



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 435 – June 2026

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LSF Gaming Party and Capital Pride Parade Viewing – Saturday June 20th – Announcement from Rob

That's right... you read it correctly... our next LSF Gaming Party is almost here! LSF Gaming Parties are an opportunity to share your favorite board/card type games or to just come and play games you know and love or learn new ones. We have plenty of space so multiple games will be underway at any given time. We'll start at 1:30 PM and run through to 11 PM or so.

Please Note: This event will replace our normal Second Sunday Social. There will be no Second Sunday Social on Sunday, June 14th.

Peter and Rob live less than a block from the Capital Pride Parade route - and we'll plan to take a break to watch the parade as a group. The timing of the parade is early again this year, and the parade kicks off at 3 PM - so the parade viewing will happen early in the party. For those who don't want to view the parade or want to only view it briefly, we'll plan for a way for those who do not want to spend any significant time at the parade to be able to remain at the house during the parade viewing break.



Because of road closures we will NOT be ordering pizza for dinner, but you can forage for food at many nearby restaurants and stores. There are a lot of food choices in the Midcity (14th and U) Corridor.

What: LSF Tabletop Gaming & Pride Parade Viewing Party

When: Saturday, June 20th - 1:30 PM until around 11 PM - doors open 1:00 PM; the parade starts at 3 PM.

Where: Peter and Rob's Home - 1425 "S" Street NW in DC

What to Bring: Bring your favorite table game (or two or three or....). Also, please bring food/snacks and/or nonalcoholic beverage to share. Please feel free to bring friends along as well – the more gamers the merrier!

Dinner: There are many nearby options.

Questions: Contact Rob at: rob@lambdascifi.org



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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 LGBTQ 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 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; but the next book discussion will be held on June 25, 2026.

Here are the details for the next five discussions:

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

July 23 – *The First Fifteen Lives of Harry August*, by Claire North; moderator: Andy.

Aug. 20 [*note changed date*] – *The Will of the Many*, by James Islington; moderator: Josh.

Sept. 24 – *The Mercy of Gods*, by James S. A. Corey; moderator: Greg.

Oct. 22 – *The Starving Saints*, by Caitlin Starling; moderator: Rob. ΛΨΦ



***** June 20, 2026 Meeting *****

Please note this change of date! The usual "2nd Sunday" meeting is rescheduled for June. The next LSF meeting will be replaced by a Gaming Party & Capital Pride Parade Viewing on **Sunday, June 20th**. It will be held at Peter and Rob's home, **1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC**. The party will begin at 1:30 PM. For details, see the Announcement above. Hope to see you there!



What's Inside?

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Page 3: Comic Book Terminology; Minutes of the May LSF Meeting.

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Asimov's Science Fiction (Jan/Feb 2026)

short fiction reviews by Carl

I was in a Barnes & Noble. On a whim, I decided to read some short SF (probably as a reaction to having just finished Claire North's *The First Fifteen Lives of Harry August*, a hefty tome). At any rate, I picked up a copy of the current issue of *Asimov's Science Fiction*. I didn't pick it for any particular reason, and I didn't recognize any of the authors' names.

As with many of the anthologies and SF magazines that I've read, I found this issue's stories to be a "mixed bag". I found some of 'em to be OK – and, after reading a few pages in some of 'em, I decided "life's too short" and moved onto the next.

But there are two stories that I *really* enjoyed: "The Man with the Ruined Hand" (a short story by Sean Monaghan) and "The Lady in Camo" (a novella by John Richard Trtek). As it turns out, these two stories have a number of things in common. (1) I hadn't previously heard of either of these authors (despite the fact that they've been recognized as fine authors). (2) In spite of their short length, each story contains an incredible amount of fine world-building. (3) Each story features a witty, "morally-flexible" loner as the protagonist and first-person narrator, as well as other characteristics of *noir* fiction. (In fact, Trtek says he based the name of his story on the title of a Raymond Chandler novel, *The Lady in the Lake*.)

"The Man with the Ruined Hand" by Sean Monaghan

Cliff Holter is a sort of an interplanetary contractor – his employers hire him to "solve problems" while avoiding "unnecessary gunfire." In this case, Cliff has been hired by the criminal mastermind Julius De Yulius to prevent petty criminal Chet Arblebey from running off with "sixteen million in cold hard cash" from Yulius's secret stash buried in the middle of a trackless desert. But, as Cliff discovers, things aren't always as they seem. Double-crosses galore. It's a nifty little story, full of fun and action.

In fact, I enjoyed this story so much that I dashed over to Amazon.com and looked up Sean Monaghan. Turns out he's a well-respected and prolific young writer from New Zealand. I quickly ordered a few of Monaghan's books and look forward to reading them in the near future.

"The Lady in Camo" by John Richard Trtek

Jack Twice (aka Jackie Two-Times) is a "gitman" living and working in the less-than-respectable Freedom Zone (across the river from the *very* respectable Uptown) – he finds people (for a price). Jack is also the estranged clone of a deceased girl from a powerful family in Uptown.

