



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 392 – November 2022

E-MAIL: info@lambdascifi.org

WEBSITE: www.lambdascifi.org

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. The next book discussion will be held in person on **December 1st (a combined Nov/Dec discussion)**. **All attendees MUST be fully vaccinated.**

Here are the details for the next two discussions:

Dec. 1, 2022 (combined Nov/Dec discussion) – *She Who Became the Sun*, by Shelley Parker-Chan (mod: Keith W).

Jan. 26, 2023 – (two works) *What Moves the Dead*, by T. Kingfisher and "The Fall of the House of Usher," by Edgar Allan Poe (moderator: Carl)

Note: The Virtual Book Club has been discontinued. **ΛΨΦ**



LSF Tabletop Gaming Party and Monthly Social Meeting Saturday November 12th

****All attendees MUST be fully vaccinated.****

What: It's a gaming party. There will be plenty of room for gaming, so please bring your favorite games (cards, board, etc.). **Please note: this event will replace our normal second Sunday of the month social meeting.**

When: Saturday, November 12; 2:00 PM to 11 PM or so.

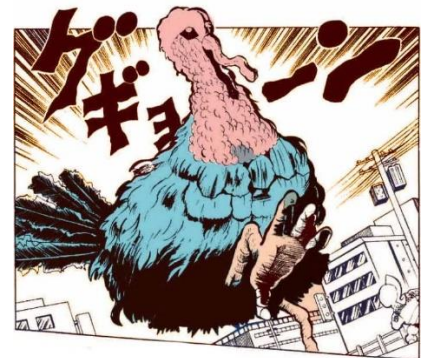
Where: Home of Peter and Rob, 1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC. Their home is in the Midcity (14th and "U") neighborhood between Dupont Circle and Logan Circle. Directions (with Metro and parking advice) at: lambdascifi.org/club/PeterRob.html

What to Bring: Bring your favorite table game (or two or three). Also, please bring munchies and/or soft drinks to share (non-alcoholic please).

Dinner: For those who are interested, we'll order pizza for dinner. To get in on the pizza order, please bring \$10 in exact change. If you don't want pizza, you can order take-out or go forage for food. There are a lot of food choices in the Midcity (14th and "U") Corridor.

Questions: Contact Peter at: PeterPKnapp@gmail.com

Remember: All attendees MUST be fully vaccinated. **ΛΨΦ**



Kaiju Thanksgiving Wishes!

***** November 12, 2022 Meeting = IN PERSON! *****

The next LSF meeting will be held on Saturday, November 12th. The meeting 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 2:00 PM with a short business/social meeting, followed by the gaming party. Hope to see you there!



What's Inside?

Page 2: October Reading, Part 1 (book reviews); Velma – the Word is Out!; Minutes of the October LSF Meeting.

Page 4: Info About Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians and Con Calendar; Sounds of Earth's Magnetic Field.

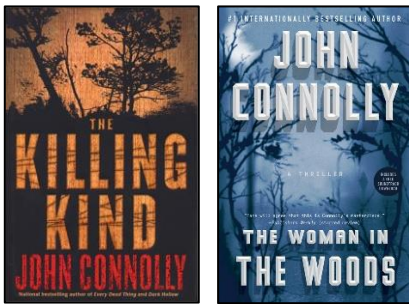
October Reading, Part 1

reviews by Carl

In honor of the Halloween season, I generally enjoy reading “weird” or “creepy” or “scary” books. This October was no exception. Here are a few reviews of some of the books I read last month.

Two “Charlie Parker” Novels by John Connolly

The Killing Kind (Pocket Star, 2001)
The Woman in the Woods
(Emily Bestler/Atria Books, 2018)



I’m not sure when I started reading Connolly’s “Charlie Parker” novels; but I quite enjoy them. There are 20 of ‘em at present, but I’m not sure how many of ‘em I’ve read. At any rate, to start off this October season, I picked two of ‘em at random from one of my “to read” piles.

John Connolly is a Dublin-based author; and he enjoys reading American crime/noir/private investigator novels. The “Charlie Parker” novels are very much in that vein, although they often contain a healthy dose of supernatural horror. The character of Charlie Parker was introduced to the world of crime fiction back in May 1999 in *Every Dead Thing*. It won a Shamus Award for best debut novel and the LA Times Book of the Year.

