



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 358 – January 2020

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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 January 23rd.

Here are the details for the next several discussions:

Jan. 23, 2020 – *The Power* by Naomi Alderman (moderator: Teresa).

Feb. 27, 2020 – *Wonder Woman: The Golden Age, Vol. 2* (moderator: Claire).

March 26, 2020 – *The Night Circus* by Erin Morgenstern (moderator: Zena).

April 23, 2020 – *Lovecraft Country* by Matt Ruff (moderator: Carl).

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Annual LSF Book (*et al*) Exchange at Jan. 12th Meeting



That's right, gang, it's Holiday time again; and it's time for Lambda Sci-Fi's *thirtieth* annual book (*et al*) exchange, which will occur at the upcoming Jan. 12th meeting! All LSF members – and visitors, guests, attendees, etc. – are invited to participate in this "blind exchange."

In case you've never participated in one of these before (or in case you've for-gotten), here's how it works:

(1) Go out and purchase a copy of your "favorite" science-fiction, fantasy, or horror book. (*NOTE*: Over the years, LSF has expanded the concept of "book" to include comics, videotapes, "books on tape," etc. If you want – or if you're feeling particularly wealthy – you can even make it *several* favorite books or whatever.)

(2) Insert a piece of paper (or bookmark) with your name on it. That's so whoever eventually ends up with the item will know who it's from and will get

to know a little about you – at least to know what one of your "favorites" is.

(3) Wrap up the exchange item, but don't put any identifying marks or anything on the wrapped package to say who it's from. That's to make sure it's a "blind" exchange – *i.e.* no one is supposed to know who it's from at first. (And, by the way, all of that leftover Holiday wrapping paper should come in handy here!)

(4) At the meeting, add your wrapped exchange item to the pile with all the others; and you'll be assigned a number. (Only one exchange item – *i.e.* one package – per person, please!)

(5) When your number is called, you pick one of the packages from the pile. And when you open it up, you'll find out who it's from. See how easy?

I can hardly wait to see what shows up *this* year! ΛΨΦ



<<<<<< January 2020 LSF Meeting >>>>>>

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, January 12th**, 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?

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Minutes of the December LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

It was a small crowd in attendance at this meeting.

Teresa expressed interest in having the LSF Book Discussion Group read Frank Herbert's *Dune*. There was general agreement, but no date has been set as yet.

TV News:

The cross-over episodes of DC's "Crisis on Infinite Earths" starts tonight, with a new *Supergirl* episode. Rob noted that there are at least six characters who have not yet been announced who appear in the first three episodes. *The Game of Thrones* prequel has been picked up for development. Rob also loves both new series: *Watchmen* and *His Dark Materials*. The new season of *The Magicians* starts up again on Jan 15th; and Season 4 of *The Expanse* starts this week. Rob described *The Good Place* as a wonderful cerebral sitcom. A trailer of *The Boys* Season 2 has been released

David is enjoying the remake of *Charmed*. One of the sisters is a lesbian. He then provided an explanation of women getting "fridged": fictional female characters who are killed, maimed, or depowered, particularly in ways that treat the female character as merely a device to move a male character's story arc forward, rather than as a fully developed character in her own right. David continues to watch *Emergence*, which he says has poor script editing

Movie News:

Chris Evans and Daniel Craig are fabulous in *Knives Out*, an homage to and a parody of Agatha Christie murder mysteries. Richard Stanley's horror film *Color Out of Space* comes out in January, based upon the HP Lovecraft short story; the reviews have been good. Speaking of the latest film in the *Terminator* movie franchise, Rob thinks that the franchise is so tired and that Edward Furlong is a waste of a human being.

Star Wars: Rise of Skywalker opens soon! Don't forget the LSF movie outing to see it on Saturday, Dec. 21st (11 AM), at the AMC Uptown Theater. Get your tickets today.

Servo-Bots?

info passed along by Carl

We might be closer to having a modern version of R2-D2 than you think. Yes, I know that robotic units are now a normal part of auto-manufacturing and other assembly plants; and, yes, there are iRobot Roombas to vacuum your floors; and, yes, Amazon.com is using drones to deliver stuff; and, yes, there've been experiments with automated food delivery units here in DC. I'm talking about something else entirely: little servo-bots that fetch-and-carry for us and look very much like the little *Star Wars* droid.

In November, Anna Fifield – the *Washington Post*'s Beijing bureau chief – reported on her first encounter with just such a servo-bot at a hotel in Shanghai. She ordered room service the morning after check-in; and soon received a call telling her that her order had arrived. (It was actually the robot contacting her via phone.) When she opened the door, she found herself face-to-face with a small delivery robot. Her coffee pods were inside a compartment behind a sliding door on the robot, which opened when she pressed a graphic on an illuminated touch pad. (She posted the encounter on Twitter.) The robot spoke Chinese (of course); and introduced itself by saying: "You are the cutest person in the whole universe. Do you want to take a selfie with me?" When it was leaving, it said: "I hope my service leaves you in a good mood for a century." Fifield reported that the encounter felt "surprisingly natural".



