



lambda Sci-fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

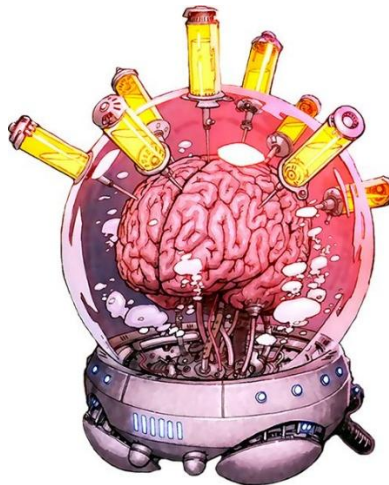
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E-MAIL: info@lambdascifi.org

WEBSITE: www.lambdascifi.org



LSF's Newest Headquarters,
Home of the
Intergaylactic Network



A Recent Picture of One of the Founding Members of LSF

(But we're not quite sure
which one it is.)



📖 The LSF Book 📖 Discussion Group

For over two centuries, LSF has hosted lively discussions of F&SF books (with an emphasis on elements of interest to the LGBT community) and invited folks to join the LSF Book Discussion Group. Each month, we have conducted fascinating round-table discussions of works by significant F&SF authors.

The Book Discussion Group usually met on the 4th Thursday of the month, starting at 7:00 PM. For example, 200 years ago, on April 23, 2026, we held a book discussion at Peter & Rob's home: 1425 "S" St., NW.

That same year (2026), the next several book discussions were:

April 23 – *The Calculating Stars*, by Mary Robinette Kowal; mod.: Carl.

May 28 – *The Adventures of Amina al-Sirafi*, by Shannon Chokraborty; moderator: Zena.

June 25 – *Project Hail Mary*, by Andy Weir; moderator: Todd.

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***** April 12, 2026 Meeting *****

An LSF meeting was held on **Sunday, April 12th**. The meeting was held at Peter and Rob's home, **1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC**. The meeting began at 1:30 PM. Were you there?



What's Inside?

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Archived Research: Martian Soil

info passed along by Carl

A major concern of all space agencies has been to prevent potential biological contamination between planets. For example, introducing Earth microbes to Mars could complicate the search for native Martian life. According to guidelines established by the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR), missions that land on worlds that might host life must keep the probability of carrying terrestrial microbes below one in ten thousand.

However, recent [2026] research indicates that Mars might already possess a built-in defense against contamination from Earth. Researchers investigating the habitability of Martian soil observed that certain regolith compositions can strongly affect living organisms. Their work focused on how microscopic animals react when exposed to soil that mimics the chemical composition measured on Mars.

The research team, led by microbiologist Corien Bakermans (Penn State University), examined how tardigrades behave when placed in simulated Martian regolith.

NOTE: Tardigrades are tiny eight-segmented micro-animals – usually about 0.5 mm (0.02 in) long when fully grown. They're famously able to survive in extreme environments, including radiation, air deprivation, dehydration, and freezing conditions. They provide a useful model for testing how simple animals might react to alien environments.

The Penn State team's published reports explained how they exposed tardigrades to two types of regolith simulations, based on measurements collected by NASA's rover Curiosity in Gale Crater. One – known as MGS-1 – represents typical Martian soil, while the other – known as OUCM-1 – mimics material from the Rocknest region explored by Curiosity.

The researchers noticed a clear difference between the two soil simulations. Although both had negative effects, the MGS-1 material appeared significantly more damaging to the organisms. When placed in MGS-1, the tardigrades quickly showed signs of

From the LSF Archives: Minutes of the March 2026 LSF Meeting taken by Scott

Scott shared his despair from attending the recent “Ancient Aliens” event, where the scientific method was not present.

Rob advised that the WorldCon 2026 hotel room block would be open for reservations tomorrow. Blerdcon (for “black nerds”) is happening this week-end. Next week is Awesome Con. Rob noted that he is volunteering for the Awesome Con puzzle area.

Hail Mary (starring Ryan Gosling) will be released later this month. Jim mentioned that he will be on the “Joco Cruise” this month, where one of the attendees will be Will Wheaton.

There was a discussion about the thruple/triad parents of the Klingon character Jay-Den in *Star Trek Academy*. It was noted that Tig Notaro's character will have a larger role in Season 2. And the next season of *Strange New Worlds* has completed filming.

