



# Lambda Sci-Fi

## DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 - Issue # 300 – March 2015

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WEBSITE: [www.lambdascifi.org](http://www.lambdascifi.org)

### LSF “Julian Memorial” Video & Potluck

March 28 (Sat.), 2:00 - 11:00 PM

Come celebrate Julian’s life at a video potluck hosted by Michael Marinelli, Peter Knapp, and Rob Gates. There will be an opportunity to share memories of good times with Julian.

The party will include a potluck meal, so bring along something scrumptious to eat. We’re not assigning categories of food to bring, so just bring something from one (or more) of the following “basic food groups”: appetizers (veggies, chips, etc.), a main course item (enough to serve at least 4-5 people), dessert, and non-alcoholic drinks (diet & regular).

Also bring your favorite science fiction/fantasy/horror movies (DVDs. As usual, attendees will vote on which movies to watch.

**Location:** 1425 “S” Street NW, Washington, DC 20009-4181

**Directions at:**

<http://lambdascifi.org/club/PeterRob.html>)

Questions can be directed to

Michael at [mmarine322@aol.com](mailto:mmarine322@aol.com)

or Peter at

[PeterPKnapp@gmail.com](mailto:PeterPKnapp@gmail.com) or 202-810-4678

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or 202-246-7800

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### Happy Birthday, LSF!!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY  
TO A  
**SUPER**  
Club



This month, Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians turns 25!

And, believe it or not, this is the 300th issue of the newsletter! We’ve never missed a month!

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**JULIAN C. REDDITT**  
1940 – 2015

### 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 – for directions or more details, call 202-483-6369. The next book discussion will be held on March 26, 2015.

Here are the details for the next couple of book discussions:

**March 26** – *One-Eyed Jack*, by Elizabeth Bear (moderator: Carl).

**April 23** – *Blood Oranges*, by Kathleen Tierney, aka Caitlin Kiernan (moderator: Krista).

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### <<<<< March 2015 LSF Meeting >>>>>

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, March 8th**. The meeting will be held at Peter and Rob’s home, **1425 “S” Street NW, Washington, DC**. The business meeting will begin at 1:30 PM and the social meeting at 2:00 PM. Please also bring some munchies or soft drinks, if you can. Hope to see you there!

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### What’s Inside?

Page 2: Come to the Circus! (F&SF Style) – Part 3 (book review).

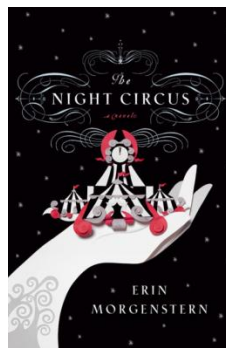
Page 3: Minutes of the February LSF Meeting.

Page 4: Information About Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians and Con Calendar.

# Come to the Circus! (F&SF-style)

Part 3

book reviews by Carl



Just another quick note before resuming the reviews in Part 3 of this series. In the introductory essay to Part 1, I remembered to include Disney's *Dumbo* as an example of Fantasy under the big top. But I forgot another Disney animated feature with a circus-like connection: *Pinocchio* (1940), considered by some to be his best. What's the connection to the "circus" theme? At one point, Pinocchio runs away from kindly old Geppetto and joins Stromboli's traveling puppet show – certainly a circus-like setting. (FYI: As part of his act, Pinocchio sings one of my favorite Disney songs: "I've Got No Strings to Hold Me Down".)

And, now, back to the book reviews...

## *The Night Circus* by Erin Morgenstern (Doubleday, 2011)

This book had been sitting on one of my "to read" piles for almost a couple of years; and, once I'd finally gotten around to reading it, I wish I'd gotten around to it sooner. It's quite good! It's sort of a combination of Chris Priest's *The Prestige* and "The Greatest Show on Earth". It also won the Locus Award for Best First Novel.

The story takes place over the course of three decades: from the early 1870s to the early 1900s. Two mysterious men have been engaged in a very long rivalry: Hector Bowen (aka "Prospero the Enchanter") and "the man in the gray suit" (whom Bowen addresses just once as "Alexander"). They hold opposing (and seemingly inexplicable) views on the nature of magic

and its display in our workaday world. But they never compete against each other directly in "the game". Over time (centuries?), each of them has trained a series of protégés to carry on the competition, while they themselves secretly "pull the strings". And there must always be a winner, with only one protégé surviving.

