



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 383 – February 2022

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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.

Before the COVID-19 shut-down orders, the LSF Book Discussion Group meet on the 4th Thursday of every month, starting at 7:00 PM, at Peter & Rob's home. *Until April 2022, book discussions will continue to be held virtually (same "4th Thursday" schedule).* The next book discussion will be held on February 24th via Zoom.

Here are the details for the next several discussions:

Feb. 24, 2022 – *A Memory Called Empire*, by Arkady Martine (moderator: Judy).

March 24, 2022 – *Architects of Memory*, by Karen Osborne (moderator: Bob A)

April 28, 2022 (*returning to in-person format?*) – *White Trash Warlock*, by David Slayton (moderator: Konrad)



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LSF To Remain Virtual Through March 2022

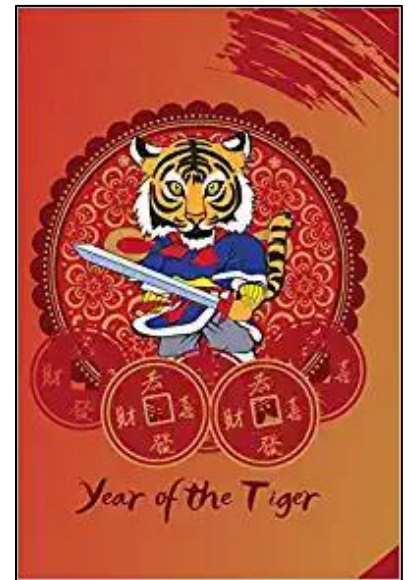
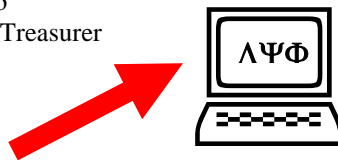
Greetings All –

While we had hoped and planned to shift our "Second Sunday Social" gatherings back to in-person starting in January 2022, the recent spike in COVID cases due to Omicron and the reinstatement of DC's indoor mask mandate have sadly caused us to change course.

So we will continue with our events being virtual – Second Sunday Social gatherings and Book Discussions – through the end of March 2022. We hope to return both to "in person" starting in April, but will reassess in March.

We hope to "see" you at one of our upcoming *virtual* events soon... and hopefully.... in-person this Spring!

- Rob
LSF Treasurer



Happy Lunar New Year
to all those born in
the Year of the Tiger
(including Ye Olde Editor)

Editor's Note: The LSF Gift Exchange has also been delayed until the next scheduled LSF face-to-face monthly Social meeting.

***** February 13, 2022 Meeting = via Zoom!!! *****

Due to the resurgence of Coronavirus concerns, we will hold the February 13th LSF meeting virtually. Anyone who would like to participate can contact Rob for virtual meeting information at robgatesdc@gmail.com. Hope to "see" you there!



What's Inside?

Page 2: Up in the Air, Junior Birdmen! (book reviews); Minutes of the January 2022 LSF Meeting.

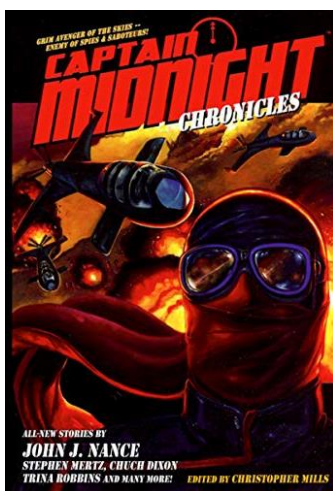
Page 4: Information About Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians & Con Calendar; Happy Valentine's Day!

Up in the Air, Junior Birdmen!

short reviews by Carl

In case you don't recognize the reference, the title of this article is an old song commemorating an organization from the 1930s. The Junior Birdmen of America (1934 – 1939) was promoted by the Hearst newspaper chain (with the cooperation of the US Bureau of Air Commerce) as a national organization for boys and girls interested in aviation and model plane building. Its motto was: "Today Pilots of Models—Tomorrow Model Pilots." The Junior Birdmen arose during the same era as the so-called "air stories" Pulp magazines, such as *Flying Aces* or *Dusty Ayres and His Battle Aces* or *Billy Barnes, Air Adventurer*. These magazines appealed to readers who enjoyed reading about the heroic adventures of fighter pilots and civilian aviators.

