



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 394 – January 2023

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Annual LSF Gift Exchange at Jan. 8th Meeting



LSF will host its *thirty-second* annual book (*et al*) exchange at the in-person monthly LSF meeting to be held on January 8, 2023!

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. (And, by the way, 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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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 January 26th. **All attendees MUST be fully vaccinated.**

Here are the details for the January discussion:

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 LSF Virtual Book Club has been discontinued. ΛΨΦ

***** January 8, 2023 Meeting *****

The next LSF meeting (and Annual Gift Exchange) will be held on Sunday, January 8th. 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 1:30 PM and the meeting will begin at 2:00 PM. Hope to see you there!



What’s Inside?

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**Minutes of the
Dec. 2022 LSF Meeting**
taken by Scott



Business: A proposal was made to eliminate the concept of membership for Lambda Sci Fi. After some discussion, the proposal was accepted by attendees. It was also agreed that future proposals/etc. must be voted on in person.

Social: Carl reported on his attendance at this year's Chessie Con (the former Darkover convention) held in Hunt Valley, MD. He reported that the noticeably low attendance – as well as the convention's inability to make its room block – may result in the death of the con.

Television news: Rob noted that there are now gay Hallmark holiday movies. Carl watched the first season of *Peacemaker* (on DVD) and enjoyed it a lot; he wasn't as fond of the latest *Jurassic World* movie. Rob likes Netflix's *Bastard Son and the Devil Himself* – urban fantasy, action + gore! The 3rd season of HBO Max's *His Dark Materials* has started streaming. The trailer for FX's *Kindred* series (based upon Octavia Butler's book) is available. There does not appear to universal adoration for Disney+'s *Andor* series.

Movie news: Teresa likes the new *Black Panther* movie, but was distressed by the death of the Angela Bassett character. Rob liked the trailer for *Indiana Jones: Dial of Destiny*. Scott briefly commented on *Squid Game*, *Circle* and *Platform*, which all have similar themes.

Book news: Rob squeed over the news of Geoff Ryman's new book *Him*, coming out in May 2023. ("It is a retelling of the story of Jesus – religious belief, gender identity and historical roles of men and women.")

Upcoming LSF activities: Peter announced the next LSF movie outing (Sunday, Dec. 18th) to see *Avatar II: The Way of Water* at the Udvar Hazy Center out near Dulles Airport. Rob announced LSF New Year's Eve gaming party & potluck dinner (as previously

Space Force Updates

info passed along by
Wayne #1 and Carl

Hey, what self-respecting military force doesn't have its own official song? The Army has "The Army Goes Rolling Along"; the Air Force has "Wild Blue Yonder"; the Navy has "Anchors Aweigh"; and the Marines have "The Marines' Hymn."

And now the US Space Force also has an official song! It's called "Semper Supra" ("Always Above"). Here are the lyrics:

*We're the mighty watchful eye,
Guardians beyond the blue,
The invisible front line,
Warfighters brave and true.
Boldly reaching into space,
There's no limit to our sky.
Standing guard both night and day,
We're the Space Force from on high.*

OK, everybody sing! Oh, wait... you say you don't know the melody? No problem – here it is:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZHpPeacOuk>

I can't help but think that it sounds like some of the songs from the film *Captain America*, when Cap was making appearances at those WWII war bond rallies.

But wait, there's more!

There's also an *unofficial* – and much more overblown – Space Force theme making the rounds. It's the product of Voice of Freedom, a group of young Miami musicians. Take a listen to it (and I suggest you turn on the closed captioning, to get the full effect of the lyrics):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iHzd35ElwuU>

This one sounds to me like it was written for a sci-fi TV show like *Babylon 5* or *Space Rangers*. But it also worries me: I can imagine it being sung by an elite military chorus in Moscow or Beijing or Pyongyang. (Just sayin'...)



On a related note, it looks like the US Space Force is going to have company "up there." Our British friends across the Atlantic have formed the United Kingdom Space Command. As you can see (above), their logo has definite thematic similarities to our Space Force's logo. In addition, take a look back at the December 2021 LSF Newsletter for comparisons with other space-related logos, such as *Star Trek's* Starfleet Command logo.