One day, while eating his usual dinner of chykyn bustados, chips, and a raspberry lager in the Wayside Eatareña, Jack is approached by a stranger from Uptown who wants to hire Jack to find his missing... um... sister. Jack is suspicious right from the start, but the stranger is offering a *lot* of money and Jack agrees to take the case. As with many another *noir* mystery story, there are encounters with less-than-honest local law enforcement officials and with outright gangsters; there are multiple hidden identities and hidden agendas; and there's the constant risk of personal harm to both Jack and his quarry. Jack is in for a "wild ride."

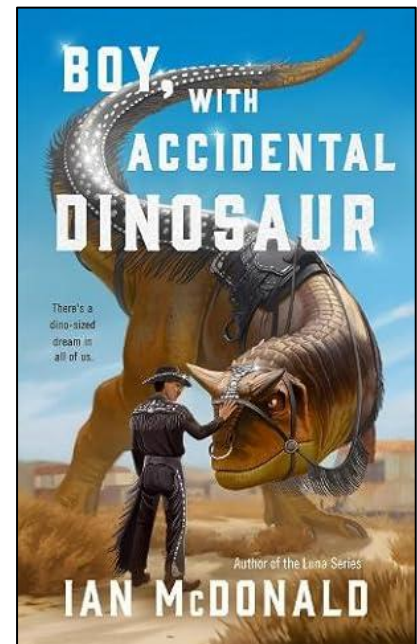
As I mentioned earlier, Trtek amply demonstrates his skill at crafting a fine sci-fi private eye story and his ability at clever world-building. The society of the Freedom Zone (and its relationship with Uptown) is revealed throughout the novella without reliance on stultifying info-dumps. All this and satisfying queer content, too. Upon finishing the story, I immediately dashed off to the internet to see if I could get my hands on more stories by Trtek. Unfortunately, his well-received short fiction hasn't yet been gathered into a collection. My only recourse, at the present time, is to hunt out those back editions of *Asimov's Science Fiction* that include several of his stories.

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Boy, With Accidental Dinosaur

by Ian McDonald
(a Tor.com book, 2026)
reviewed by Carl

I've always liked dinosaurs – and I get a kick out of sci-fi stories that include them. And I'm a big fan of the near-future novels in Ian McDonald's "Luna Series" (*Luna: New Moon*, *Luna: Wolf Moon*, *Luna: Moon Rising*). And then – hey, presto! – I ran across a new sci-fi novella by Ian MacDonald that includes dinosaurs. Sold!



The story is set in the American West, but certainly not one that we'd especially recognize. The story has been described by reviewers as "post-apocalyptic" – not quite, says I. At least not "post-apocalyptic" as depicted in *Mad Max* (1979 *et seq.*) or *A Boy and His Dog* (1975 film based on the 1969 Harlan Ellison novella). I agree with other reviewers who describe the setting as "dystopian." The United States has fragmented into feuding state-lets of various kinds; and there is no overall guiding government to keep everything running.

But there has been one amazing scientific advancement: the Berryman Belazu Tunneling Transfer (colloquially referred to as "the B2T2"). The B2T2 is

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Comic Book Terminology

info passed along by Carl

I was reading a fascinating book on etymology: *Useless Etymology: Offbeat Word Origins for Curious Minds*, by Jess Zafarris (Chambers/John Murray Press, 2025).

In one of the chapters, I came across a listing of terms that apply to comic books; and I decided to pass along a few of them.

- **Grawlix** is a set of typographical symbols and punctuation marks (such as @\$%#) replacing a censored swear word or profanity – may also be called **maladicta**.
- **Blurgits** and **swalloops** are the curved lines that are drawn beside the limbs of a character who is excitedly or vehemently waving them.
- **Briffits** are the clouds that remain behind when a character has swiftly darted away.
- **Indotherms** are the wavy lines rising from something hot, steamy, or stinky.
- **Plewds** are the droplets of sweat that emerge from a character who is nervous or hard at work.
- **Squeans** are the starbursts surrounding the head of a character who has been stunned by a blow.
- **Waftarom** are aroma lines.
- **Fumetti** are speech balloons. **Cumulus fumetti** are thought balloons.
- **Neoflect** are lines indicating an object is brand-spanking-new.

If you're interested in researching this subject further, consult *The Lexicon of Comicana* (New York Review Comics, 1980) by artist Mort Walker. Note: Many of the terms documented in Walker's book are vague and fanciful in origin and are certainly meant to be "whimsically" imitative of the things that they describe.



Minutes of the May LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

Rob reminded everyone that there will be no "second Sunday" LSF meeting in June 2026. Instead, LSF will host a Pride parade viewing and gaming day the day before on Saturday, June 20th. [For details, see the article on page 1 of this newsletter.] Rob also advised everyone that the August LSF book discussion will be moved to August 20th to avoid conflict with WorldCon in Anaheim.

TV News

Scott described the first season of Hulu's *Testaments*, the sequel to *The Handmaid's Tale*. Pedophile commanders with teenaged girls as brides-to-be.

Rob and Peter have been watching the current season of Apple's *For All Mankind*. Does it feel like a prequel to *The Expanse*? It is noted that both *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* exist in this universe.

Arne is enjoying Netflix's *One Piece*. It was noted that the manga *One Piece* first began in 1997.