Shanghai Bot



YO2D2

A number of hotels are experimenting with servo-bots in China, Japan, South Korea, and the U.S. Marriott has rolling butler service at several locations; and Yotel Boston has a robot named YO2D2 on staff. If you're interested in seeing them "in action", here are some links to videos:

Anna Fifield Twitter video:

<https://twitter.com/annafield/status/1196952444640661504>

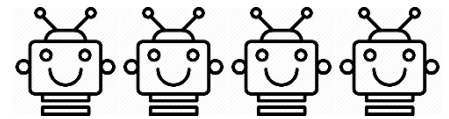
Yotel's YO2D2 robot:

<https://www.tastemade.com/videos/tastemade-travel-yotel-robot-in-boston>

LAX Marriott robot:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DATdyHhuyc>

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Upcoming LSF Events: *Rise of Skywalker* movie outing on Dec. 21st; LSF New Year's Eve gaming party and midnight toast on Dec. 31st; and the next LSF meeting on Sunday, Jan 12th, includes the annual blind book exchange. (See announcement on page 1.)

Then we watched the first two episodes of *The Mandalorian* – with "Baby Yoda"! – followed by the trailer for the new *Wonder Woman 1984* movie, featuring villain Maxwell Lord and the return(?) of Steve Trevor (played by Chris Pine).

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DC Fontana 1939 – 2019

Dorothy Catherine Fontana passed away on December 2nd. She was probably most famous for her long association with the *Star Trek* franchise – as a script writer, story editor, novelist, and/or associate producer. She began using the gender-blind “DC Fontana” for her written works in the early 1960s, to prevent her story submissions being prejudged on the basis of her gender. (She was one of the few female writers at NBC at that time.)

At an early age, Fontana decided that she wanted to become a novelist; and she often wrote horror stories featuring herself and her friends. When she graduated from college, Fontana moved from New Jersey to New York City, where she got a job working as the junior secretary for the president of Screen Gems Productions.

After her boss’s death, she briefly returned to New Jersey and then moved to Los Angeles, where she worked as the secretary to writer Samuel Peeples during his time on the Western TV series *Overland Trail* (1960, Revue Studios) and on several other early-60s Western-themed TV series. When Peeples left, Fontana moved on to working for Del Reisman, a producer on the short-lived NBC TV series *The Lieutenant* (1964), which was created by Gene Roddenberry and starred a young Gary Lockwood. (Other actors ap-

pearing in this series included: Ricardo Montalban, Leonard Nimoy, Nichelle Nichols, Walter Koenig, and Majel Barrett.)

When Roddenberry began working on *Star Trek*, Fontana was appointed as story editor. This was Fontana’s introduction to science fiction, which had not been a previous interest of hers. For the original *Star Trek* series, Fontana either wrote, re-wrote, or contributed to the following episodes: “Charlie X”, “Tomorrow Is Yesterday”, “This Side of Paradise”, Journey to Babel”, “Friday’s Child”, “The Ultimate Computer”, and “The City on the Edge of Forever”.

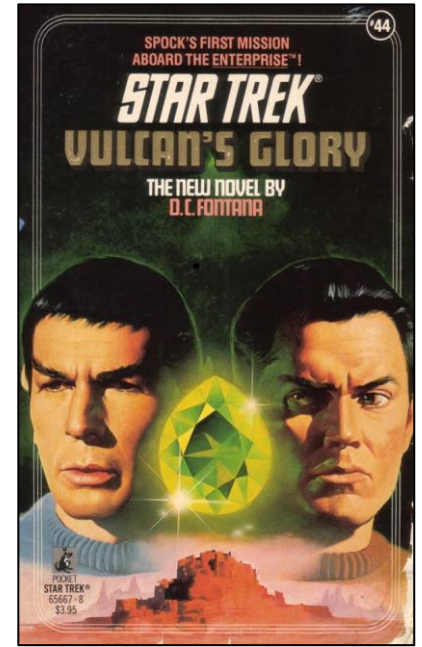
Fontana left *Star Trek* after the second season to pursue freelance work. She continued to write *Star Trek* scripts on a freelance basis, including: “The Enterprise Incident”, “That Which Survives”, and “The Way to Eden”. Leonard Nimoy credited Fontana for expanding information about Vulcan culture within the *Star Trek* universe. Later, in 2006, Pocket Books approached Fontana to write a *Star Trek* novel; this resulted in *Vulcan’s Glory*, in which Fontana tells the story of Spock’s first mission on the *Enterprise* (under Captain Christopher Pike).

Fontana later worked with Roddenberry again, writing the script for *Genesis II* (1973), and then as story editor and associate producer for *Star Trek: The Animated Series* (1973-1974). (*ST:TAS* won the Daytime Emmy Award for Outstanding Children’s Series in 1975.)

