



LAMBDA SCI-FI



DC Area Gaylaxians

PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044 - (202) 232-3141 - Issue #128 - November 2000

E-MAIL: info@lambdasf.org WEBSITE: http://www.lambdasf.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 LBGT community), we invite you to join the LSF Book Discussion Group. Each month, for over a year now, we've been conducting fascinating round-table discussions of works by significant F&SF authors.

The LSF Book Discussion Group generally meets on the 4th Thursday of every month, starting at 7:00 PM. The next meeting will be held on Dec. 7th, at Peter & Rob's house, 1425 "S" St., NW. (For directions or more details, call 202-483-6369.)

Here's the Discussion Group's schedule for the next several months:

--- **Thurs., Dec. 7** (combined Nov./Dec. meeting) - *China Mountain Zhang*, by Maureen McHugh; co-facilitators: Rob & Peter.

--- **Thurs., Jan. 25** - *Dune*, by Frank Herbert; facilitator: Peter.

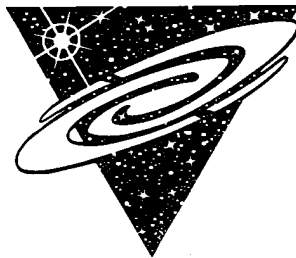
--- **Thurs., Feb. 26** - *Anno Dracula*, by Kim Newman; facilitator: Carl?

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LSF Network Representative's Report

by Kay Cornwell
(alison.plays@zzapp.org)



The Network Board meeting occurred on Sunday, Oct. 8, during Gaylaxicon 2000; and I am happy to report that the future of the Network is looking brighter.

Roughly a month before, LSF, NFGC (Niagara) and GLG (Michigan) drafted a letter to the remainder of the Affiliates inviting them back with open arms. After a few bites (but not with the enthusiastic responses that I really wanted), I started placing calls to Network Representatives trying to convince them that we really needed their help. Beyond my wildest expectations, Reps from three "lost" Affiliates attended the G2K Board meeting, paying their dues and returning to full voting status: GSFS (Boston), Planet Lambda (So. Calif.), and North Country (Minneapolis/St. Paul). Also in attendance were Reps from LSF, NFGC, GLG (by proxy), and 15 other people (Gaylactic Network Officers, interested parties and others representing potential Network groups).

Nov. 12th LSF Meeting

The next Lambda Sci-Fi meeting will be held on Sunday, Nov. 12th, at James Crutchfield's apartment: 1414 17th St., NW (near Dupont Circle) - 1:30 PM for business meeting.

Remember: The "Officers" proposal will be voted on at the meeting. (For details, see the boxed article on page 2 of this issue.) *And, if this proposal passes, candidates for LSF offices must also announce their desire to run for office no later than the end of that meeting!*

The social meeting will begin at 2:00 PM. Please bring some munchies or soft drinks if you can.

See you there!

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Jed Shumsky (Worldcon 2001 Liaison) reported that he is working toward having GLBT programming at **Millennium Philcon**. He asked for a budget to cover costs for a GLBT "con-suite" and nightly parties. **Since there will be no Gaylaxicon in 2001, Worldcon will serve as the location for the annual Network Board meeting and for the Spectrum Awards.** The Speaker reported that the night before, **Keith Rodwell had resigned as Network Treasurer** and turned over bank statements and a check for \$1813.57 to the Speaker.

Each Affiliate (regardless of status) was then asked to report on its activity (continued on page 2)

WHAT'S INSIDE?

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Network Rep's Report

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ties and to include a statement about the direction they wished the Network to go. Most Affiliates expressed a desire to move toward an individual-based Network, to have the Network provide a strong website and an electronic newsletter, and to have the Network promote GLBT fandom at SF cons.