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**Happy New Year 2023
to everybody at LSF
(and friends)!!!**

announced on page 1 of the December LSF newsletter): "Bring real food." The Annual LSF Book(ish) Exchange will be held at the January LSF meeting (1/8) – see announcement on page 2 of this newsletter. The next LSF Book Discussion will occur on Thursday, Jan. 26, 2023: a "double discussion" of the T. Kingfisher novella *What Moves the Dead* and the Edgar Allen Poe short story "The Fall of the House of Usher."

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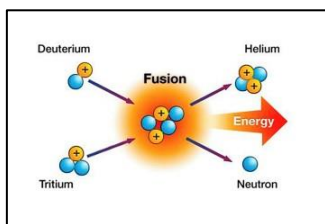
Breakthrough in Nuclear Fusion

info passed along by Carl

On December 13th, the US Department of Energy announced a breakthrough in nuclear fusion.

Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm confirmed that in the previous week scientists at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory had for the first time “achieved fusion ignition” that resulted in a net energy gain. In other words, it created more energy than was used to make it happen – producing 2.5 megajoules of energy (120% of the energy used by the lasers to ignite the reaction). Granholm called it “one of the most impressive scientific feats of the 21st century;” and Joe Dominguez (CEO at Constellation Energy) called this achievement “an enormous game changer” and “transformational.”

Nuclear fusion occurs when – under extreme pressure and heat – the nuclei of two atoms fuse into one atomic nucleus, and the excess mass is converted into energy. Nuclear fusion is what “powers” the Sun and other stars. It’s the reverse of nuclear *fission* (“splitting atoms”), which is what occurs in nuclear power plants and nuclear bombs.



Scientists have been working on achieving sustained nuclear fusion ever since the Lawrence Livermore Lab was founded in the 1950s; but it’s extremely difficult to replicate in a laboratory the conditions that are found inside the massive cores of stars. One difficulty has been to run the reaction long enough to spark a chain of reactions; and another has been to unleash larger amounts of energy. There have been promising results in recent years due to improvements in technology. Donut-shaped reactors

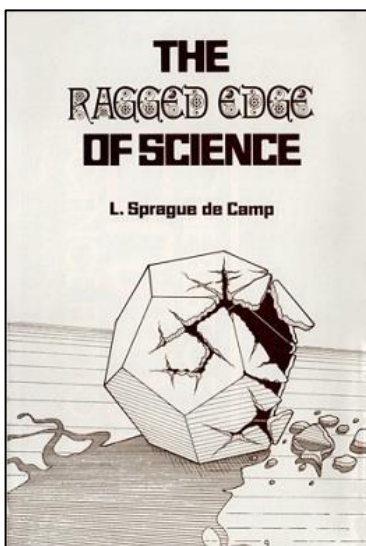
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The Ragged Edge of Science

by L. Sprague de Camp

(Owlswick Press, 1980)

a short review by Carl



This little gem has been deeply buried in one of my “to read” piles for quite a long time! I ran across it by accident recently and asked myself: “Why not read it now?” So I did. And it was an enjoyable read.

The Ragged Edge of Science collects 21 articles that de Camp wrote over the course of 30 years for various periodicals (*Astounding Science Fiction*, *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*, *Science Digest*, and many, many more.)

The flyleaf contains a pretty clear description of the intent of these articles:

“Between the bright-lit land of science on one side and the dark domain of magic, occultism, and pseudo-science on the other, lies a broad and doubtful borderland, a twilight zone where dwell explorers, exiles, and spies from both sides... For those who wish to investigate this borderland, this volume is offered as a chart to guide them through some of its more treacherous tracts.” The articles are divided into three categories: “Long Ago and Far Away,” “Round About the Cauldron,” and “Science and Pseudo-Science.”