Season 2 of Netflix's *Three Body Problem* will come out later this year.

Rob reported that Amazon's *Good Omens* 90-minute final episode will be airing soon.

Other Discussion Items

Andy cited Chongqing as the "Cyberpunk Capital of the World," describing it as engineering science fiction made real.

Jim described his continuing fascination with Charles Babbage and Ada Lovelace. He explained in some detail Babbage's difference engine and his analytical engine, as well as the probably contributions of Ada Lovelace.

Karl initiated a discussion of the Antikythera mechanism, a 2000-year-old Greek machine that functioned as an astronomical prediction computer, capable of forecasting eclipses and planetary motion with gearwork.

There was some discussion of Neotropolis, an annual multi-day futuristic and cyberpunk event held in the Mojave Desert.

Book News

Rob said that the Hugo Award finalists have been announced; he cited a couple of finalists, including Guillermo del Toro's *Frankenstein* (film) and Nnedi Okorafor's novel *Death of the Author*.

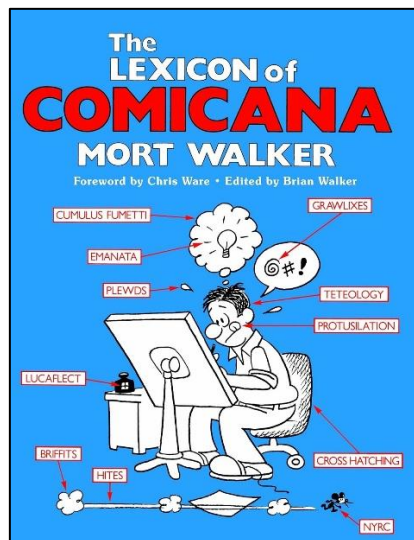
Karl talked about Asimov's 1955 *End of Eternity*: the plotline is similar to Asimov's more famous *Foundation's Edge*.

George R. R. Martin's *Winds of Winter*, the sixth title in the "Tale of Ice and Fire" series, might be released by the end of the year.

CJ Cheryh has announced she is officially retired from writing.

Upcoming LSF book discussion titles: *The Adventures of Amina al-Sirafi* by S. A. Chakraborty (May); *Project Hail Mary* by Andy Weir (June); *The First Fifteen Lives of Harry August* by Claire North (July).

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Neotropolis

**** 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. But the next Lambda Sci-Fi meeting will be a Gaming Party and Capital Pride Parade Viewing on **Sunday, June 20th, 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 Gaylactic Network, an organization for gay people and their friends who are interested in science-fiction and fantasy.

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

July 10-12 2026. **SHORE LEAVE 46**. "Celebrate Star Trek's 60th Anniversary." Lancaster Wyndham Resort & Convention Center (Lancaster PA). Guests include: Walter Koenig; David Hewlett; Anne Lockhart; Herb Jefferson; Oded Fehr. 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>

Accidental Dinosaur
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described (via scientific double-talk) as a device that takes advantage of some sort of singular "fracture in the timeline" to link to the current world and the mid-Cretaceous. It allows its operators to "capture" the occasional dinosaur and bring it forward in time. These dinosaurs are purchased via auction (sort'a like cattle or horse auctions), and the money supports B2T2 operations. Not for scientific study... it's all entertainment, baby!

Latif ("Tif") Tamim was orphaned during racial cleansing riots in the Midwest. Since then, he's been on his own, working toward his dream of becoming a "dinosaur buckaroo" in one of the big "dino circuses" out West. One day, as a minor wrangler at Dino!Dino!, Tif accidentally releases a nasty carnivorous dinosaur into a nearby parking lot. Despite there being no associated

casualties (except for the dinosaur), Tif is fired; but, thanks to the efforts of Dino!Dino!'s kindly Silver Clown, he doesn't suffer any worse penalties. Tif wanders out into the West in search of another dino-related job, riding a powered bike supplied by the kindly Silver Clown as part of his "severance package."

First Tif rescues an ailing Carnotaur from a rich but abusive owner; and then he manages to get hired on as an all-purpose dino-attendant and go-fer by Memphis Red's Tatterdemalion Circus, a small-time traveling show that makes additional income ferrying dinosaurs to and from the B2T2 facility. There, Tif finds a family. Memphis Red is the owner and maternal *jefa*; Matilda is a wrangler and "dino-whistler" who helps Tif develop his skills as a dino-wrangler; and this circus's Silver Clown is a fatherly figure who provides comfort and advice when needed. And then there's Prince,

the flashy, charismatic, black-and-silver-clad dino-rider – he awakens Tif's deeply-hidden desires, but Prince is reserved and has some unexpected, shadowy character depths.

McDonald has crafted an interesting coming-of-age and found-family story for Tif as the Circus moves through a dangerous landscape to deliver his ailing Carnotaur to the time portal at the B2T2 facility and return it to the Age of Dinosaurs. There's also a satisfying and complex Queer angle to Tif's story, including the rescue of his childhood best friend from slavery. *Boy, with Accidental Dinosaur* is a quick read – short but enjoyable. I'm glad I stumbled across it.

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