The floor was also opened to reports from various guests in attendance:

Kirk Tsouros (Atlanta) talked about how this year's Dragoncon GLBT party was a big boost to their group. They have 45 members on a discussion list and hold popular local events. Kirk attended Gaylaxicon to learn about the Network and to get the Atlanta group in touch with other clubs; and he is interested in hosting a future Gaylaxicon in Atlanta. **Lee Moody (Orlando)** reported that there is renewed interest to re-form a group in Florida and host a G'con. During G2K, he took a poll, via written questionnaire, about interest in an Orlando Gaylaxicon in 2002. He reported that responses had been positive. **Alan Lutton (presently from Philadelphia, moving to San Diego)** plans on developing a local GLBT group in San Diego and expressed interest in hosting a West Coast Gaylaxicon in 2003, possibly a joint effort of all West Coast Gaylaxian groups. **Richard Mandrachio (Golden Gate Gaylaxians)** reported that they host events/parties at local Bay-area cons. They are interested in working with the ConJose/Worldcon committee for GLBT programming.

The following **Network Officers were elected**: Treasurer (Jed Shumsky), Gaylactic Record (formerly GNAPA) Editor (Kendall Bullen), Correspondent (John Dumas).

The most important item on the agenda was to address the issue of Network reorganization, as discussions had stalled over the last 8 months. GLG's statement was read, opposing any action to change the Network Charter at the Board meeting or to move the Network toward individual-based membership. NFGC moved to repeal the Gaylactic Network Charter. Planet Lambda proposed that the Network use "Robert's

Proposal - Officers (to be voted on at the Nov. 12th LSF meeting)

LSF will have five officers, elected by the membership for a term of one year, to begin on January 1st immediately following elections. Officers must be members of LSF. Elections for all officers will be held annually at the regular December meeting of LSF. Officers may serve for any number of terms. An individual may not hold more than one office at a given time. Candidates must announce their desire to run at or before the November LSF meeting. Candidates are encouraged to submit platform and qualification statements in writing to the Newsletter Editor in time for the December newsletter.

All elected officers must keep records of correspondence and samples of materials used in the performance of their office and make these available for review as requested. All officers must insure that all data relevant to their office is backed up regularly offsite.

The five officers are:

SPEAKER: Presides over LSF meetings and insures that the club is informed regarding the enactment of club decisions.

TREASURER: Manages, monitors, and reports on the financial activities of the club. Reports monthly on the club's financial status. Provides detailed written reports annually and as requested. Insures that club bank accounts have multiple signatories, who shall be

officers of the club and who cannot all reside at the same address.

MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR: Manages incoming mail. Maintains LSF membership database. Generates mailing labels and renewal notices for mailings. Generates regular membership directories. Generates membership list and insures that a current membership list is available at each regular meeting. Creates membership inquiry packets and responds to membership inquiries. Produces LSF membership forms and insures that forms are available at LSF meetings. Maintains confidentiality of member data.

GAYLACTIC NETWORK REPRESENTATIVE: Reports to Network about club activities. Reports to club about Network activities. Reports Network business to the club for voting. Reports club votes on Network business to the Network.

SECRETARY: Insures that minutes are taken at all regular monthly LSF meetings. Maintains archives of minutes and a separate archive of business proceedings. Makes these archives available on request. Provides meeting reports to *The Washington Blade* on request. Creates, updates, and makes available a quarterly calendar of upcoming LSF events. Completes and sends all required business forms for LSF activities (e.g. Pride table paperwork).

Rules of Order" as interim procedures for running the Network Board, keeping the existing Officers and Affiliate Reps in place, and using the previous Charter as a "set of guiding principles" while a new Charter is developed. This friendly amendment was accepted; and the motion to repeal the charter passed (5 to 1).

NFGC moved to reinstate Golden Gate Gaylaxians as a full voting Affiliate of the Network and to accept

Richard Mandrachio as the GGG Rep on the interim Board. This passed. This brought the Network up to 7 voting members on the Board. The Speaker appointed Richard to the office of Listener, which was approved by the Reps.