The first section deals with “the debatable ground where history, mythology, and archaeology meet.” For

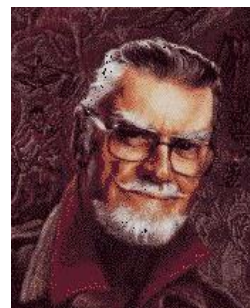
example, “The Mayan Elephants” discusses the questionable theory of Diffusionism (all civilizations ultimately derived from the same source, such as Atlantis). Other articles discuss such topics as The Flood, the Trojan War, and King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table – and the myths, legends, speculations, and misconceptions that accumulated around possible realities.

The second section deals with occult and supernatural phenomena, cults, magic, and occultism. The *dramatis personae* for this section consist of a veritable rogues gallery of controversial characters, including P.D. Ouspensky, Guy Warren Ballard, Alexander of Abonouteichos, Madame Blavatsky, Aleister Crowley, Cagliostro, and MacGregor Mathers

The third section is “devoted to... the conflict between science on the one hand and pseudo-science on the other.” This section also includes biographical sketches of such notorious advocates of pseudo-science as Ignatius Donnelly (*Atlantis: The Antediluvian World*), Immanuel Velikovsky (*Worlds in Collision*), and Erich von Däniken (*Chariots of the Gods?*). It also includes an article about the origins and history of the so-called “Monkey Trials” (yes, plural) that pitted Fundamentalism against the theory of evolution. (This article was really fascinating; it illuminates current controversies over parental control of school curricula.)

As I said, this book was one heck of an enjoyable read.

As a side note, Owlswick Press was a small press founded by George Scithers (long-time WSFS member and chairman of Discon, the 1963 Worldcon). Between 1973 and 1993, Owlswick published a few dozen F&SF and Fandom-related books. I don’t remember when or where I purchased this one.



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L Sprague de Camp (portrait by Kelly Freas)

**** 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-generated (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 Sunday, January 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.

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

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

May 26-29, 2023 **BALTICON 57**. Renaissance Harborplace Hotel (Baltimore MD). GoH: Jane Yolen; Artist GoH: Ariel Burgess. Registration details TBA. Website: <https://www.balticon.org/wp57/>

July 7-9, 2023 **SHORE LEAVE 43**. Delta Hotels Baltimore Hunt Valley (Hunt Valley MD). "Guests will be announced as soon as they are confirmed." Weekend membership: \$105 (daily rates available). On-line membership application if paying by credit card. Website: www.shore-leave.com

June 16-18, 2023 **AWESOME CON 2023**. Walter E. Washington Convention Center (Washington DC). Guests TBA. On-line registration: details TBA. Website: <https://awesome-con.com>

July 28-30, 2023 **OTAKON 2023** (celebrating Asian pop culture, including anime and manga). Walter E. Washington Convention Center (Washington DC). On-line registration: details "currently being updated" on their website. Website: <https://www.otakon.com>

Sept. 29 – Oct. 1, 2023 **CAPCLAVE 2023**. Rockville Hilton & Executive Meeting Center (Rockville MD). GoHs: Sarah Pinsker, Kameron Hurley. Registration details: TBA. Website: <https://www.capclave.org/capclave23/>

Nuclear Fusion
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using large magnets have been able to extend the time of the reaction – earlier this year, one such reactor in China set a record for the longest-sustained fusion reaction (17 minutes). Other tests have claimed to reach the breakeven point (*i.e.*, energy output equaling the energy used for the test). Results at Lawrence Livermore appear to have exceeded those of previous tests. Their National Ignition Facility (NIF) uses a different method to generate the pressure and heat necessary for fusion: directing powerful lasers at a capsule of hydrogen atoms.

Says Joe Dominguez (CEO at Constellation Energy): "...this development, where we're now getting more energy out of the reaction than we're putting in to create the reaction, is a gigantic milestone."

These developments carry broad implication for renewable energy and long-term solutions for replacing fossil fuels. Experts theorize that nuclear fusion releases 4 million times more energy than burning oil or coal. But practical applications – such as commercial nuclear fusion reactors – are still decades away.

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