



lambda Sci-fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 340 – July 2018

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

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

July 26 – *Moonstruck, Vol 1: Magic to Brew* (graphic novel) by Grace Ellis & Shae Beagle (moderator: Carl).

Aug. 23 – *Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mandell (moderator: Claire).

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Confluence July 27-29, 2018

[Ed. Note: Here's an announcement from our *Parsec* newsletter-exchange friends.]

Dear Lambda Sci-Fi,

My name is Karen Yun-Lutz. I am the publicity director for Confluence, the Annual SF/F/H Literary, Music and Art Conference in Pittsburgh, PA. Confluence, the longest running SF/F/H literary, music and art conference, is doing it again! The Confluence conference is coming to Pittsburgh, July 27-29, 2018.

The first Confluence was held in 1988 at the William Pitt Student Union Building on the campus of the University of Pittsburgh. Since then, Confluence has been held annually, except for two years. This year marks the 30th anniversary of the first Confluence. Confluence is so much more than just a literary conference. We offer a full weekend music track, an art show that includes art demos, a writing workshop (led by award-winning writer, David Levine), poetry readings, and a full three days of informative and thought-provoking programming panels that include everything from hard science topics to how to write, fund-raising, and so much more.

Our Guest of Honor this year is *NY Times* bestselling and award-winning author, Catherynne Valente. Our special music guest is S.J "Sooj" Tucker. Over the years we have had as our Guest of Honor many award-winning authors, including, Jack Chalker, William Tenn (aka: Phillip Klass), Peter S. Beagle, John Scalzi, Nancy Kress, James Morrow, David Hartwell, Hal Clement, Tamora Pierce, Joe Haldeman, Robert J. Sawyer, and Lawrence Schoen.

A full history of dates, locations, and guests can be found on our website:

<http://parsec-sff.org/confluence/about/confluence-history/>

Our main website is: www.confluence-sff.org

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<<<<< July 2018 LSF Meeting >>>>>

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, July 8th**. The meeting will be held at Peter and Rob's home, **1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC**. The meeting will begin at 1:30 and the "group watch" will begin at 3:00 PM. Hope to see you there!

What's Inside?

Pages 2 - 3: Prehistoria (book reviews).

Page 4: Information About LSF: DC Area Gaylaxians and Con Calendar.





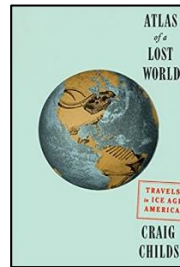
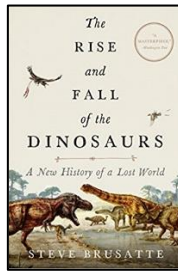
HAPPY
4TH OF JULY
TO
EVERYONE
AT
LAMBDA SCI-FI!



Prehistoria

2 reviews by Carl

Yes, I like dinosaurs and other prehistoric stuff – always have, and probably always will. (As a kid, I even wrote a letter to Dr. Edwin H. Colbert, when he was Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology at the American Museum of Natural History.) Needless to say, I was very happy to see a couple of new books about “prehistoria” show up on the shelves of my friendly local Barnes & Noble (just in time for me to use some discount coupons and gift cards, I might add). One book deals with dinosaurs, and the other deals with the earliest arrivals (yes, “arrivals” – plural) of human beings in North America. OK, so they’re not F&SF books; but the concepts they deal with have been (and will undoubtedly continue to be) fertile sources of inspiration for so many F&SF writers over the years!



The Rise and Fall of the Dinosaurs:
A New History of a Lost World
by Steve Brusatte
(William Morrow, 2018)

This is one of the best “big picture” histories of dinosaurs that I’ve ever read. It looks at the very long “reign” of the dinosaurs, covering the period between the Permian Extinction (about 252 million years ago) and the Cretaceous Extinction (66 million years ago). Not only is it an informative book – based upon and including lots of the latest research and discoveries – but it’s well-written. The author, Steve Brusatte, is a good writer as well as a working paleontologist (a “digger”, as they say in *Jurassic Park*); he’s a graduate of the University of Chicago who now works at the University of Edinburgh.

Here’s an excerpt from the Prologue, in which Brusatte sets out the broad goal of his book:

That is the tale I am going to tell in this book—the epic account of where dinosaurs came from, how they rose to dominance, how some of them became colossal and others developed feathers and wings and turned into birds, and then how the rest of them disappeared, ultimately paving the way for the modern world, and for us. In doing so, I want to convey how we’ve pieced together this story using the fossil clues that we have, and give some sense of what it’s like to be a paleontologist whose job is to hunt for dinosaurs.

