



LAMBDA SCI-FI

DC Area Bisexual/Gay/Lesbian Science Fiction Association

P.O. Box 10087 * Silver Spring, MD 20914 * (301) 445-5650 Issue #5 - August '90

LAST MEETING MINUTES

Our July 8th meeting took place at Al's in Silver Spring. Present were: Al W.; Barrett B.; Carl C.; DJ C.; David N.; Helgi D.; Jim C.; Jim D.; Loree C-D.; and Thom W.

The big task of the meeting was getting out letters to the more than 100 persons who signed up at our booth on Gay Pride Day and the 30 or so who have contacted us since we began. So we addressed envelopes, stuffed, sealed, and stamped while we talked. The mailing included: a letter talking about Lambda Sci-Fi and its next meeting; a membership form; and the July newsletter. We are asking everyone who is interested in Lambda Sci-Fi to become a paid member (dues are \$10/year) as we cannot afford to send out regular mailings to such a large mailing list. Thanks to all who helped with this task. *(continued on page 2)*

LAMBDA SCI-FI AT GAY PRIDE DAY

June 17th dawned clear and bright. I was a little tired after a late-night date; but I still managed to get up, get myself put together, and get over to the Festival site by 8:15 AM. I found our table without too much trouble; and the actual set-up only took about 15 minutes. Yes, Lambda Sci-Fi was ready for its big debut at the 1990 Gay Pride Festival!

It ended up being a long, hot day for me. I spent the entire day (from 8:15 AM to 6:00 PM) at the table, with only a couple of quick walks around the fairgrounds to see what was going on (and a couple of necessary pit-stops). Fortunately, our table was situated against the trees lining the north side of the fairgrounds; so we were partially shaded throughout most of the day and not continuously baking in the sun. As a precaution, I had an ice chest full of sodas on hand and liberally dispensed a #45 sunblock to each of the dedicated souls at the table.

Al & Barrett were my unindicted co-conspirators during the day. Al did a great job helping get the table set up *(continued on page 2)*

Book Review

Support Your Local Wizard

Book Author: Diane Duane

Diane Duane, perhaps best known to gay fantasy fans for her warm, convincing portrayal of central bisexual, gay and lesbian characters in "Door into Fire" and "Door into Shadow," has written a charming and funny trilogy corporately entitled Support Your Local Wizard. The three books, So You Want to be a Wizard, Deep Wizardry, and High Wizardry, copyrighted in 1983, 1985 and 1990 respectively, chronicle the adventures of teenagers Nita Callahan and Kit Rodriguez, and Nita's younger sister Dairine, as they discover their wizardly powers and play vital roles in the age-old fight between good and evil. This time around, evil takes the form of "The Lone Power," the entity who, at the creation of the universe, introduced entropy and death, thereby guaranteeing the ultimate end of everything. Wizards, recruited as needed among all species and all the various interstellar humanities, have the ability to delay the final death of the universe a bit at a time by fighting the Lone Power in all his attempts to hurry the process of decay. *(continued on page 5)*

UPCOMING CONVENTIONS

Have you been to a science fiction convention yet? No? That's OK; you've still got a couple of good opportunities coming up this year! Here's the details:

PHILCON 90, November 16 - 18

This is the 54th Annual Philadelphia Science Fiction Conference. It's a large, generic, well-rounded, well-attended convention. By "generic" I mean that it's not a convention devoted to any particular aspect or specialized area of science fiction or fantasy. By "well-rounded" I mean that it'll have all the various functions and appurtenances you'd expect to find at a con: *(continued on page 4)*

PRIDE DAY - cont'd.

positioning the Lambda Sci-Fi banner to best effect, making some other small signs to let people know we're a science fiction/fantasy club, and brightening things up a bit with bunches of balloons he'd liberated from somewhere. During the day, he imitated some sort of arcane sideshow barker, shouting "Science Fiction! Fantasy!" into the crowd. (As you can imagine, he got some interesting responses!) Barrett's methods were a little more direct and personal. He was constantly signalling friends over to the table for introductions, sign-ups, and a chat. (I swear, it seemed to me that he must have known at least half the people attending the Fair!)