The Speaker proposed a Charter revision plan: the formation of committees to deal with drafting proposals covering 5 major areas:

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Network Rep's Report

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- *Outreach* (how the Network communicates with Affiliates, members, and the rest of the world; Gaylaxicons; etc.).
- *Benefits* (what the Network provides for Affiliates and for individual members).
- *Government* (how the Network governs itself; how the Board operates; how votes are taken; Officers and duties of same; etc.).
- *Membership* (how individuals become members; how Affiliates join the Network).
- *Finance* (dues, fiscal responsibilities, Gaylaxicon funding, etc.).

Reps were encouraged to join one or more committees, to inform their membership, and to see if anyone in their Affiliates are interested in joining any of the committees. (I am encouraging LSF members to assist us by joining the effort. Let me know which committee you're interested in joining by sending me your e-mail address; and I'll forward it on to the committee head.)

The committees have 3 months to develop their proposals (deadline: 1/31/01), after which the chairs will present their ideas to the Board. A 2-month period of discussion will follow between the Board and committees to iron out any differing opinions. Board Reps will finalize any decisions that need to be resolved (by 3/31/01). At the end of this discussion period, the Speaker (with appropriate help/advice) will compile results and put them together into a new Charter, for approval by the Board.

Committee members were told to use the Network's 5 stated Purposes (Article II, Section A of the former Charter) as the basis for their decisions. (It's the same as LSF's mission statement.)

All Board members in attendance approved this plan. (More information on who is serving on each committee is available in the Network meeting minutes that I have posted to our website at www.lambdasf.org/gaylacticnetwork/minutes/)

I was highly encouraged by this meeting. Many of the conditions which Affiliates required before they would return

Dark Cities Underground

written by Lisa Goldstein.

(NY: Tom Doherty, 1999)

reviewed by Colleen R. Cahill



If you have read *Neverwhere* by Neil Gaiman (NY: Avon, 1997) and then pick up *Dark Cities Underground*, you will find the similarities striking. Both books deal with underground subways; and although Goldstein's work starts with the BART system in San Francisco, she does eventually end up in the London Underground. Both have secret, dark worlds that are magical and eerie; but these are not identical books. *Dark Cities Underground* has a different mythos at its base and involves children more heavily than Gaiman's work does.

Ruth Berry is a writer trying to interview the elusive Jeremy Jones. Jones' mother is the author of several very popular children's works with the lead character of Jeremy Jerome Gerontius Jones; and the now 50-year-old Jeremy tries to hide from this notoriety. In the children's series, Jeremy had various adventures in Neverwas (another similarity to *Neverwhere*), where he met a female river boat captain who was rescuing her brother. As expected, the trip was more

than a flight of fancy; and no one is surprised to learn that young Jeremy had actually wandered into Neverwas. Aside from Ruth Berry, Jeremy is also being approached by Mr. Sattermole, a dark and ominous character who is clearly up to no good. Eventually Jeremy and Ruth team up to discover the truth of Neverwas and to rescue her kidnapped daughter.

All this may sound predictable and flat, but Goldstein excels in atmosphere; and once you enter the book, the landscape will quickly surround you. By the first 100 pages, the story gains its own standing and the echos of *Neverwhere* fade. There is a grander plot of world domination involved in Goldstein's book; and she brings in more historical elements. Her use of children in the story is realistic and adds suspense without sugar. Although I think Goldstein's *Walking the Labyrinth* was a better-executed book, *Dark Cities Underground* has enough interesting plot twists to keep a reader involved.

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to the Network were met. I hope that the loyalty and the desire for an organized Gay Fandom that brought these Affiliates back will inspire us to work together to rejuvenate the Network and to create the community Gay Fandom wants. I had personally talked with each of these Reps and told them that LSF wants to see positive movement forward; and the Reps' actions have exceeded my expectations. I hope that each of you, as LSF members, are as excited and encouraged as I am. If you want to contribute to this worthwhile effort, please let me know.

