



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 349 – April 2019

E-MAIL: info@lambdascifi.org

WEBSITE: www.lambdascifi.org

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 April 25.

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

April 25 – *Temper* by Nicky Drayden (moderator: Claire).

May 23 – *Carry On* by Rainbow Rowell (moderator: Ben).

June 27 – *An Unkindness of Ghosts* by Rivers Solomon (moderator: Rob S.).



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LSF April Gaming Party Saturday, April 20th

What: It's a gaming party. There's plenty of room for gaming, so please bring your favorite games (cards, board, etc.).

When: Saturday, April 20th; 2:00 PM to 11:30 PM

What to Bring: Bring your favorite table game (or two). Also, please bring munchies and/or soft drinks.

Dinner: For those who are interested, we'll order pizza at 6:30 PM. To get in on the pizza order, please bring \$10 in cash and put it in the pizza bucket with your name (it will be visible!). We'll order for as many people who put in money and any excess money will help support LSF's Pride table cost. If you don't want pizza, you can order take-out or go forage for food. There are a lot of food choices in the Midcity (14th and "U") Corridor. Also, delivery menus will be available at the party.



Where: Home of Peter and Rob, 1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC. Their home is in the Midcity (14th and "U") neighborhood between Dupont Circle and Logan Circle. Directions (with Metro and parking advice) at:

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

Questions: Contact Peter at: PeterPKnapp@gmail.com

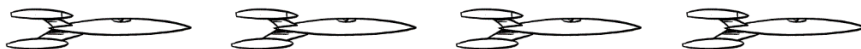
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From LSF's 29th Birthday
- March 10, 2019 -

<<<<< April 2019 LSF Meeting >>>>>

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, April 14th**. The meeting will be held at Peter and Rob's home, **1425 "S" Street NW, Washington, DC**. The meeting will begin at 1:30 PM. The "group watch" will begin about 3:00 PM. Hope to see you there!



What's Inside?

Page 2: Tyrannosaurus Rex (stamps); Betty Ballantine (obituary).

Page 3: Ancient Myths Retold by Modern Authors, Part 2 (book review).

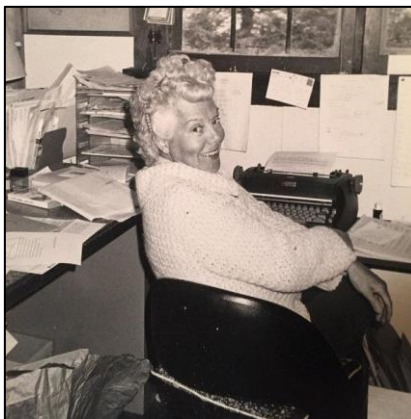
Page 4: Information About LSF: DC Area Gaylaxians and Con Calendar.

Tyrannosaurus Rex info passed along by Peter



With this pane of 16 stamps, the U.S. Postal Service brings *Tyrannosaurus rex* to life—some 66 million years after its demise. One design illustrates a face-to-face encounter with a *T. rex* approaching through a forest clearing; another shows the same young adult *T. rex* with a young *Triceratops*—both dinosaurs shown in fossil form. The third and fourth stamps depict a newly hatched *T. rex* covered with downy feathers and a bare-skinned juvenile *T. rex* chasing a primitive mammal. The “Nation’s *T. rex*”, the young adult depicted on two of the stamps, was discovered on federal land in Montana and is one of the most studied and important specimens ever found. Its remains will soon be on display at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of Natural History in Washington D.C. Art director Greg Breeding designed the stamps with original artwork by Julius T. Csotonyi, a scientist and paleoartist.

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Betty Ballantine 1919 – 2019

You might not know much about Betty Ballantine; but you’ve undoubtedly heard about the publishing houses she and her husband founded: Bantam Books and Ballantine Books. They helped invent the modern paperback market in the United States. Betty Ballantine passed away on February 12th at the age of 99.

Betty (Elizabeth) Jones was born in India in 1919, during the British Raj; she was the daughter of a British colonial officer. When attending school in England in 1939, she married the 23-year old Ian Ballantine, an American at the London School of Economics and the cousin of one of her classmates. Soon afterwards, the Ballantines moved to Ian’s native New York; and, using a \$500 wedding gift from her father, they set up a company to import Penguin quality paperbacks to the US from England. In 1945, they left Penguin to set up Bantam

Books as part of a consortium of publishers and other companies. They helped establish the paperback market for SF, Westerns, and other genres; they released original works and reprints by such authors as Arthur C. Clarke and H.P. Lovecraft; and their books were available in drugstores, railroad stations, and other non-traditional outlets.