Myself, I had a wonderful time meeting and talking with people, discussing science fiction, and handing out copies of a club flyer I'd devised and copies of our latest newsletter. Everyone seemed to be in some sort of holiday mood, and smiles were absolutely infectious. (And, truth to tell, the "scenery" wasn't bad either!) "Integrity" (the Gay Episcopalians) had one of the tables next to ours; and I had some pleasant talks throughout the day with some of their members (especially one guy who was very interested in "Dungeons and Dragons" and eventually signed up with us). Loree had even arranged for a reporter from The Washington Blade to interview us for the "Out in Numbers" column. Yvette Gibson, the reporter, showed up late in the afternoon and we deluged her with facts, figures, and flyers. [This article eventually appeared in the 7/13/90 issue of The Blade.]

The Gay Pride Fair itself seemed much better than last year---more booths, greater variety of participating organizations, more merchants selling all sorts of neat stuff, larger attendance. I didn't get to see the parade; but I've been told it was also really great.

It was a surprisingly good day for Lambda Sci-Fi, too. The response to our club at the table was (to say the least) overwhelming: we ended up with about 115 names/addresses on our sign-up sheets! (Even if only a small percentage of these people actually join and participate, it'll be quite a boost for our club!)

I'd had a lot of fun; but by the time 6:00 PM rolled around, the adrenaline rush had started to wear off and I was ready to call it a day, go home, and take a shower for an hour or so. But I also started thinking about the next Gay Pride Festival! Given more time to organize and a larger membership to draw on, who knows what we'll be able to accomplish next year?!

My personal thanks to the following members for contributing to the success of the Lambda Sci-Fi table this year: Loree and Marcelle (for background organization and the loan of their lawn chairs), David Neveu (for creating the Lambda Sci-Fi banner on his computer), Jed Shumsky of Philadelphia Gaylaxians and Frank Hummel of the Gaylactic Network (for sending Gaylaxicon flyers to me in time to hand them out at the table), and especially to Al and Barrett for all their help and support throughout the day. Thanks everyone!

-- by Carl Cipra

LAST MEETING MINUTES - Cont'd.

Loree shared copies of a letter from Gaylactic Network's founder and director, Frank Hummel. He is concerned about various administrative matters, including the exchange of newsletters and the possibility of a Gaylactic Network decision-making meeting at Gaylaxicon '90 (to be held in Tewksbury, Massachusetts on 20-22 July). We unanimously elected Carl to represent us at this meeting.

Formal business over, we began our usual round of open-ended discussion. This time we got an impromptu lesson in role-playing games (several people are interested, but no formal plans were made to try one); and an impromptu lesson in cyberpunk. We also discussed Dick Tracy (not a SF movie, but hey, who says we're doctrinaire?!) and other upcoming SF films. We again discussed going on a field trip to the movies and/or holding our own film fest. Unfortunately we didn't decide on either of these. Let's decide about these at the August meeting! Bring your ideas.

We finished our meeting by watching a Twilight Zone episode called "Quarantine" and the last, cliff-hanger episode of Star Trek: The Next Generation.

-- by Loree Cook-Daniels

A Century of H.P. Lovecraft

This month heralds the centennial birth of H.P. Lovecraft, perhaps one of the greatest and most innovative writers of twentieth century supernatural fiction and dark fantasy. Howard Phillips Lovecraft was born on August 20, 1890, in Providence, Rhode Island, where he spent all but two years of his life. This New England setting, with its picturesque landscape and ancient architecture, helped to form the setting and ideas of Lovecraft's fiction. Often compared with Edgar Allen Poe, who was a major influence, H.P. Lovecraft wove weird tales of ancient gods, alien life forms, re-animated corpses, madness and the unknown. In his treatise, *Supernatural Horror in Literature* (an excellent critique and history of horror fiction), Lovecraft writes that "the oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear and the strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown." This statement forms the basis of Lovecraft's work.

H.P. Lovecraft was fascinated by quirks in the laws of nature or the invasion of everyday events by mysterious forces or beings. He is most often credited with creating a Mythos of super beings and creatures collected in his Cthulhu tales. Two of these tales are "The Colour Out of Space" and "The Dunwich Horror." Both stories are set in a fictional region of New England that is invaded by cosmic forces. In "The Colour Out of Space," a meteorite lands in a farmer's well and emits radiation that destroys the vegetation and the inhabitants. In "The Dunwich Horror," an ancient text, the Necronomicon, is utilized in unleashing mythological gods. Both tales resulted in film versions which fail to capture the scope of unknown horror.

