Collision Orbit" is a fascinating story of how a clever independent merchant exploits the unique socio-political relationships among asteroid miners to get the upper hand on some murderous hi-jackers. And "The Barbary Shore" (by James Cambias) is a really innovative story of high-tech "piracy by keyboard" as perpetrated by a very talented young hacker from his hotel room on Earth.

*Cosmic Corsairs* is a light and mostly frothy read. If space pirates are your *forte*, then this anthology is for you.

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## Minutes of the November 2021 LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

### Movies

Rob said that the current *Dune* movie is visually stunning. Nobody seemed to like the acting talents of Kyle MacLachlan, who portrayed Paul Muadib in the first *Dune* movie. Rob enjoyed *The Eternals*, and he explained the original Jack Kirby origin story from the comics.

### TV

David is looking forward to the new *Wheel of Time* series (Amazon Prime), starring Rosamund Park. Rob has misgivings about the first book in the series, stating that he feels author Robert Jordan provides a great deal of detail for things that do not advance the plot. (“Overly long and bloated.”) But Rob says he will give the Amazon series a try.

Peter and Rob gave the animated *Q Force* (NetFlix) series a second chance, and they said it improved after the first episode. Peter is enjoying the *Foundation* series being shown on Apple TV+.

David talked about the final episode of *Supergirl* (CW). Rob said that some fans have suggested that a scene with Lena and Kara kissing was cut from the final episode. David commented about the transgender superheroine Dreamer. Rob said he would not be surprised if one of the two Kent sons on *Superman and Lois* (CW) is revealed to be gay.

Peter talked about Series 13 of *Doctor Who*, titled *Doctor Who: Flux* (BBC America). It consists of six episodes and stars Jodie Whittaker as The Doctor.

A 10-episode live-action adaptation *Cowboy Bebop* (the Japanese anime series) premieres this Friday on NetFlix. Genre series starting up soon: *Hit-Monkey* (Hulu), *Star Trek: Discovery* Season 4 (Paramount +), *Wheel of Time* (Amazon Prime), *Lost in Space* (NetFlix), the final season of *The Expanse* (SyFy).

Disney Plus has announced a couple of new Marvel-related series: Oscar Isaac will star in *The Moon Knight*, while Tatiana Maslany will star in *She Hulk*.

Rob summed up the discussion by saying: “Lots of genre content out there!”

## Classic *Doctor Who* on Home Media

by Peter Knapp

Rob volunteered me to write an article for the LSF newsletter about classic *Doctor Who* episodes on home media. I accept the challenge. 😊

As of November 14, 2021, 865 episodes of *Doctor Who* have aired. From the classic series that aired from 1963 - 1989 (with an additional TV movie in 1996), 695 episodes aired as mostly multi-episode stories. For various reasons – including not considering broadcast episodes to be of commercial value, and wanting to reuse master videotapes – 147 episodes from the first two Doctors’ adventures (shot in B&W) were purged from the BBC archives.

In the mid-seventies, home media started being sold in the form of videocassette recordings (VHS and Betamax). The BBC realized they could make money by releasing old episodes of *Doctor Who*.

### Other

There was a lot of discussion about the lost episodes of the original two seasons of *Doctor Who*, during which Peter demonstrated his deep knowledge of all things related to Dr. Who.

Carl will moderate a virtual discussion panel at Discon III/Worldcon next month; the topic will be the legacy of Charles Saunders (“hailed as a trailblazer in the literary world for his contributions to the establishment of the genre known as *Sword and Soul*”). Carl also talked about how much he has enjoyed the works of author Elizabeth Hand.

Peter and David plan to attend next year’s Gallifrey *Dr. Who* in-person convention in California.

Rob advised everyone that when the LSF Book Discussion returns to an in-person format, it will not be a hybrid of in-person and virtual. Rob also reminded everyone of the upcoming LSF Book Discussion titles: *Finder* by Suzanne Palmer (combined Nov/Dec 2021); *Far Out: An Anthology of Recent Queer Science Fiction and Fantasy*, an anthology edited by Paula Guran (Jan 2022); *A Memory Called Empire* by Arkady Martine (Feb 2022); and *Architects of Memory* by Karen Osborne (March 2022).

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Therefore the policy to wipe out episodes of *Doctor Who* officially came to an end in 1978.

Commercial releases of *Doctor Who* have been very popular. Some stories have been released multiple times, first on VHS, then DVD, and most recently on Blu-Ray. By 2013 every episode held by the BBC had been released. Originally the BBC had a policy of releasing stories with at least 50% of their surviving episodes. Back in the day, they recorded the audio of broadcast stories and also took pictures of the episodes. The BBC used these audio recordings and “telesnaps” (along with the surviving episodes) to release “full” stories.

As *Doctor Who* had been sold abroad, particularly in the Commonwealth, the search for missing episodes began. Between 1978 and by 2013, 50 missing episodes were recovered from around the world, returned to the archives, cleaned up, and released. That left 10 of the original 156 stories still unreleased, with 13 additional stories missing at least one episode. The hope is that more episodes will be found in the future.

In addition, since 2006, forty-six missing episodes have been animated and released, along with any surviving live action footage to make “complete” stories. As long as they are commercially successful, the BBC plans to animate and release every missing episode to complete all 156 stories. (In 2017 the BBC animated the unfiled scenes from the uncompleted and unaired 4th Doctor story, “Shada”. Depending on who you talk to, “Shada” is considered canon and therefore is an important part of the expanding collection of released classic *Doctor Who* stories.)

As a lifelong fan and collector of *Doctor Who*, this makes me very happy. 😊

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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, December 12th, will be held virtually. We'll 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

Dec. 15-19, 2021 **WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION (DisCon III)**. Omni Shoreham Hotel (Washington DC) – hotel information: <https://discon3.org/location/accommodations> Incorporating virtual and on-site/face-to-face programming. “We are committed to having a masking and health policy which complies with local legal requirements and CDC recommendations. As the situation is still fluid, we will be updating you with our requirements to be in-person as we get closer to December.” Author GoH: Nancy Kress; Artist GoH: John Harris. Adult attending membership = \$275; virtual membership (to access on-line programming) = \$90.

Website: <https://discon3.org/> Purchase memberships on-line at: <https://discon3.org/membership/membership-information/>

April 29 – May 1, 2022 **RAVENCON 15**. Virginia Crossings Hotel & Conference Center (Richmond VA). GoH: Terry Brooks; Music GoH: Rhiannon's Lark. Membership: \$35 before 12/31/2021; \$40 before 4/5/2022; \$50 at the door; day badges available. On-line registration at: <https://ravencon.com/store/Registration-c23522469> Webpage: <https://ravencon.com>

**Comparative Logos**

(or “I’ve Seen This Somewhere Before, Haven’t I?”)  
- some thoughts from Carl -

Remember all the controversy over the U.S. Space Force logo and its “similarity” to the Starfleet Command logo? Well, when I wandered over to the DisCon III/Worldcon website, I couldn't help but get a certain feeling of *deja vu* as I looked at their new logo. And I figured – what the heck – I'll give y'all a look-see and a chance to make your own comparisons.

Take a look at the four logos on this page:

- NASA (upper left)
- Starfleet Command (lower left)
- US Space Force (upper right)
- DisCon III (lower right)

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