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A Cartoon by Chris Browning



**Sabertooth's Biggest Problem
in a Relationship...**

**Nan Fredman:
Running for Speaker**

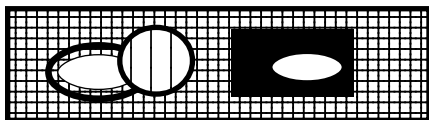
Yes, I am running for Speaker again!

The Speaker's job is a subtle one and deceptively simple: to preside, and to act as insurance that the club's choices are made and nourished and facilitated. In the past year and a quarter, as Lambda Sci-Fi's latest Speaker, I've had the pleasure of learning the ins and outs of this service; and I believe that we can continue to evolve together in a way that is fun and refreshing.

My door is always open to your ideas for the club; and anybody can and *should* approach me if you need a champion for some project of yours or for a committee you want to start. Write to me at red_sonja@capu.net, or phone me at (301) 762-7704. This is part of what I mean by facilitating the club's choices.

We've already got some great projects going (book club, used book sales, video nights, Michael's tours); and we can continue to add new, entertaining, and educational options — beginning with quarterly program plans in the next year! Here are some possibilities: regular club Game Nights; dinners with local authors; periodic themed video parties; a badge-making workshop (which was very popular at Gaylaxicon); and a costuming workshop. If there is interest, we can even organize a May "retreat" in West Virginia at the Lost River Guest House (which specializes in serving Gays and Lesbians) to enjoy the spa, parties, seminars, and workshops — not to mention catching up on our games, books, and movies.

Additionally, I encourage the club to continue pursuing our mission goals in the coming year, especially outreach through the website and e-mail lists, through Gay Fandom events at conventions, and through continued involvement in the re-invention of the Gaylactic Network.

**Michael Cornett:
Candidate for Speaker**

Just over a year ago, I stepped down as Speaker of Lambda Sci-Fi so that I could attend to some personal matters that were making life a little rocky for me. Now that those matters are behind me, I feel ready to return to active duty.

Lambda Sci-Fi has weathered a few storms; and, although I think that's made us a bit stronger, we also need to do some work. Our meetings have become too much of a liability. Discussions of business and politics, albeit sometimes necessary, have gone on way too long. The result? Bored members, smaller meetings (as some people have been avoiding them), and disinterested visitors.

As Speaker, I will do my best to make our meetings and events what they should be: Fun. Business and politics will be kept in their place; and I'll do my best to make our meetings a good experience for everyone involved. Our meetings should be a time for us to make friends and to discuss the things that interest us.

As Speaker, I will also do my job: Run the meetings. Dictating policy and controlling the organization's direction is a job for the club as a whole, not for any single person. My previous experience as Speaker -- and the break I've had since then -- have given me a good opportunity to learn and reflect. I've learned a lot; and being Speaker again will give me a chance to put what I've learned to work for Lambda Sci-Fi.

**Rob Gates:
Candidate for Treasurer**

I've served as LSF's Treasurer for about 5 years now; and I have helped the club thrive financially. I've been the fiduciary conscience of the club and have provided leadership and guidance as we've dealt with all sorts of financial situations. When our coffers were steadily sinking, I provided an in-depth report and analysis of the situation to the club; and this led to a change in our membership rates which would be more in line with the real cost of the benefits offered.

As Treasurer, I'll continue to provide regular information on our finances and will hopefully see our accounts remain healthy!

**Peter Knapp:
Candidate for
Membership Coordinator**

I have held the position of membership Coordinator since 1990, when I helped found Lambda Sci-Fi. I believe I have done a good job of maintaining the club's membership information, publishing the membership directory, and providing other membership services. It has always been my policy to process memberships in a timely manner and to answer questions about LSF as quickly as possible.

I look forward to continuing to provide quality membership services to LSF.

Kay Cornwell: Running for Network Rep

I am running again to serve as Gaylactic Network Representative. I have actively served as LSF's Network Rep since the beginning of the year. At that time, I was chosen, because of my "bull-dog" approach, to shake up the Network.