Lovecraft wrote many other works, including a short novel entitled, "At the Mountains of Madness," a sort-of sequel to Poe's *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, incorporating Mythos creatures. He imitated the fantasy writer Lord Dunsany in his "Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath" and "The White Ship" and created Tolkein-like realms that lie beyond the world of dreams. His description of the occult and witchcraft evoke the works of Arthur Machen and Nathaniel Hawthorne. In "Herbert West--Reanimator," (recently filmed as "Re-Animator") he depicts a student at Miskatonic University who like Frankenstein, revives corpses to his own demise. Though there seems to be a comparative edge to earlier writers, it is Lovecraft's own philosophy and experience that marks him as a leader in the genre of twentieth century fantastic literature.

In turn, his work has influenced a legion of writers in the field of dark fantasy, among them: Robert Bloch, Clark Ashton Smith, Robert E. Howard, Colin Wilson, Brian Lumley, and even Stephen King. In homage to his memory, the statuette presented to all winners of the World Fantasy Awards, is made in his image. Perhaps those who view the film versions of his works will become Lovecraft fans. Nevertheless, his influence and literary style has endured and hopefully will be remembered for eons to come.

-- Don Crisostomo

UPCOMING CONVENTIONS - cont'd.

discussion panels on all kinds of fantasy/SF topics, video and movie rooms running most of the time, an art show, a huge dealer's room, dances and parties, a costume show, lots of guest authors and artists. The Principal Speaker will be Fritz Leiber. (How can you top that?) The Guest Artist will be Frank Kelly Freas. (You've seen his artwork on book covers, etc. for years now.) Michael Bishop will be the Special Guest.

There's a Gaylaxians chapter located in Philadelphia; so you can be assured of some friendly faces. I recently spoke with Jed Shumsky and asked him if they'd be throwing a party at the con. (Remember Jed? He was our guest at the May 13th Lambda Sci-Fi meeting.) He says that the Philadelphia Gaylaxians most probably would be reserving a room and hosting a party, but that they haven't finalized any plans as yet.

The convention will be held in Philadelphia at the Adam's Mark Hotel, located on the corner of City Avenue (U.S. 1) and Monument Road, just south of the Schuylkill Expressway (I-76). It's a very nice hotel, convenient to shopping and eating areas. I don't have the information on the room rates. Membership to this con is \$20 until November 1st (\$25 at the door). Send checks payable to "Philcon 90" to: Philcon '90 Registration, P.O. Box 8303, Philadelphia, PA 19101. (Note: "Proper ID will be required to be registered at Philcon.")

DARKOVER GRAND COUNCIL MEETING XIII, November 23 - 25

If you're into the "Darkover" novels of Marion Zimmer Bradley or the "Deryni" novels of Katherine Kurtz, then this is the convention for you. It's a more specialized type of con, organized by the Armida Council (part of a national Darkover fan club). Its two Special Guests will be Marion Zimmer Bradley (health permitting) and Katherine Kurtz. Other author guests include: Lisa Barnett, Julia Ecklar, Jacqueline Lichtenberg, Diana Paxson, Don Sakers, and Melissa Scott.

What kind of activities can you expect? Well, there'll probably be all kinds of discussion panels and workshops dealing with "Darkoveriana" (Keepers, Free Amazons, psychic abilities, etc.). The organizer, Judy Gerjouy (aka Jaelle of Armida), tells me at past Councils there have also been panels dealing with such other diverse topics as "Writing in Someone Else's Universe" and "The Arcane Uses of Bran Muffins." There'll also be a Huckster's Room (Psst! Hey, buddy, wanna buy a Keeper's Crystal?), an art show, filk singing, a bardic circle, a costume contest Friday night, presentations by the Society for Creative Anachronism (a medievalist recreation group), and a video room (evenings/nights). On Saturday afternoon, there'll even be a Regency Ball. (When was the last time you waltzed? "Regency dress is strongly encouraged, but not required.")

The social scene at this con has traditionally be "liberal." It's not predominantly lesbian/gay; but the Community will definitely be there in force. (Anyone who's read Marion's books knows how open she is about alternative sexuality.)

The convention will be held at the Holiday Inn in Timonium, Maryland (about 45 minutes northeast of the District). If you're staying at the hotel, room rates will be \$57 per night (up to four per room); and reservations must be made with the official hotel reservation card that you get with the purchase of a membership. Membership at this con costs \$25. (Checks payable to "Armida Council", P.O. Box 8113, Silver Spring, MD 20907.)

- by Carl Cipra

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL WIZARD - cont'd from page 1.