The current phase of the competition is set to take place in *Le Cirque des Rêves* ("The Circus of Dreams"): a mysterious, fantastical circus that travels the world delighting and mystifying everyone who is fortunate enough to get inside. Here's a short description from the novel's introductory section (fittingly entitled "Anticipation"):

*The circus arrives without warning.*

*No announcements precede it, no paper notices on downtown posts and billboards, no mentions or advertisements in local newspapers. It is simply there, when yesterday it was not.*

*The towering tents are striped in white and black, no golds and crimsons to be seen. No color at all, save for the neighboring trees and the grass of the surrounding fields. Black-and-white stripes on grey sky; countless tents of varying shapes and sizes, with an elaborate wrought-iron fence encasing them in a colorless world. Even what little ground is visible from outside is black or white, painted or powdered, or treated with some other circus trick...*

*And the black sign painted in white letters that hangs upon the gates, the one that reads:*

*Opens at Nightfall*

*Closes at Dawn*

Such is the latest setting for the competition. The newest competitors? Prospero's protégé will be his daughter, Celia. (Her mother had drafted instructions for her lawyer to literally drop the girl off at the stage door of the theater where Prospero is currently performing – and then she committed suicide.) "The man in the gray suit", on the other hand, locates his new protégé, an intelligent 9-year-old named Marco, in a shabby orphanage. After about twenty years of training by their masters – each according to the tenets of his particular philosophy of "magic" – Celia and Marco are enrolled as illusionists in *Le Cirque des Rêves*. But no one else in the circus (neither staff nor performers) knows anything about the secret "game" being played out in their midst.

As the unannounced competition progresses, Celia and Marco each produce a series of fantastical "installations" (I can't think of any other word for it), each enclosed within its own tent. For example: The Labyrinth, The Cloud Maze, and The Pool of Tears – each one more intricate and astonishing than the last. I found the descriptions of the installations to be one of the absolute delights of this novel: I think Morgenstern really has a knack for bringing "magic" to life in print. (I guess it's no surprise that Morgenstern is also a multimedia artist.) Another fascinating aspect of the story is watching how several of the secondary characters associated with *Le Cirque* get caught up all unknowingly in the wave of spells and charms being woven around them.

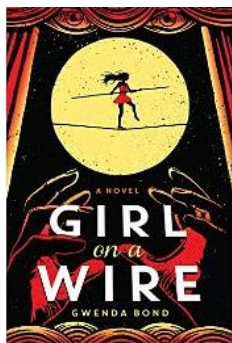
And there's yet another wrinkle: when Celia discovers that Marco is actually her "adversary" (the protégé of Prospero's competitor), she and Marco unexpectedly fall in love; and they collaborate in a series of ever-more-intricate enchantments. Unfortunately, Prospero and "the man in grey" are determined to keep their protégés from spoiling the outcome of their age-old magical "game" – as in all previous clashes, there can be only one "winner".

It's an amazingly beautiful story. As I said, I wish I'd gotten

(continued on page 3)

## Come to the Circus! continued from page 2

around to reading *The Night Circus* earlier. (I bought it in hardback; it's now out in trade paper.) This is Erin Morgenstern's first novel; I look forward to seeing what she comes up with next.



### *Girl on a Wire* by Gwenda Bond (Skyscape, 2014)

I thought I'd close out this series with a recent YA title. Ah, it's young love under the big top in this contemporary Fantasy.

Actually, it's a variation on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Instead of the Capulets and Montagues, the feuding families are the Amazing Maronis (a famous highwire act) and the Flying Garcias (an equally prestigious trapeze act); and young Jules (aka Julietta) Maroni and Remy (aka Romeo) Garcia are the star-crossed lovers.

When Jules literally runs away to join the Cirque American – and forces the rest of her family to join her! – she learns of the long, mysterious, and possibly cursed relationship between the Maronis and the Garcias. Young love blooms after a prickly start, but so does the apparent curse: robberies, vandalism, injuries, and death. But who's really behind it all? Is it the matriarch of the Garcia clan? Or possibly Jules's own grandmother, whose tempestuous relationship with the late Roman Garcia seems to have been the source of the curse? Or is it the bluff and hearty owner of the Cirque American: Thurston Meyer, millionaire entrepreneur and circus aficionado, who has long been scheming to bring both the Maronis and the Garcias into his own private circus?

## Minutes of the February LSF Meeting taken by Scott

Peter reminded everyone about the March 28th LSF video potluck party in memory of late LSF member Julian Redditt. Carl and Peter reminisced about the early days of LSF.

Dan advised that the film *They Live!* is being remade. Carl passed around an *Advocate* article about the upcoming *Flash* movie (2018) that will star a gay actor. Dan mentioned a movie entitled *Pixels* about alien-created giant PacMans that attack Earth. *Jupiter Ascending* is reputed to be a horrible movie – visually stunning, but horrid plot. Dan talked about upcoming genre movies, including Robert Heinlein's *All Your Zombies* (a classic time travel story), which will include GLBQT content and full frontal nudity and will star Ethan Hawke. *Hot Tube Time Machine II* and *Chappie* are both being released soon.