In 1952, Betty and Ian founded their own publishing house: Ballantine Books. In 1953, Ballantine acquired Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*; and in the early 1960s they secured the rights to publish authorized editions of Tolkien’s *Hobbit* and the “Lord of the Rings” Trilogy. In 1970, Ballantine Books published Katherine Kurtz’s first novel, *Deryni Rising*, as part of its Ballantine Adult Fantasy Series; it was the first non-reprint novel in the series.

In 2002, Betty said the following during a *Locus* interview: “We really, truly wanted and did publish books that mattered. And science fiction matters, because it’s of the mind...”

The Ballantines sold their company to Random House in 1973, becoming freelance publishers and consultants. Ian Ballantine died in 1995.

Betty and Ian Ballantine were honored with special professional World Fantasy Awards in 1975 and 1989, a special SFWA Award in 1985 (for their pioneering contributions to F&SF publishing), and the Literary marketplace Lifetime Achievement Award in 1995. Betty won a special SFWA President’s Award in 2002 and a World Fantasy Life Achievement Award in 2007. The Ballantines were inducted into the Science Fiction Hall of Fame in 2008.

Notes from Ye Olde Editor:

The Postal Service also issued a sheet of Sesame Street characters.

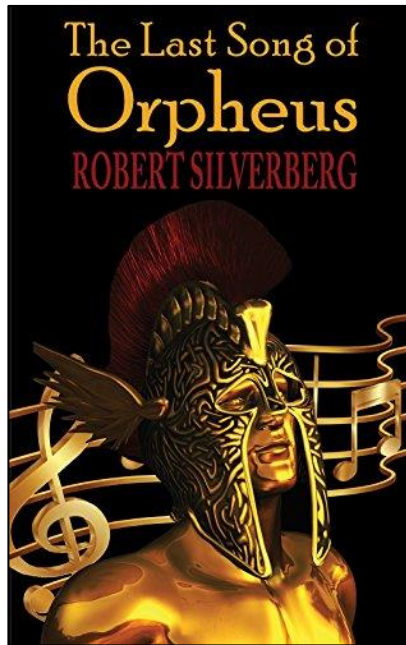
Did they include *your* favorite character? I can’t decide which of them is *my* favorite; maybe a tie between the Cookie Monster and The Count (“Vun, two, tree...”).

LSF Minutes for the March meeting? Nope; sorry, don’t got ‘em. Dan (who graciously agreed to be the stand-in secretary) intimated he was going to write the minutes in poetry form—perhaps a limerick or haiku. Maybe he decided to do ‘em in *blank* verse? Who knows? I’ll keep you posted if/when I finally receive ‘em.

--Ye Olde Editor

Ancient Myths Retold by Modern Authors (Part 2)

a couple of reviews by Carl



The Last Song of Orpheus by Robert Silverberg

(Phoenix Pick/Arc Manor, 2010)

I spotted this novella this year at San Jose Worldcon and couldn't resist buying it. As the title suggests, it tells the story of Orpheus in the form of a first-person narrative to his son Musaeus, relating his adventures here in the mortal world, as well as the myth of his "eternal return". The language – if not necessarily "poetic" – is certainly of a "mythic" quality.

Silverberg does a masterful job of interweaving all the various aspects of the myths of Orpheus into a single narrative, from his birth as the son of Apollo (or possibly the mortal King Oeagros of Thrace?) and the Muse Calliope up until his gruesome death (or release from his mortal body?) at the hands of the Maenads. What's with the uncertainties, you ask? Well, the myths and legends surrounding the figure of Orpheus are often garbled, sometimes contradictory; and, as Orpheus says any number of times in this story: "I deny nothing; I confirm nothing." Silverberg ensures that all of the best-known Orphic

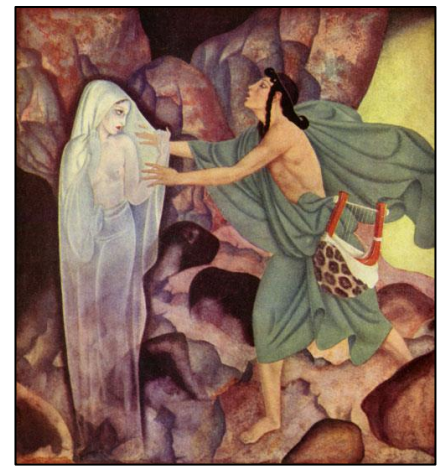
myths are incorporated into this novella: the magical quality of the music he played upon his golden lyre (presented to him by Apollo); his unsuccessful journey into the Underworld to rescue his beloved Eurydice; his adventures with Jason and the Argonauts on their quest for the Golden Fleece; and (as I said) his death at the hands of the Maenads or Bacchantes (wildly ecstatic female worshipers of Dionysus/Bacchus).