In So You Want to be a Wizard, thirteen-year-old Nita and twelve-year-old Kit begin their Ordeals, faced by every new wizard, after they each discover and read the wizard's manual, which disguises itself as a children's book, and which constantly updates itself to suit the particular strengths and abilities of the wizard in whose possession it remains. Nita finds that her strengths lie in living and growing things, while Kit finds his in inanimate objects... stones and metal, for example. Thrust into an alternate Manhattan, where violent sentient vehicles and appliances reign, Nita and Kit are joined by a white hole (unlike a black hole, it emits objects) they christen Fred. Their task is to recover the Book of Night with Moon, the ultimate volume of wizardry which contains the written Speech--the primal language that describes everything everywhere--stolen by the Lone Power, who can use the book to twist anything to suit its own design.

In Deep Wizardry, Nita and Kit, while on vacation, meet S'reee, a whale wizard, who enlists their help in singing the Song of the Twelve, an ancient ritual that keeps one aspect of the Lone Power bound in a volcano beneath the Atlantic Ocean. Nita and Kit take on the shapes of a humpback and a sperm whale to sing their parts in the Song, and learn that the Lone Power remembers them from their prior encounter, and that only the ultimate sacrifice a wizard can make--her own death--can maintain the binding of the Power.

Finally, in High Wizardry, Dairine, Nita's younger and incredibly intelligent sister, stumbles across an online beta version of the manual. Armed with her portable Apple IIc+, she discovers that she has incredibly strong wizard potential and power and, along with Nita and Kit, faces the Lone Power in its strongest attempt ever to destroy the Universe.

Duane's trilogy is a replay of standard fantasy themes, but a literate, fun, witty and intelligent modern setting of them. The characters, especially the teenagers and excepting Kit's parents, who are only spoken of secondhand, have depth... Nita's mother, for example, wondering why Nita and Kit spend so much time together away from home, worries that they might be sexually involved. There is a wonderful scene when Nita and Kit "come out" to Nita's parents about their wizardry that should strike a chord among any person who has faced that awkward moment when parents realize their children have lives and meaning and purposes of their own. Nita's father tells her that, wizard or no, she cannot go back to complete a vital task even though it would save the lives of more than 10 million people. Nita responds, "Don't you get it? There are some things in the world more important than doing what you tell me!"

Furthermore, there are two minor but recurring characters never openly identified as gay, but then we've learned to read between the lines, right? Tom and Carl, first identified as Advisory Wizards for North America but later promoted to Senior Wizards for our solar system, live together with their pets near Nita and her family, and are friends and an important resource to the Callahans, who often need help understanding their two wizard daughters. This is how Duane describes Tom and Carl in the third book: "Their house in Nita's town was very like their neighbor's houses... perhaps a little bigger, but that wasn't odd, since Carl worked as chief of sales for the big CBS flagship TV station in New York, and Tom was a moderately well-known freelance writer of stories and movie scripts. They looked like perfectly average people--two tall, good-looking men, one with a mustache, one without; Carl a native New Yorker, Tom an unrepentant Californian. They had all the things their neighbors had--mortgages and phone bills and pets and occasional fights: they mowed the lawn and went to work like everybody else...." A couple of pages later, this conversation takes place between Tom and Nita, on the subject of Nita's parents: "Magic still makes her nervous," Nita said. "Or we still make her nervous," Tom said... "Well, yeah. Neither of them can quite get used to it, that you were their neighbors for all these years and they never suspected you were wizards..." "Being out in the open," Tom said, "causes even more problems than 'passing'... as you'll have noticed. But the truth works best..." Sound familiar?

GuildAmerica books published by arrangement with Delacorte Press (available in one volume from the Science Fiction Book Club).
-- by Thom W.

ODDS AND ENDS

Note: To submit movie/book reviews for our newsletter, please mail your story on 5 1/4" IBM-PC formatted floppy disk (preferably in WordPerfect 5.0 or 5.1 format). You can also download your story onto our BBS (see Electronic Bulletin Board under Services). If you have some other IBM PC word processor, please contact AI at 384-6868 to see if we can use your format.

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NEXT MEETING NOTICE

Meetings are held on the second Sunday of each month at a private residence. The August meeting will be at our regular time -- 2:00 p.m. on August 12th, but it will be at a different place than the last few meetings. This time we're meeting at Carl's, which is more accessible by public transportation. His address is 93 Hawthorne Court, N.E., WDC. He's in the Park Place condos near the corner of North Capitol and Michigan Avenues. By Metro, get off at the Brookland/CUA Metro stop and walk. It's about a 10-15 minute walk. If you drive, you may want to park on Michigan Avenue or in one of the nearby commercial or CUA parking lots and walk in as visitor parking is limited. The guard may ask you for Carl's number to "announce" you. It's 483-1974. We hope to see everyone there!