Brusatte sets the stage in the first chapter by describing what happened about 252 million years ago: the great Permian Extinction – perhaps the greatest episode of mass death in Earth’s history, in which about 90% of all species disappeared, and which “cleared the stage” for the rise of agile little upright-walking “proto-dinosaurs” and others. Afterwards, he describes the rise of the first true dinosaurs about 240-230 million years ago, during the Triassic Age, and their eventual evolution into all the wild and fascinating forms that we usually think of as dinosaurs. In other chapters, Brusatte shows how continental drift affected the evolution and diversification of dinosaurs and how tiny two-legged proto-dinosaurs evolved into monstrously-huge herbivores (like *Brontosaurus* and *Brachiosaurus*), as well as terrifying carnivorous killing machines (like *Tyrannosaurus* and its ilk). A couple of chapters concentrate on *Tyrannosaurus rex* and other massive carnivores; and there’s a whole chapter on the possible origins of feathers, the discovery of feathered dinosaurs, and the evolution of birds from feathered theropod dinosaurs. The final chapter deals with the end of all non-avian dinosaurs during the Cretaceous Extinction event (66 million years ago); and an Epilogue talks about what the world was like following that massive catastrophe.

In amongst all this information, Brusatte takes his readers around the world – from the American West, to Po-

(continued on page 3)

Prehistoria

continued from page 2

land, to northern Africa, to south-eastern China, and many other areas – to explain the importance of the fossil evidence at those sites and to introduce the reader to the paleontologists who have made (and continue to make) those important finds. Brusatte also shows how good old-fashioned museum-work, CAT scans, computer simulations (such as FEA – “finite element analysis”), and so on, have also contributed to our increasing knowledge of the Age of the Dinosaurs.

If you’re looking a *very* readable book that still includes “the latest and the greatest” info about dinosaurs, then I highly recommend Steve Brusatte’s *The Rise and Fall of the Dinosaurs*.

***Atlas of a Lost World:
Travels in Ice Age America***
by Craig Childs
(Pantheon Books, 2018)

OK, so now let’s fast-forward from the end of the Age of Dinosaurs (66 million years ago) to the end of the Ice Ages (only about 25,000 years ago). Now we’re ready to look at *Atlas of a Lost World*, in which Craig Childs “traces the arrival of the first people in North America... and describes the artifacts that tell of their lives and fates.”

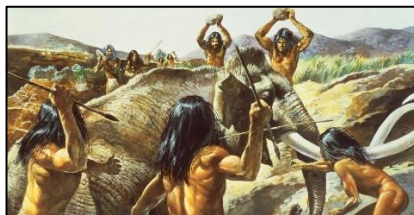
If you still believe that humans all crossed from Asia into North America about 25,000 years ago while chasing mammoths and other large prey across the glaciated Bering Land Bridge (or, if you prefer, the sub-continent of Beringia), then Childs aims to show you that the latest geological, archaeological, and genetic evidence seem to indicate otherwise. There might well have been earlier Asia-to-North America travelers along the partially glaciated southern coasts of Beringia – and maybe even trans-Atlantic immigrants coming along similarly glaciated coasts into eastern North America from Europe about 20,000 to 17,000 years ago. He also includes some sobering statistics about just how many humans it



would have taken to maintain a genetically viable population in previously-unpopulated North America.

Childs’s narrative includes visits to important archaeological sites throughout North America. He also includes a lot of personal travelogue experiences – mostly as a method to provide very human perspectives to the realities of Paleolithic North America. For example, he describes his trek onto the Harding Ice Field in Alaska (“one of the largest remaining ice masses in North America”) to show what it might have been like if early humans had attempted crossing the glacier-blocked wastes of Inner Beringia 24,000 to 18,000 years ago. (An ice-free corridor through Beringia would have been unavailable until after that period, which seems to contradict current archaeological and genetic evidence.) In the next chapter, Childs describes his 1200-mile journey down the Northwestern Coast (from Prince William Sound in south-central Alaska to the upper corner of Washington State) – mostly via kayaks, accompanied by his “tribe” of seven adults and five young children (including his own wife and sons). This is his way of demonstrating the possibility of coastal skin boat travelers along an “essentially unobstructed” path “entirely at sea level, from northeast Asia into the Americas”. Later, in the Four Corners region of the American Southwest, Childs uses personal experience of such sites as Lime Ridge and Bechan Cave (both in Utah) to show *why* such sites seem to have been frequented by mammoth hunters for about 2,000 years.