Over the past 10 months, I've spent hours talking to Network Officers and Reps, learning the history and per-

sonalities at work. I've worked toward an environment of cooperation, consistency, and fair treatment. Refusing to give up and let the Network die, I continued my efforts with the few active Affiliates; but I felt that differences between the remaining active Affiliates and a lack of communication made positive move-

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Kay Cornwell

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ment impossible. Therefore, I drafted a letter for the active Affiliates' approval, inviting all clubs back to the table with open arms and no restrictions. When there was only a feeble response, I telephoned these absent Reps and learned that many had stopped reading the GNAPA months ago. I listened to their desires for the Network and created an environment in which change could occur. I encouraged them to attend the Board meeting at Gaylaxicon 2000 and to voice their needs there. The Network Board meeting resulted in the repeal of the Network charter and a plan for revising the Network. The Network has returned to full strength, with 7 voting Affiliates.

There are still difficult times ahead. I am optimistic and ready to tackle the job of Network Rep with new and rejuvenated partners. My plan is to keep you informed, to the extent that you wish, and to work toward the goals LSF voted for. I would still like to create a committee of LSF members who are willing to get together and work on ideas to submit to the reorganization committees. My e-mail will always be open to your ideas. I encourage discussion on what the Network should do, what you want from it, and what you think non-Affiliated individuals might want from it. I would also like to identify people who are willing to do Network outreach at conventions.

I'm running on my commitment to the Network and to gay fandom. I feel that LSF will benefit from both in the future, as it has benefited in the past. Thank you for your consideration.

???Secretary???

Unless Ye Olde Editor's eyesight and memory are completely shot, I don't believe that anyone has yet announced his/her candidacy for the proposed LSF office of Secretary. Please consider this brief statement a plea for candidate(s) to step forward! Volunteer now; volunteer often!!

Waiting for Odysseus by Clemence McLaren (Atheneum Books, 2000) reviewed by Carl Cipra



Every now and then, my continuing interest in YA (young adult/children's) literature leads me to another very satisfying read. Well, it's happened again.

As you can tell from the title, *Waiting for Odysseus* (by Clemence McLaren) is a re-telling of Homer's legendary *Odyssey*. What's unique about this YA novel, however, is that it is NOT told from the point of view of Odysseus (aka Ulysses); the story is told by four women (two supernatural and two mortal) who have had a most profound influence of Odysseus' life. The supernatural narrators are the Goddess Athena (Odysseus' guide and mentor) and Circe the enchantress; and the mortal narrators are Eurycleia (Odysseus' aged nanny) and -- most important of the four -- Penelope (Odysseus' patient and long-suffering wife). Indeed, it is the author's belief that without the influence of these four women in his life, Odysseus would never have become a true "hero". Athena, Circe, Eurycleia, and (above all) Penelope are presented as four aspects of the *anima* that inspires him and aids him in mastering the flaws in his character (primarily, his overweening pride). It is, in fact, very possible to view the intelligent, self-possessed, sensible Penelope as the true heroine of the story. (In her epilogue, McLaren states that she "wanted to remind readers of the quiet heroism of Penelope's life journey, for she, too, has much to teach us.")

Like Homer, McLaren does not present the narrative of Odysseus' adventures in strict chronological order -- she "jumps around" a bit and even barely touches on some of the incidents in the *Odyssey*, depending on who's narrating the story at the time. My presumption is that, also like Homer, McLaren relies upon an audience composed of people who are *already* well-versed in the story of the *Odyssey* and can, thus, "fill in the details" on those adventures that aren't germane to the story she's trying to tell here. Part I