The Fantasy element in *Girl on a Wire* is much more subtle than in all the other stories I've reviewed in this series. There's a curse, tarot cards, lucky (and unlucky) charms – as well as Jules's grandmother, who seems to have "the power" passed along to her from her mother.

I found *Girl on a Wire* to be an enjoyable read – enough so that I think I'd like to look up a couple of Gwenda Bond's other YA fantasy novels: *Blackwood* and *The Woken Gods*.

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Michael likes to watch junk-science documentaries, like *Ancient Aliens*.

George ("Sulu") Takei, John ("Gimli the Dwarf") Rhys-Davies, and Sean ("Sam Gamgee") Astin will be guests at this year's Awesome Con. Peter said that the hallway costumes at last year's Awesome Con were high-quality.

Peter says he drooled when he got close to the original *Star Trek* USS Enterprise model (under renovation) at the Udvar-Hazy Air and Space Museum (Chantilly VA).

Peter and David will be attending the Gallifrey convention next week, which will feature guests John ("Captain Jack") Barrowman and Alex ("River Song") Kingston.

Carl reported that Elizabeth Bear's new steampunk/Western novel *Karen Memory* has just hit the stands. He also stated that he enjoyed the first two "Prydain" novels by Lloyd Alexander, which he received from Xena in this year's LSF book exchange.

The February LSF Book Club discussion will feature Emily Carroll's graphic novel *Through The Woods*. In March, the book discussion will feature Elizabeth Bear's *One-Eyed Jack*.

As a special treat, Peter showed the Kickstarter video for the new cardgame *Exploding Kittens* and the Saturday Night Live *Group Hopper* video. He also showed excerpts from two episodes of the *Star Trek Continues* fan-based series. Actor Vic Mignogna portrays (mimics?) William Shatner quite well.

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Gaylaxicon



Access Progress Report # 1 at:

<http://www.lambdascifi.org/club/Bentcon-Gaylaxicon-2015-PR1.pdf>

## \* \* 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 \$10, for which you will receive an e-mailed copy of this monthly newsletter and a membership directory. (Hard copies of the newsletter cost an additional \$15 per year.) 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, **March 8th, at Peter and Rob's home, 1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC.** 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



April 24-26, 2015 **RAVENCON 10**. Double Tree by Hilton Richmond Midlothian (Richmond VA). GoH: Allen Steele; Artist GoH: Frank Wu; Special Guest: Lawrence M. Schoen. Membership: \$40 before 4/10/2015; \$45 at the door.

Info at: <http://www.ravencon.com>

May 22-25, 2015 **BALTICON 49**. Hunt Valley Inn (Hunt Valley, MD). GoH: Jo Walton; Artist GoH: Charles Vess. Membership: \$55 until 2/28/2015; \$60 from 3/1 thru 4/15; \$65 thereafter. On-line registration thru the convention website.

Website: <http://www.balticon.org/>

May 29-31, 2015 **AWESOME CON 2015**. Walter E. Washington Convention Center (Washington, DC). Guests include: George Takei ("Mr. Sulu"), John Rhys-Davies ("Gimli the Dwarf"), and Sean Astin ("Sam Gamgee"). Weekend membership: \$75 after 1/1/2015 (daily rates available). On-line registration thru the convention website.

Website: <http://www.awesome-con.com/washington-dc/>

June 19-21, 2015 **CAPITAL CON DC 2015**. "A new science fiction/fantasy convention for the Washington DC area." Washington Court Hotel on Capitol Hill (Washington DC). Media GoH: Doug Jones ("Abe Sapien" in *Hellboy* and *Hellboy 2*). Author GoH: Sherrilyn Kenyon. Artist GoH: Ruth Sanderson. More info as it becomes available.

Website: <http://www.capitalcon.org/>

Oct. 9-11 **CAPCLAVE 2015**. Hilton Washington DC North/Gaithersburg (Gaithersburg MD). Guests include: Gorden Van Gelder (Editor, *F&SF Magazine*); Alastair Reynolds (*Revelation Space*). Membership: \$50 thru 5/31/2015.

Website: [www.capclave.org](http://www.capclave.org)

Nov. 6-8, 2015 **BENT-CON/GAYLAXICON 2015**. Los Angeles Marriott Burbank Airport Hotel and Convention Center (Burbank, CA). Membership: \$60 weekend rate. More info as it becomes available.

Website: <http://bent-con.org/>

See Progress Report # 1 at the following web address:

<http://www.lambdascifi.org/club/Bentcon-Gaylaxicon-2015-PR1.pdf>

Gaylaxicon