Childs is a radio, newspaper, and

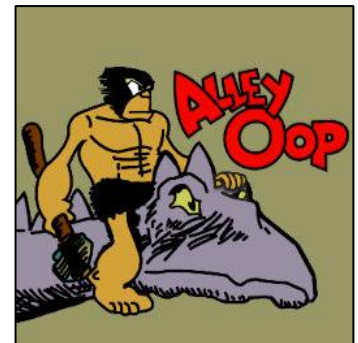


magazine reporter; and he spins good stories in the service of making prehistoric times more personal and realistic. If I have any complaint about the book, it’s that I feel some of Childs’s travelogues became rather *too* “personal” (rather than “illustrative”) – almost as if they were excuses for him to regale the reader with “all the cool stuff I did”. Here’s an example... In Chapter 7 (“A Dangerous Eden”), Childs and two friends canoed and kayaked through the backwoods swamps and bayous of Taylor County, Florida – providing a pretty vivid idea of what the sub-tropical Southeastern savannas might have been like about 14,500 years ago when humans first entered “the armpit of Florida between Georgia and the Gulf, where rivers flow through birdsong, islands, and sinkholes.” But I feel he dwelt rather longer than necessary on his experiences among the camps of backwoods “good ol’ boys” they unexpectedly encountered out there. Maybe this was just a case of the reporter in him coming to the fore. (I found it interesting, however, that Childs’s two friends were a gay male couple.)

On the whole, I found *Atlas of a Lost World* to be both an informative and an enjoyable read. If you’re trying to get an idea of what it might have been like for early humans when they first entered and traveled through Paleolithic North America, I think you’ll enjoy it, too.

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I hesitate to seemingly reinforce a piece of Creationist pseudoscience, but here’s a popular comic strip character created by V.T. Hamlin in the 1930s.



*** * 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-gendered (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, **July 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

July 6-8, 2018 **SHORE LEAVE 40** (a fan-run media SF convention). Hunt Valley Inn – Delta Marriott (Hunt Valley, MD). Guests include: William Shatner, Ming-Na Wen (*Agents of SHIELD*), Shawn Ashmore (*X-Men*). Membership: \$95 for the weekend (daily membership rates available) – pre-registration deadline June 15 (prices higher thereafter & at the door). Website: <http://www.shore-leave.com> E-mail: information@shore-leave.com

Aug. 16-20, 2018 **WORLDCON SAN JOSE**, the 76th World Science Fiction Convention. McEnery Convention Center (San Jose, CA). Guests of Honor: Chelsea Quinn Yarbro & Spider Robinson. Membership: currently \$230 (will go up!). On-line registration thru the convention's website. More information (including hotel information) as it becomes available. Website: www.worldcon76.org

Sept. 28-30, 2018 **CAPCLAVE 2018**. Rockville Hilton & Executive Meeting Center (Rockville, MD). GoH: Nancy Kress & Alyssa Wong. Membership: \$60 from June 1 to July 31; \$65 from Aug. 1 to Sept. 30. Use the on-line registration form (using Paypal or processing your credit card thru Paypal). Website: <http://www.capclave.org/capclave/capclave.18/>

Oct. 5-7, 2018 **CREATURES, CRIMES & CREATIVITY CON** ("for readers and writers and fans of all genre fiction, including mystery, suspense, romance, thriller, horror, sci-fi, fantasy, and paranormal"). Sheraton Columbia Town Center (Columbia MD). Membership \$245. For more information: www.creaturescrimesandcreativity.com

Nov. 1-4, 2018 **WORLD FANTASY CONVENTION**. Baltimore Renaissance Harborplace Hotel (Baltimore, MD). Guests of Honor: Kaaron Warren, Scott Edelman, Michael J. Walsh. Artist Guest of Honor: Tom Kidd. Special Guest: Aliette de Bodard. Membership: \$200 (current rate; will go up). On-line registration or print out registration form & send to: WFC2018 c/o Baltimore Science Fiction Society, Inc., PO Box 686, Baltimore MD 21203-0686 Website: <http://www.wfc2018.org/>

Nov. 23-25 **CHESSIECON 2018**. Radisson North Baltimore Hotel (Timonium MD). GoH: Jo Walton; Music GoH: Dr. Mary Crowell. Membership: \$55 until Nov. 1; \$60 at the door (checks payable to "Thanksgiving Science Fiction Society"). To pre-register, print out the registration form & send to: TSFS, Inc., PO Box 83032, Gaithersburg, MD 20883-3032 – or register on-line via PayPal Website: www.chessiecon.org Information: info@chessiecon.org

October 2019 **GAYLAXICON 2019**. Crown Plaza Aire Hotel (Minneapolis MN). During Outlantcon-Gaylaxicon 2018, the Gaylactic Network Board approved the bid by the North Country Gaylaxians to host Gaylaxicon 2019. More details as they become available.