Having just finished reading several long, complex books, I decided to "cleanse my palate" by pulling a couple of anthologies from one of my "to read" piles. I chose two small press anthologies that contain simple, unchallenging short stories and that hark back to the air stories of the Pulp era.



Captain Midnight Chronicles
edited by Christopher Mills
(Moonstone Books, 2010)

I can't say as I've been a fan of any of Captain Midnight's numerous incarnations: 1930s radio show, 1942 serial film, 1940s comic strips and comic books, 1950s television show, or 2012 reintroduction.

(continued on page 3)

Minutes of the January 2022 LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

TV News

Carl reported that he tried again to watch *Into the SpiderVerse*, but (unlike everybody else) couldn't get into it. Most meeting attendees have enjoyed the *Hawkeye* series. There is only episode (the series finale) remaining for *The Expanse*. Rob has watched the first season of *Wheel of Time* – he likes how the series has addressed plot holes in the novels. The *Harry Potter Reunion* was nostalgic; it included flashbacks of JK Rowling before she went off the deep end with anti-trans rant. (Wess wondered how much the author's controversial comments have impacted the brand.) Rob said that *The Book of Boba Fett* "is not telling its own story." Rob also lamented that he and Peter watched all six of the *Doctor Who* animated episodes; and they both admitted that the animation is horrible. The general consensus is that the *Doctor Who* New Year's Eve episode was "just okay." Rob is looking forward to *Resident Alien* Season 2, premiering soon.

Movie News

Wayne said that he watched the movie *Tennant* and was disappointed. Dan and Teresa enjoyed the new *Matrix Resurrections* for about 10 minutes. The new *Spiderman* movie is considered in the top five MCU movies. Rob reported that *Black Panther* actress Letitia Wright will be back at Marvel Studios. *Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore* is set to be released in April 2022. Peter and Rob enjoyed *Don't Look Up* – "brilliantly done." The new *Death on the Nile* movie is set to be released in February, starring actor Armie Hammer (he of the cannibal comments). David has enjoyed *Legends of Korra*, a sequel to *Avatar: The Last Airbender*.

Other News

Bob reported that one of his short stories has been published in a Chinese genre magazine (without permission) – stories by several other prominent F&SF authors are also included (also without permission). Rob mentioned that China has won the bid for 2024 World-Con. He also explained the WorldCon-in-DC apol-

ogy letter regarding the Raytheon sponsorship. (Peter recalled a similar controversy when the CIA had a presence at AwesomeCon.) Did you like the Snowman Jabba the Hutt pic that Karl posted during the meeting? Rob reminded everyone that the film *Soylent Green* was set in the year 2022.

Rob reviewed the upcoming titles in the Lambda Sci Fi book discussion group: *Far Out: An Anthology of Recent Queer Science Fiction and Fantasy* edited by Paula Guran (January); *A Memory Called Empire* by Arkady Martine (February); *Architects of Memory* by Karen Osborne (March); *White Trash Warlock* by David R. Slayton (April).



Ye Old Editor sayeth: "These are pictures of my great-nephew and some of his friends at a recent premiere of the new *Spiderman* movie. They all dressed up in Spiderman costumes they purchased via Amazon.com. My great-nephew is the Spiderman wearing white tennis shoes."



Junior Birdmen continued from page 2

duction by Dark Horse Comics. I can't even tell you how and why I picked up this slim anthology – I was probably browsing around Amazon.com and picked it up on a whim. I *do*, however, have some interest in the Pulp Era, which is when the character first appeared. So...