But Silverberg doesn't stop there. By late Antiquity, the figure of Orpheus had firmly been incorporated into of the Great Mystery Religions of the Mediterranean, including the Orphic Mysteries and the Pythagorean Mysteries. And Silverberg shows how, over the course of his travels, Orpheus encountered devotees of the Great Mysteries all over the Ancient World, including Egypt, the Black Sea regions, and even Britain. (I was particularly fascinated by descriptions his two long visits to Egypt.) Music, harmonics, mathematics, transmigration of souls, death and rebirth – Orpheus comes to realize they are all inter-related as part of an over-arching "Mystery of the Eternal Return".

The Greek gods and demi-gods, of necessity, make their appearances throughout the narrative. Silverberg handles them a bit differently from Madeline Miller's depictions in *Circe*. Yes, Silverberg clearly emphasizes the "divine beauty" of Great Apollo, the centaur Cheiron, and others – as well as the frightening nature of such chthonian entities as Hades, Charon, and Cerberus – but his descriptions never quite gave me the same little shiver or thrill that I got from Miller's descriptions of (for example) the Titan Helios or the nymph Perse.



"Orpheus" by Lesley Keen



"Orpheus and Eurydice"
by Edmund Dulac

Once again, it's impossible to avoid the inclusion of LGBTQ characters in any story about Greek myths. During Orpheus's adventures with the Argonauts, Orpheus clearly relates the love of Heracles and Hylas. And, at the very end, Silverberg has Orpheus respond to the homophobic taunts of the Maenads by freely admitting "...I had turned to members of my own sex for the comforts of love after the death of Eurydice—and it was true; I had, many times..." A delightfully unexpected touch.

I'm very glad I decided to buy *The Last Song of Orpheus*; and I highly recommend it to anyone who enjoys well-written modern stories based on the ancient Graeco-Roman myths. ΛΨΦ

Three times the year had gone through
waves of Pisces,
While Orpheus refused to sleep with
women;
Whether this meant he feared back luck in
marriage,
Or proved him faithful to Eurydice,
No one can say, yet women followed him
And felt insulted when he turned them out.
Meanwhile he taught the men of Thrace
the art
Of making love to boys and showed them
that
Such love affairs renewed their early
vigour,
The innocence of youth, the flowers of
spring.

Ovid, *The Metamorphoses* (Book X)
translated by Horace Gregory
Signet Classics (1958)

*** * 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, **April 14th, 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 5-7, 2019 **RAVENCON 14** (Virginia's Science Fiction & Fantasy Convention of Opportunity). Doubletree by Hilton Williamsburg (Williamsburg VA). Author GoH: Melinda Snodgrass; Music GoH: Library Bards (more to come). Membership: \$40 until 3/9/2019; \$50 at the door (daily rates available). Membership on-line through the website.

Website: <http://www.ravencon.com/>

May 24-27, 2019 **BALTICON 53**. Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel (Baltimore MD). Guests of Honor: Elizabeth Bear, Scott Lynch, Nicky Drayden (2018 Compton Crook Award Winner). Artist GoH: Charles Vess. Membership: \$71 from March 1 until April 15; \$74 beginning April 16; \$77 at the door.

Website: <https://www.balticon.org/wp53/> E-mail at: balticoninfo@balticon.org

July 4-7, 2019 **NASFiC 2019/WESTERCON 72/1632 MINICON**. Davis Conference Center & Hilton Garden Inn (Layton UT). Guests include: Laurell K. Hamilton, David Weber, John & Bjo Trimble, Jim Butcher, Eric Flint, Vincent Villafranca (artist & designer of the new World Fantasy Award). Membership: \$70 thru 03/31/2019 (will go up after that).

On-line registration at: registration@spikecon.org Website: <https://www.spikecon.org/>

August 15-19, 2019 **DUBLIN 2019: AN IRISH WORLDCON**. Convention Center Dublin (Dublin, Ireland). Guests of Honor include: Jocelyn Bell Burnell, Diane Duane, Steve Jackson, Ian McDonald.

Current membership pricing and on-line registration: <https://dublin2019.com/join-us/>

Website: www.dublin2019.com For general inquiries: info@dublin2019.com

October 18-20, 2019 **GAYLAXICON 2019**. Doubletree Hotel by Hilton Minneapolis-Park Place (Minneapolis MN). Membership: \$65 (ends 10/1/2019).

On-line registration via EventBrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/gaylaxicon-2019-registration-51438596226>

Homepage: <https://www.facebook.com/MNGaylaxicon/>

Nov. 29 – Dec. 1, 2019 **CHESSIECON 2019**. Red Lion Inn North Baltimore (Timonium MD). Guests of Honor: Charlie Jane Anders; Music GoH: Cathy McManamon; Special Guest: Tom Smith. Membership: \$55 thru 11/15/2019; \$60 after that and at the door.

Website: www.chessiecon.org

Info at: info@chessiecon.org