Parker is a cop with the New York Police Department. When his wife and daughter are brutally murdered, Parker is racked with guilt over his inability to save them. He quits the NYPD and vows to avenge the murder of his family. Parker travels to Maine and Louisiana to track down their murderer, the mysterious Traveling Man. After bringing the Traveling Man

(continued on page 3)



Velma – the Word is Out!

info passed along by Carl

That’s right, folks! Velma Dinkley (the bespectacled brains of the Scooby Gang) has been viewed as a Queer icon for quite some time; but now there’s clear evidence that she is, in fact, a lesbian.

“What evidence?” you ask. Well, just watch the new animated feature *Trick or Treat, Scooby-Doo!* The “big reveal” happens when Velma first meets the costume-designing crime boss Coco Diablo. She’s striding past Daphne and Fred, carrying a box of Scooby Snacks to give to Scooby-Doo. First, she trails off in mid-sentence. Then Velma blushes; her eyeglasses fog up; and she sighs her signature “Jink-iiiiies!” But that’s not all. Her interest in Coco is confirmed in a later scene when she’s talking with best-friend Daphne: “I’m crushing big time, Daphne. What do I do? What do I say?” Can’t be much clearer than that, can it?

The info went viral after Trinity Wheeler (an 18-year-old student from Ontario, Canada) shared a clip of from the new animated film on-line. Her posting was captioned as follows: “OMG LESBIAN VELMA FINALLY.” In about 48 hours, the video had been played more than 5.5 million times and received more than 200,000 “likes.” Audie Harrison, director of the new “Scooby-Doo” adventure, told National Public Radio that Warner Brothers (which owns the franchise) was “very supportive of this direction for Velma’s character from day one.” She also confessed: “It honestly didn’t occur to [me] that we were doing something so groundbreaking until right now. I just set out to have fun with the comedy of an awkward teenage crush.”



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Minutes of the October LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

Seven sentients attended.

TV News

AMC’s new *Interview with a Vampire* series is very gay and has lots of sex. David raved about the non-genre Netflix TV show *The Mole*: “A group of fourteen American strangers undertake an array of physical and mental challenges.” (I’ll pass.) Season 2 of the genre comedy *HBO Show Avenue* is about to start. Rob stated that the final Jodie Whitaker *Doctor Who* episode will be aired on October 23; the episode is titled “Power of the Doctor. Rob claimed that the most recent *She-Hulk* episode included the best “walk of shame” – he didn’t provide the details to avoid spoilers.

Movie News

Rob is looking forward to the *Black Adam* movie, which includes some Justice Society characters – Golden Age Hawkman and Doctor Fate.

Other News

Rob mentioned that New York Comic Con was held this weekend; and the trailer for Season 3 of *Picard* was shown. Rob labeled the new season at “no story, all pander” with some TNG cast. There was a discussion of Clive Barker’s “Books of Blood” series from the 1980’s, including “In the Hills, the Cities” with a theme of body horror.

The next two LSF book discussions: *Spear* by Nicola Griffith (Oct. 27); *She Whom Became the Sun* by Shelley Parker-Chan (Dec. 1)

Rob announced that the next LSF meeting will be on Saturday, November 12 (rather than on Sunday the 13th). It will precede an LSF table-top gaming party. [Ed. note: See announcement on page 1 of this newsletter.]

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October Reading, Part 1

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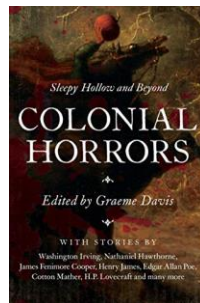
to a satisfactory (and violent) end, Parker abandons NYC and sets up his private investigator business in Portland, Maine. But his experiences with supernatural darkness have changed his life forever. He's a man for whom evil isn't just a philosophical concept – it's a palpable presence. He discovers that he has some kind of link to murder victims – they reach out to him. But the Dark (in many forms) is somehow also drawn to him and senses him as a threat.

Interesting note: When Parker needs more physical help (which he frequently does), he calls on his buddies Louis and Angel. Louis and Angel are lovers, former (?) contract killers who maintain a certain less-than-legal financial status and often provide a touch of humor to the stories.

