



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 386 – May 2022

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The LSF Book Discussion Group

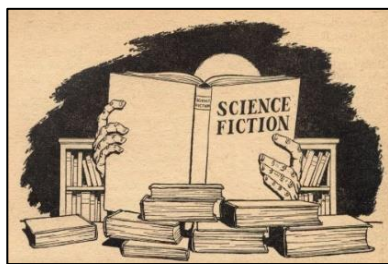
If *you're* interested in lively discussions of F&SF books (with an emphasis on elements of interest to the LGBT community), we invite you to join the LSF Book Discussion Group. Each month, we conduct fascinating round-table discussions of works by significant F&SF authors.

Before the COVID-19 shut-down orders, the LSF Book Discussion Group met on the 4th Thursday of every month, doors opening at 7:00 PM, at Peter & Rob's home. The next book discussion will be held **in person** on **May 26th**. **All attendees MUST be fully vaccinated.**

Here are the details for the next several discussions:

May 26, 2022 – *Iron Widow*, by Xiran Jay Zhao (moderator: Ben)

June 23, 2022 – *The City Beautiful*, by Aden Polydoros (moderator: Carl) ΛΨΦ



Annual LSF Gift Exchange at May 8th LSF Meeting



Hooray! We'll resume a long-delayed tradition and host LSF's *thirty-first* annual book (et al) exchange at the in-person monthly LSF meeting to be held on May 8, 2022!

All LSF members – and visitors, guests, attendees, etc. – are invited to participate in this “blind exchange.” (*Remember: You MUST be fully vaccinated to attend this meeting.*)

In case you've never participated in one of these before (or in case you've forgotten), here's how it works:

(1) Go out and purchase a copy of your “favorite” science-fiction, fantasy, or horror book. (*NOTE: Over the years, LSF has expanded the concept of “book” to include comics, graphic novels, videotapes, “books on tape,” etc. If you want – or if you're feeling particularly wealthy –*

you can even make it *several* favorite books or whatever.) New or used, it makes no difference, as long as it's one of your favorites!

(2) Insert a piece of paper (or bookmark) with your name on it. That's so whoever eventually ends up with the item will know who it's from and will get to know a little about you – at least to know what one of your “favorites” is.

(3) Wrap up the exchange item, but don't put any identifying marks or anything on the wrapped package to say who it's from. That's to make sure it's a “blind” exchange – *i.e.* no one is supposed to know who it's from at first. (All of that leftover Holiday wrapping paper should come in handy here!)

(4) At the meeting, add your wrapped exchange item to the pile with all the others; and you'll be assigned a number. (Only one exchange item – *i.e.* one package – per person, please!)

(5) When your number is called, you pick one of the packages from the pile. And when you open it up, you'll find out who it's from. See how easy?

I can hardly wait to see what shows up *this* year!

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***** May 8, 2022 Meeting = IN PERSON!!! *****

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, May 8th**. Meetings have returned to in-person format and will be held at Peter and Rob's home, **1425 “S” Street NW, Washington, DC**. **All attendees MUST be fully vaccinated.** The doors open at 1:30 PM and the meeting will begin at 2:00 PM. *Remember: This meeting will also feature the return of the LSF Gift Exchange!! Hope to see you there!*

What's Inside?

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My Votes for the 2022 Dramatic Presentation Hugo Awards (Part 1 of 2)

by Peter Knapp (with guest commentary by Greg McElhatton)



<https://www.thehugoawards.org/hugo-history/2022-hugo-awards/>

When I qualify to nominate and vote on the Hugos I usually contribute two articles to Ye Old Editor for the LSF newsletter. The articles are for the two Best Dramatic Presentation categories, one for my nominations and later one for my votes. This year I missed the nomination deadline. I plan to vote for the works that were nominated so I can at least contribute one article (in two parts). 😊

Warning: My commentary is full of spoilers, so reader beware!

Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form (386 nomination ballots cast)

This is a tough category, as unless the work in question is a standalone work, it's hard to judge an individual episode on its own merit. I chatted with Greg about this, and he said, "It's definitely a tough category to weigh them all if you aren't watching all the shows. I feel like so many nominees are hard to judge if you aren't already a fan." I was already a fan of four of the series and had watched all episodes from those series. I watched the single nominated episode of the two series I had not seen. Here is the ranking I gave each of the nominees with some commentary about my decision process.

1. *For All Mankind*: "The Grey" – *For All Mankind* is an alternate history drama created by Ronald D. Moore. Moore worked on three *Star Trek* shows before developing the reboot of *Battlestar Galactica*. As a creator of some of my favorite genre shows, I looked

Minutes of the April LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

There were 9 attendees at the first LSF in-person monthly meeting since pandemic began.

TV News: Peter is enjoying Apple TV+'s *For All Mankind* – in an alternate timeline, the Soviets land the first person on the moon; and the United States attempts to catch up, including an emphasis on diversity. Teresa likes Netflix's *Russian Doll*, a comedy-drama TV series about a game developer who repeatedly dies and relives the same night in an ongoing time loop and tries to solve it. (A second season is premiering this month.) Teresa also loves John Cena as *Peacemaker*. Did you know that HBO Max is working on a new series about second Aqua-man, starring DC's openly gay Jackson Hyde?

Movie News: Lots of exuberance over *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, starring Michelle Yeoh. ("When an interdimensional rupture unravels reality, an unlikely hero must channel her newfound powers to fight bizarre and bewildering dangers from the multiverse as the fate of the world hangs in the balance.") Rob warned everyone that the viewer must pay

forward to seeing his take on alternate history.

Starting in 1969, Soviet cosmonaut, Alexei Leonov, beats the USA to the moon. As a result, President Nixon accelerates the American space program. Women and minorities become astronauts much earlier than in our timeline. The show follows the space program and profiles a group of astronauts as they struggle to get to the moon and then establish a moon base. The Soviets are doing the same thing so they can claim the moon for themselves. While the pacing of the show could become excruciatingly slow at times, I stuck with it, as the writing, acting, and production values are top notch.

While it would help to have seen the previous 19 episodes of the series, this finale was written in a way that one could get into the episode with no knowledge of the show. During this season finale of the second season, I shed both tears of sadness and joy.

attention. There was discussion about MCU superhero character America Chavez, who is a Queer American teenager with the ability to travel between dimensions of the multiverse.

Other News: Rob informed everyone that the Hugo finalists have been announced. He noted that many of the finalists have significant queer content. A crowdfunding campaign is underway for *To the Journey: Looking Back at Star Trek: Voyager*. (Will it be horrible like Ira Steven Behr's 2018 *What We Left Behind: Looking Back at Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*?) Rob reviewed The Halcyon, an immersive "Star Wars: Galactic Starcruiser" event at the Walt Disney World Resort: two days of cosplay at Disney.

Upcoming LSF Events: Rob reminded everyone that LSF will not have a table at this year's **Capital Pride Festival** as in prior years. (The cost is much too high!) Upcoming **LSF Book Discussions:** *White Trash Warlock* by David Slayton (April 28); *Iron Widow* by Xiran Jay Zhao (May 26); *The City Beautiful* by Aden Polydoros (June 23). **Gaming Party:** Saturday, April 30. **Annual Book(ish) Exchange:** at the May 8th LSF meeting.

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Four major events start the episode taking place in 1983. The USSR and the USA are on the brink of nuclear war on Earth. Cosmonauts have invaded the American moon base and killed astronauts who resisted the incursion. Stray gun fire damages the base's nuclear power source. In space, astronauts and cosmonauts are trying to dock Apollo and Soyuz capsules and are being told by their respective governments to abort the mission. Meanwhile a Soviet spacecraft is blocking a delivery of American "scientific" equipment to the moon, that has secret nuclear weapons on it.