("A Girl Plots a Marriage") is Penelope's (non-Homeric) own story about how a small-town princess falls in "love at first sight" with the clever and dashing Odysseus, how

she manages to out-maneuver everyone into allowing her to marry him, and how, try as she might to avert it, she must eventually lose him to the Trojan War. In the very short Part II ("A Witch Takes a Lover"), Circe explains how she always knew that Odysseus would come and how she understood that she would eventually need to let him go on his way -- but that, against her better judgement, she actually grew fond of this mortal man. ("I would not die of love. I tasted the sorrow on my tongue and wondered how I would live.") Athena takes over the narrative in Part III ("A Goddess Inter-cedes"). She tells the story of how she finally helps Odysseus, her favorite mortal, get back to Ithaca. (She only decides to help out when she sees that he has learned something from all his trials: "I knew that his guile had matured into wisdom, that he had sailed in search of fame and found instead his own humanity. He'd learned that what he most cherished was what he'd left behind -- on Ithaca.") Part IV ("An Old Servant Recognizes Her Master") recounts the well-known story of Odysseus' homecoming and the destruction of the suitors who have been pestering Penelope for a couple of decades. But the story is told not by any of the major players; it's told by dear old Eurycleia, Odysseus' faithful old nanny. (It's fascinating to hear her tell how, after she comes to recognize the disguised Odysseus, she's just *dying* to let someone else in on the secret -- particularly long-suffering Penelope -- but realizes that doing so could put them all in peril of their lives.)

I've always enjoyed re-tellings of the Homeric epics -- everything from Alexander Pope's massive, rhymed "translations" to Padraic Colum's "children's Homer" (illustrated by Willy Pogany) to Marion Zimmer Bradley's *The Firebrand* -- but it's not often that I've run across one as unique and thoughtful as Clemence McLaren's *Waiting for Odysseus*. Check it out.

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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 transgendered (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 \$20, for which you will receive 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 be held on **Sunday, Nov. 12th**, at James Crutchfield's home: 1414 17th St., NW, (near DuPont Circle) - 1:30 PM for business meeting; 2:00 PM for social meeting. Please bring some munchies or soft drinks, if you can. 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, Rob, Mike and Kendall



Nov. 17-19, 2000 **PHILCON 2000**. Adam's Mark Hotel (Philadelphia). GoH: Vernor Vinge; Artist GoH: Bob Walters; Special Guest: Poul Anderson. Membership: \$45 after 10/25/00 & at the door. Hotel rate: \$101 (sgl/dbl), \$115 (tpl/quad), until 10/1/00 (slightly higher after that). Make membership checks payable to "Philadelphia Science Fiction Society" and send to: PSFS, PO Box 8303, Philadelphia, PA 19101-8303. E-mail: Info@philcon.org Web site: www.philcon.org

Nov. 24-26, 2000 **DARKOVER GRAND COUNCIL MEETING XXIII**. Holiday Inn Select - Baltimore North (Timonium, MD). GoH: Diane Duane & Peter Morwood; Special Guest: Katherine Kurtz; Musical GoH: Clam Chowder. A very GLBT-friendly con! Membership: \$40 after 11/1/00 (and at the door). Hotel rates: \$70/night (sgl - quad); res. cut-off date 11/10/00. Make membership checks payable to "Armida Council" and send to: Armida Council, PO Box 7203, Silver Spring, MD 20907. Web site: www.darkovercon.com

July 6-8, 2001 **FANEX 15 (Classic Filmfest)**. Hunt Valley Inn (Baltimore, MD). Guests: TBA. Membership: \$40. Make checks payable to "Midnight Marquee" and send to: Midnight Marquee Press, Inc., 9721 Britnay Ln., Baltimore, MD 21234.

Aug. 24-26, 2001 **THE BALTIMORE WEEKEND OF TERROR**. BWI Airport Marriott (Baltimore). Guests: TBA. Horror convention sponsored by Horrorfind.com and [Frightvision](http://Frightvision.com), in association with the magazines *Scarlet Street*, *Rue Morgue*, and *Haunted Attraction*. Membership: \$20, until 4/1/2001. Make checks payable to "Horrorfind.com" and send to: Horrorfind.com, 9722 Groffs Mill Dr., PMB 109, Owings Mills, MD 21117.