At the start of *The Killing Kind* (#3 in the series), Parker is hired to investigate the unlikely suicide of Grace Peltier, a well-connected young woman. When a mass grave is accidentally uncovered in the northern forests of Maine, ghostly presences also draw Parker into investigating the mysterious disappearance of the Aroostook Baptists, a religious community that disappeared in the 1960s. (Comparisons to Jim Jones and the People's Cult of the 1970s are unavoidable.) During his investigations, Parker also runs across a series of grisly murders, as well as the nightmarish "Mr. Pudd", who is seeking to recover a modern Apocalypse manuscript created by the founder of the Aroostook Baptists. Mr. Pudd's strange affinity for brown wolf spiders, black widow spiders, and other such deadly creepy-crawlies clearly links him to all the murders. What really happened to Grace Peltier and the Aroostook Baptists? Who (or what) is Mr. Pudd? And who will get to the mysterious manuscript first: Parker or Pudd? Once again, human and supernatural evil combine to threaten Charlie Parker's life. (I found Mr. Pudd and his *modus operandi* to be truly horrific.)

The Woman in the Woods (#16 in the series) takes Parker back out into the Maine woods, where the body of a

young woman has been unearthed. She died about five years ago, and a pathologist finds evidence that she had a baby just before she died – but there is no sign of the child. Portland lawyer Moxie Castin hires Parker to help police with the investigation. In the course of his investigation, Parker follows a set of gruesome murders that would seem to be linked to someone also trying to track down the missing child, as well as an altered 1909 edition of *Grimm's Fairy Tales* that is rumored to contain pages from a mysterious "Atlas" that will enable its possessor to "rewrite worlds." Parker's primary adversaries are Mr. Quayle (a refined, reserved, amoral, and seemingly ageless servant of "the Old God") and his devoted "tame murderess" Pallida Mors. They, in turn, have been set on the hunt for the child and the book by a group of wealthy Boston cabalists who serve "the Buried God." (As an added complication, Quayle and the cabalists aren't exactly allies, because the entities they serve would seem to have separate agendas.) Once again, Connolly weaves mayhem, mystery, stone-cold killers, and supernatural threats into his novel. (Gotta love it!)



**Colonial
Horrors:
*Sleepy Hollow
and Beyond*
edited by
Graeme Davis
(Pegasus
Books, 2017)**

I dug this one out of one of my "to read" piles. It's been sitting there for a while; and I figured this was as good a time as any to read it.

The "horrors" in this anthology present quite a change from the gritty, graphic horrors in the Connolly novels. All but two of the 16 stories (and one poem!) in this anthology were written before 1900; and tastes have definitely changed. I don't think this collection will be everyone's "cup of hemlock" – I figure you'll need some kind of "anti-

quarian" interest in horror fiction in order to enjoy it. Some well-known "usual suspects" are represented here. The first story in the collection is Washington Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (1820), and the last one is an excerpt from H.P. Lovecraft's "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward" (1927). Edgar Allan Poe's "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains" (1844) is somewhere in the middle.

There were some surprises. The earliest entries were written by Increase Mather ("An Essay for the Recording of Remarkable Providence," 1684) and his son Cotton Mather ("Wonders of the Invisible World," 1693). (They both lived in Massachusetts at the time of the Salem Witch Trials.) Their "true accounts" mostly deal with what we would probably consider poltergeist activities (which were, of course, blamed on witchcraft). Not my favorites, by any means.

On the other hand, I definitely enjoyed Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Birth-Mark" (1843), a cautionary tale of romance and "scientific horror" set in the late 1700s. "The Salem Wolf" (1909), by well-known illustrator and pirate-stories author Howard Pyle, is a fascinating witch-and-werewolf tale set in Massachusetts at about the time of the Salem Witch Trials. There's also a short story by James Fenimore Cooper (author of *The Last of the Mohicans* and other "Leatherstocking" tales) – "The Lake Gun" (1850) – it deals with a mysterious legendary sonic boom reported by settlers around Lake Seneca in upstate New York.