To save the moon base, two divorced astronauts need to repair the base from the outside without space suits. They fashion temporary protection out of duct tape and gas masks. While they know it's a suicide mission, they sacrifice themselves to save the moon base from exploding and die in each other's arms.

(continued on page 3)

Dramatic Presentation Hugo Awards

continued from page 2

Meanwhile in space, the astronauts and cosmonauts disobey their respective governments, and one group docks the Apollo and Soyuz capsules, and the other group destroys the delivery ship with the nuclear weapons on board. Nuclear war is averted, and humanity is saved. This was an amazingly tense episode that showed the best of humanity doing the right thing for the betterment of all mankind.

2. *The Expanse*: “Nemesis Games” – *The Expanse* is my favorite recent genre show. Similar to *Game of Thrones* and *House of Cards*, at one level this show is about politics, in this case Earth, Mars, and the Belters struggling for control and self-determination. At its heart it’s about the four people who are trying to do the right thing and save people and the galaxy from itself and also from an alien protomolecule, an infectious agent of extra-terrestrial origin that people try to process for power and profit.

This nominated episode was another season finale that assumes one knows the characters and situations leading up to the episode. I of course was strongly invested in the characters and story, and this season finale satisfactorily resolved many story elements. In saving one of the main characters, Naomi Nagata, another of the main characters, Alex Kamal, dies of a high-gee induced stroke. Normally I would have gotten upset at one of the characters I loved dying, but not in this instance.

In this information age, I had read about the character’s exit from the show. The actor, Cas Anvar, was accused by over 40 people of assaulting, intimidating, and harassing female fans and colleagues. This colored my reaction to the character’s death on the show and lessened the impact of the episode. Sometimes I miss the pre-internet days when one could watch something truly without any foreknowledge.



3. *Loki*: “The Nexus Event” – Like *WandaVision* (covered in part two of my commentary), *Loki* takes a popular though not main character from the Marvel Cinematic Universe and devotes a whole season (in this case six episodes) to tell a tale that expands and develops the character. When last we saw Loki (in *Avengers: Endgame*) he escapes the Avengers by stealing the Space Stone and jumping into a new timeline. At the start of *Loki*, he is apprehended by the Time Variance Authority whose duty is to protect the sacred timeline at all costs.

The mid-season episode of *Loki* that was nominated for a Hugo was really, really, good. It left enough breadcrumbs that somebody who hadn’t seen the previous episodes could figure out what was going on. It also changed the direction of the show, but it didn’t resolve anything. I think of award-winning works as telling a complete story, even if it’s within the context of a broader story. “The Nexus Event” is a great middle chapter of a great series but doesn’t really stand on its own.

4. *Star Trek: Lower Decks*: “wej Duj” – *Star Trek*’s first animated comedy got a lot better in the second season. I found this episode particularly good. Three of the four friends who work in the lower decks decide to hang out with a “bridge buddy.” Ensign Boimler doesn’t have a bridge buddy, and hijinks ensue when he desperately tries to get one. Meanwhile two lower decks crew members from a Klingon Bird-of-Prey and a Vulcan cruiser struggle to fit in. Profiling Ma’ah (stationed on a Klingon ship) and T’Lyn (working on a Vulcan ship) added depth to what would have otherwise been a fluffy story about Ensign Boimler’s shenanigans. It would be great to see Ma’ah and T’Lyn in future episodes.

5. *The Wheel of Time*: “The Flame of Tar Valon” – I’m not a fan of fantasy and tend not to watch nor read it. I’ve never read Robert Jordan’s “Wheel of Time” book series and didn’t watch the Amazon Prime series based on the book series. When I watched the sixth (of eight) episode, I was entering a fantasy world I

knew nothing of. I watched a well-crafted piece of television with gorgeous production values. The lesbian content was a nice bonus. I enjoyed the episode, but it did not speak to me emotionally, most likely because it was fantasy and because I hadn’t watched the previous five episodes of the season.