At Roddenberry’s request, Fontana worked up the idea which became “Encounter at Farpoint”, the pilot for *Star Trek The Next Generation*. She also worked on the script for “The Naked Now” (under a pseudonym). She later wrote an episode for *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*: “Dax” (1993). She also wrote an episode for the fan-made production *Star Trek: New Voyages*: “To Serve All My Days” (2006).

During the 1970s and the early 1980s, Fontana worked on *Logan’s Run*, *The Six Million Dollar Man*, and *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century*. She also wrote scripts for several episodes of *Babylon 5*: “The War Prayer”, “Legacies”, and “A Distant Star”.

Fontana joined the Writers Guild of America in 1960 and served on the



Board between 1099 and 1990, and the Guild in 2002; and she was twice inducted into the American Screenwriters Association Hall of Fame (1997 and 2002). In recent years, she had been a senior lecturer at the American Film Institute.

[Ye Editor’s Note: The “official” obituaries for Dorothy usually don’t mention the non-*Star Trek* aspects of her life. I knew Dorothy through the Southern California branch of the Society for Creative Anachronism; her name in the Society was “Lady Miranda Douglas of Schiehallion” (yes, as in “Miranda”, the name of Spock’s mother). She was also active in the Mythopoeic Society, a non-profit international organization promoting study and discussion of the works of JRR Tolkien, CS Lewis, and Charles Williams, among others. I also attended a presentation she made for the Richard III Society, a group that aims to promote research into the life and times of King Richard III of England and secure a re-assessment of his disreputable depictions in Shakespeare’s *Richard III* and other Tudor “propaganda”.]



**** 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. 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, **January 12th, 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, 2020 **RAVENCON 15.** DoubleTree by Hilton Williamsburg (Williamsburg VA). GoH: Terry Brooks. Membership: \$35 before 12/31/2019; \$40 until 4/3/2020; \$50 at the door. (Daily rates also available.) On-line registration.

Website: www.ravencon.com

May 1-3, 2020 **AWESOME CON.** Walter E. Washington Convention Center (Washington, DC). Guests include: Zachary Levi ("Shazam!"); Ron Perlman ("Hellboy"). Includes "Pride Alley, a celebration of queer creators and fans curated by GeeksOUT." Membership: 3-day passes = \$80; 1-day passes = \$40-\$55 (depending on the day). "Tickets on sale soon." Limited tickets – on-line purchase advised via their Tickets Page. Website: <https://awesome-con.com/>

May 22-25, 2020 **BALTICON 54.** Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel (Baltimore MD). GoH: Wen Spencer; Artist GoH: Lee Moyer; Musical GoH: Cheshire Moon; 2019 Compton Crook Award winner: R.F. Kuang. Membership: \$66 until Feb. 29, 2020. On-line registration. Website: <https://www.balticon.org/wp54> Info at: balticoninfo@balticon.org

July 10-12, 2020 **SHORE LEAVE 42.** Delta Hotels Marriott Baltimore Hunt Valley (Hunt Valley MD). Actor GoH: Denis Lawson (*Star Wars* "Wedge Antilles"); more TBA. Membership: \$105 for the weekend (\$120 at the door); daily rates available. Printable registration forms & on-line registration available through the Registration Page.

Website: www.shore-leave.com

July 29 – Aug. 2, 2020 **CONZEALAND, the 78th World Science Fiction Convention.** TSB Arena, Intercontinental Hotel *et al* (Wellington, New Zealand). GoH: Mercedes Lackey & Larry Dixon; Artist GoH: Greg Broadmore; Toastmaster: George RR Martin. Membership: currently \$452NZ (approx. \$272US); it will go up! On-line registration. Website: <https://conzealand.nz>

Aug. 20-23, 2020 **COLUMBUS NASFiC 2020, the North American Science Fiction Convention.** Sheraton Columbus Hotel at Capitol Square (Columbus, OH). GoH: Brian Herbert & Kevin J. Anderson; Artist GoH: Stephanie Law; Science GoH: Marc Millis (NASA). Membership: currently \$100 (will go up!). Make checks payable to "Columbus 2020 NASFiC" and sent to: Columbus 2020 NASFiC, c/o Kim Williams, 4227 Beechrun Rd., Whitehall, OH 43213. On-line registration also available.

Website: <http://columbus2020nasfic.org/>

Sept. 4-7, 2020 **TCEP 27** ("Ted and Craig's Excellent Party"). "A relaxed gaming convention." Hampton Inn & Suites Washington Dulles Airport (Sterling VA). Membership: \$30 for the weekend. Website: <https://www.barkingmad.org/>

Oct. 16-18, 2020 **CAPCLAVE 2020.** Rockville Hilton & Executive Meeting Center (Rockville MD). GoH: Peter S. Beagle and Troy L. Wiggins (editor/blogger). Membership: \$50 thru the end of 2019 (will go up). On-line registration.

Website: <https://www.capclave.org/capclave/capclave20/>