Two other stories – although definitely not my favorites – are worthy of note. "In the Pines" (1859) by W.F. Mayer is one of the earliest accounts of the Jersey Devil myth (based on 18th Century tales). And "An Authenticated History of the Bell Witch" (1894) by Martin van Buren Ingram purports to tell the true story of a haunting in 1817 Tennessee as experienced by the author when he was a small boy – it's apparently the inspiration for the hit film *The Blair Witch Project* (1999).

(to be continued **ΛΨΦ**
in next month's newsletter)

**** 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; but the next Lambda Sci-Fi meeting will be on Saturday, November 12th, in conjunction with a gaming party, at Peter and Rob's home, 1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC. All attendees MUST be fully vaccinated. We hope to see you there.

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.

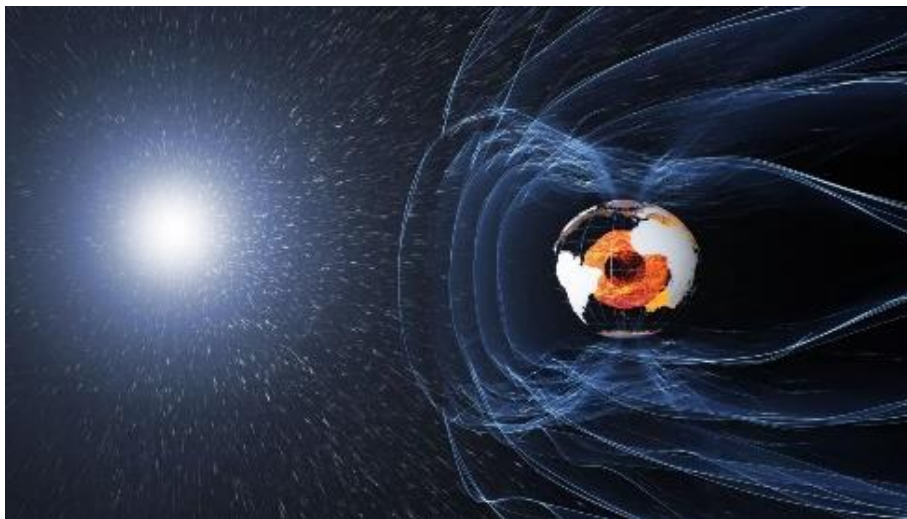
**** Con Calendar **** by Carl, Peter & Scott

Nov. 18-20, 2022 **PHILCON 2022**. Doubletree by Hilton (Cherry Hill NJ). Principal Speaker: Keith DeCandido; Artist GoH: Charles Urbach. Membership: \$65. Website: www.philcon.org Registration: www.membership.philcon.org

Nov. 25-27, 2022 **CHESSIECON 2022**. (A very LGBTQ+ friendly con.) Delta Hunt Valley Hotel (Hunt Valley MD). GoH: Danielle Ackley-McPhail; Music GoH: Blibbering Humdingers. Membership: \$50 until 10/30; \$55 after that; \$60 at the door; daily memberships available. On-line registration (via PayPal): <https://johogan.org/chessieconlogin.cfm> OR by mail to: TSFS, Inc., PO Box 83032, Gaithersburg MD 20883-3032 (checks payable to: TSFS, Inc.). Info at: info@chessiecon.org Website: <https://chessiecon.org/>

Feb. 10-12, 2023 **FARPOINT**. Delta by Marriott Hunt Valley (Hunt Valley MD). Guest: Wilson Cruz (*ST: Discovery*), Rylee Alazraqui (*ST: Prodigy*). Membership (register on-line): \$90 for the weekend; daily rates available.

For more information: www.FarPointCon.com



Sounds of Earth's Magnetic Field

info passed along by Carl

The European Space Agency has released audio of what Earth's magnetic field sounds like. The magnetic field protects us from cosmic radiation. When charged particles from solar winds hit the field, it turns out that they produce a definite noise.

You can't exactly point a microphone at the sky and hear the magnetic field, but scientists from the Technical University of Denmark converted data collected by ESA's three Swarm satellites into sound, representing both the magnetic field and a solar storm.

Click on this link to hear the sounds of the Earth's magnetic field:

https://www.esa.int/Applications/Observing_the_Earth/FutureEO/Swarm/The_scary_sound_of_Earth_s_magnetic_field

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