Jim reported that he recently enjoyed watching the Syfy Channel's *Expanses* series. He also led a short discussion of *The Ophiuchi Hotline*, a 1977 novel by John Varley set in his “Eight Worlds” universe; one of its themes is the ability of its characters to engage in routine sex changes.

stress: within two days, many of them entered a dormant state, which is a survival response normally triggered by dehydration or harsh conditions.

While describing the early results of the experiment, Bakermans said: “[MGS-1] was very damaging compared to OUCM-1, which was still inhibitory but much less so. We were a little surprised by how damaging MGS-1 was, [so] we theorized that there might be something specific in the simulant that could be washed away.” To test this idea, scientists washed MGS-1 with water and repeated the experiment. After this treatment, tardigrades exposed to the washed soil showed much fewer nega-

Peter and Rob said they enjoyed *Wonder Man*. Rob explained that in the MCU, insurance companies won't insure movies with actors who have super powers.

David reported that he will be seeing a stage presentation of *Safety Not Guaranteed*; it's about time travel and is based upon a 2012 film of the same name.

There was an extended discussion of knitting (which Derek is doing) and crocheting (which Rob is doing).

Upcoming LSF Book Discussions: March – *Klara and the Sun* by Kazuo Ishiguro; April – *The Calculating Stars* by Mary Robinette Kowal; May – *The Adventures of Amina al-Sirafi* by Shannon Chokraborty.

Finally, we celebrated LSF's thirty-sixth birthday with a very strange “cake” composed of Twinkies and Hostess Cupcakes. Derek (the youngest attendee) blew out the candles. ΛΨΦ



tive effects, which suggests that the harmful substance was water-soluble (possibly salts or another compound that dissolves easily). The exact chemical responsible for the toxicity has not yet been identified.

Based on the Penn State research, the possibility that Martian soil itself can suppress biological organisms may act as an additional safeguard against accidental contamination. At the same time, the results point toward another possibility: if harmful compounds in the Martian regolith can be removed by washing, future explorers might one day transform Martian soil into a medium capable of supporting plant growth. ΛΨΦ

Typical →
Tardigrade



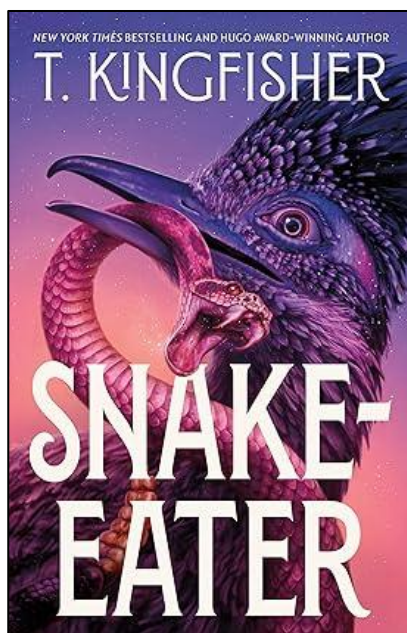
From the LSF Archives:

Snake-Eater
by T. Kingfisher
(47North, 2025)
reviewed by Carl

As I've said before, I've become a BIG fan of T. Kingfisher (aka Ursula Vernon). I've read a dozen or so of her novels and short stories, and I've enjoyed them all. *Snake-Eater*, her latest novel, is no exception.

Kingfisher is a master at basing her stories on a re-formulation of existing fairytales or folk tales. For example, *Thornhedge* (2024) takes the legend of Sleeping Beauty and stands it on its head; and *What Moves the Dead* (2022) adds a Lovecraftian touch to Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher". But in *Snake-Eater* Kingfisher returns to the American Southwest setting of some of her previous short stories, such as "Jackalope Wives," "Razorback," and "The Tomato Thief." The "mythology" of the story isn't based on any particular Native American lore, although it's definitely influenced by Southwestern Native American spiritualism.

Selena has been leading a rather disappointing life, featuring a boring dead-end job and an emotionally abusive boyfriend. One day, she packs a few personal items and simply abandons her life in the city, accompanied by her faithful dog Copper. She flees (via train ride and hitch-hiking) to the small desert town of Quartz Creek, a "cultural preserve" (in Arizona? New Mexico?) and the last known address of her free-spirited Aunt Amelia. Unfortunately, she learns that Aunt Amelia died about a year previously. The folks Selena meets in Quartz Creek provide emotional support and solace, and she "temporarily" moves into her aunt's old house out on the edge of town. While reading through her aunt's old journals, Selena learns about an entity known only as "Snake-Eater" that had unexpectedly become a significant part of Aunt Amelia's life. There are also indications that Snake-Eater might have been involved in some way with Aunt Amelia's death. Then, after a series of mysterious incidents, Selena



comes to suspect that something sinister is watching her at night. Selena suspects that Snake-Eater has now become attracted by – and to – her. Is Selena's life also in danger?