6. *Arcane*: “The Monster You Created” – This is yet another season finale that assumes one knows the characters and situations leading up to the episode. I had not heard of *Arcane* before reading it was a nominee. From a quick look on Google, I learned it was based on a video game I’ve also never heard of. “Two sisters. Two cities. One discovery that will change the world forever. In the cities of Piltover and Zaun, unrest stirs as inventors and thieves, politicians and crime lords chafe against the constraints of a society torn asunder.”

<https://arcane.com/en-us/>

I thought the animation was decent and the story and characters compelling. Not knowing anything about the show, the multiple deaths and cliffhanger ending didn’t affect me emotionally. I suspect if I had watched the whole season, I might have been more invested in the characters and story.

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Hugo Gernsback
1884 – 1967
“Father of Science Fiction”

*** * 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 next Lambda Sci-Fi meeting will return to face-to-face format on Sunday, **May 8th, at Peter and Rob's home, 1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC. All attendees MUST be fully vaccinated.** We hope to see you there and 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, Peter & Scott

May 27-30, 2022 **BALTICON 56**. Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel (Baltimore MD). GoH: Nancy Springer; Artist GoH: Odera Igbokwe; Special Guests: Seanan McGuire, Wen Spencer, CJ Cherryh.

Membership: \$75 before 5/22; \$85 at the door; daily rates available.

On-line registration at: <https://www.balticon.org/wp56/registration/>

Webpage: <https://www.balticon.org/wp56/> E-mail at: balticoninfo@balticon.org

June 3-5, 2022 **AWESOME CON 2022**. Walter E. Washington Convention Center (Washington DC). Special Guests include: Anthony (C3PO) Daniels; Sean (Sam Gamgee) Astin; Simu (Shang-Chi) Liu, Sylvester (Dr Who) McCoy. Membership (Badges):

\$85 for 3-day badge (single-day badges available). Webpage: <https://awesome-con.com/>

Purchase membership/badges on-line at: https://purchase.growtix.com/eh/Awesome_Con_2022

July 15-17, 2022 **SHORE LEAVE 42**. Delta Hotels Baltimore Hunt Valley (Hunt Valley MD). Guests: Brandon Routh (Superman/Clark Kent, Ray Palmer/Atom); Adam Baldwin (Jayne, *Firefly*), Jewel Staite (Kaylee, *Firefly*), and others. Weekend membership: \$105; daily rates available. Web page: www.shore-leave.com

July 29-31, 2022 **OTAKON 2022**. (A convention devoted to animé, manga, and Kpop.) Walter E. Washington Convention Center (Washington DC). Guest list to be announced. Membership rate: \$100 for the weekend (daily rates available).

On-line registration: <https://www.otakon.com/register/>

Webpage: <https://www.otakon.com/>

July 29-31, 2022 **CONFLUENCE 2022**. Sheraton Pittsburgh Airport Hotel (Coraopolis, PA). Guests: Neil Clarke (editor of the Hugo and World Fantasy award-winning *Clarkesworld Magazine*), Tim Griffin (award-winning teacher, musician, and storyteller), and others. Weekend membership: \$50 from 4/16/2022 - 6/30/2022, \$55 from 7/1/22 - 7/25/2022, \$60 at door.

Web page: <http://confluence-sff.org/>

Sept. 1-5, 2022 **80TH WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION (CHICON 8)**. Hyatt Regency Chicago Hotel (Chicago IL). Author GoH: TBA; Artist GoH: Floyd Norman. Membership: \$240. Webpage: <https://chicon.org/>

On-line registration: <https://registration.chicon.org/>

Sept. 30 – Oct. 2, 2022 **CAPCLAVE 2022**. Hilton Washington DC/Rockville Hotel & Executive Meeting Center (Rockville MD). GoHs: Ursula Vernon, Irene Gallo. Membership: \$55 thru May 31st; \$60 from June 1st to Aug. 31st; \$65 from Sept. 1st to Sept. 15th. On-line registration at: <https://www.capclave.org/capclave/capclave22/registration.php>

Webpage: <https://www.capclave.org> Info at: info@capclave.org