Author Kingfisher spent her childhood in the Sonoran Desert of Arizona – she's now living in the high desert near Albuquerque – and I enjoyed seeing the Southwestern desert through her eyes. The story of Selena and Snake-Eater is filled with road-runners, javelinas, quail, and desert flora – I was reminded of all my pleasant visits to southwestern Arizona. As in several of Kingfisher's earlier stories, *Snake-Eater* also features a delightful "wise older woman" (Aunt Billie) who helps Selena through several tight spots. *Snake-Eater* also has fascinating – and satisfying – Queer content. But I won't go into this aspect of the novel, because I don't want to spoil the fun for you. Go enjoy *Snake-Eater* for yourself.

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Ye Olde Editor
in the Jester's Chair,
Marrion Square, Dublin, Ireland
(August 2019)

Whan that Aprille with his
shoures soote,
The droghte of March hath
perced to the roote,
And bathed every veyne in
swich licour
Of which vertú engendred is
the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his
swete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and
heeth
The tendre croppes...

Prologue to
The Canterbury Tales
by Geoffrey Chaucer
(in Middle English, ca. 1400)

**** INFORMATION ABOUT LAMBDA SCI-FI: DC AREA GAYLAXIANS ****

Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians (LSF) is an organization for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and trans-gendered (LGBT) 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 LGBT people and their friends;
- provide forums for LGBT people and their friends to share their interest in SF/F/H;
- promote the presence of LGBT elements within SF/F/H and within fandom; and
- promote SF/F/H within the LGBT community.

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, April 12th, at Peter and Rob's home, 1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC**. We hope to see you there.

Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians is an affiliate of **the Intergalactic Network**, an interplanetary organization for gay people and their friends who are interested in science-fiction and fantasy.

**** Historical Con Calendar **** by Carl

May 16-17, 2026 **HANACON**. "Anime, Art, Asian & Pop Culture Convention." Sheraton Baltimore North Hotel (Towson MD). Membership: \$65 (until May 15, 2026); \$70 thereafter and at the door. Website: www.HanaConAnime.com

May 22-25, 2026 **BALTICON 60**. Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel (Baltimore MD). Guests of Honor: Jim Butcher, Jennifer Blackstream, Elizabeth Leggett (Art GoH). Membership: \$80 thru April 15; then \$85 thru May 15; \$89 at the door (daily rates available). More details as they become available. Website: <https://www.balticon.org/>

July 10-12 2026. **SHORE LEAVE 46**. "Celebrate Star Trek's 60th Anniversary." Lancaster Wyndham Resort & Convention Center (Lancaster PA). Names of celebrity guests on website. Membership: \$130 for the weekend; daily rates available. Website: www.shore-leave.com

July 30 – August 2, 2026. **PULPFEST 2026**. "Celebrating Mystery, Adventure, Science Fiction, and More." Includes Doc Con 2026, FarmerCon XXI, and Shadow Con. DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Pittsburgh-Cranberry (Mars, PA). Membership: Advance Full Membership = \$40 (if staying at the DoubleTree); \$50 Full Membership; Single-Day Membership for either Friday or Saturday = \$25. Registration form can be downloaded from the Homepage. Homepage: <https://pulpfest.com>

August 27-31, 2026 **LACON V** (2026 World Science Fiction Convention). Anaheim Convention Center, Hilton Anaheim & Anaheim Marriott Hotels (Anaheim CA). Guests of Honor: Barbara Hambly, Ronald D. Moore, Colleen Duran, Dr. Anita Sengupta, Tim Kirk, Geri Sullivan (Fan GoH), Stan Sakai, Ursula Vernon (aka T. Kingfisher). Full attending membership: currently \$200 (will go up). For more information & on-line registration: <https://www.lacon.org/>

October 2-4, 2026 **CAPCLAVE 2026**. Rockville Hilton & Executive Meeting Center (Rockville MD). Guests of Honor: Rebecca Roanhorse, Nino Cipri. Details as they become available. Website: <https://capclave.org>



**From
Ye Olde Editor:

You have been
reading the
2026 "April Fool"
issue of the
LSF newsletter.
I hope you enjoyed
it!**