"Who is Captain Midnight?" you ask. He's not a superhero. He's one of those "air stories" heroes that appeared during the 1930s; and he's similar in some respects to other larger-than-life heroes like Doc Savage or The Shadow. Here's a short description, as excerpted from one of the stories in this anthology:

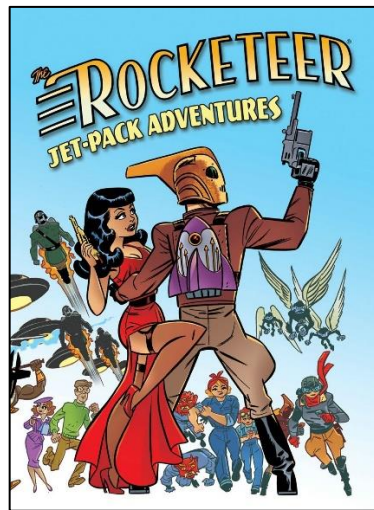
His real name was James Albright—"Red" to his closest friends—and he was the commander of the Secret Squadron, a covert paramilitary organization dedicated to world peace. An ace pilot during the Great War, he now devoted all of his skills and resources to the cause of peace, using his world-wide intelligence network and private air force to aggressively prevent or extinguish regional conflicts—or "brush fires"—before they could escalate into global warfare.

And that'll give you a pretty good idea of the kind of stories you'll find here. Captain Midnight and his closest associates battle the forces of evil throughout the world, relying on 1930s/1940s "super-science" inventions. This anthology includes adventures representative of all the various periods of the Captain Midnight saga: from post-WWI stories in which the Captain foils the nefarious plots of his nemesis, the arch-criminal mastermind Ivan Shark; to stories set just before WWII, in which the Captain counters the rising power of Hitler's Germany and Tojo's Japan.

All twelve stories were newly-written for this Moonstone anthology. I can't say as I've heard of any of the authors; but they do a nice job of recreating a Pulp Era feel for their stories. Each story even features a full-page title illustration by Richard Clark in the style of the Pulp magazines. (And Clark's cover painting for the anthology is a beauty!) As it says on the title page: "From out of the past, the Ace of Aviation returns in twelve thrilling

new tales of high-flying excitement and suspense!" Of course, none of these Captain Midnight stories are great literature. I found some of them to be entertaining; but some of them exhibit many of the worst traits of stories from the Pulp Era: cardboard characterizations, clunky dialog, over-the-top plots, etc. I couldn't help but be reminded of the Doc Savage novels I'd read in the 1960s and 1970s (Pulp Era stories reprinted by Bantam Books). And then there are all the typos. (Shame on you, Moonstone editor.)

But if you want some light entertainment – and if you're feeling particularly nostalgic – give *Captain Midnight Chronicles* a try.



***The Rocketeer: Jet-Pack Adventures*
edited by Jeff Conner & Tom Waltz
(IDW Publishing, 2014)**

The Rocketeer was created by writer/artist Dave Stevens and first appeared in 1982 as a backup feature in Mike Grell's *Starslayer* series (Pacific Comics). The Rocketeer character was designed as an homage to the "Rocket Man" heroes that appeared in several multi-chapter serials made by Republic Pictures: *King of the Rocket Men* (1949), *Radar Men from the Moon* (1952), *Zombies of the Stratosphere* (1952), and *Commando Cody: Sky Marshal of the Universe* (1953). (I used to watch *Commando Cody* when it was on Saturday morning TV in the 1950s.) The Rocketeer never appeared in the "air stories" Pulp magazines but was designed – and has been consistently portrayed – as a

hero from the Pulp Era. The Pulp atmosphere was also emphasized when Disney/Touchstone produced a film version set in 1938 Los Angeles: *The Rocketeer* (1991), with Billy Campbell in the title role.

I think I picked up this anthology in the dealer's room at a sci-fi convention. It contains 10 short stories set in the years 1939 to 1946, featuring adventures of Cliff Secord (The Rocketeer) and his friends and associates. The action takes place in all sorts of exotic locales: Catalina Island (off the coast of Los Angeles), the deserts of Arizona, a hidden valley in the Himalayas, islands in the Caribbean, Burmese jungles, and a Hollywood movie lot – in addition to various less-than-exotic places in and around Southern California. There are battles against Nazi spies and undercover agents, mad scientists (and their monsters), cross-dimensional invaders, supernatural entities, and criminal gangs. Many of the stories even feature appearances by historic figures from the '30s and '40s, such as Howard Hughes, Hedy Lamarr, Johnny Weissmuller, Zane Grey, and Claire Chennault – as well as a special appearance by two of Doc Savage's "Fabulous Five" side-kicks.

Maybe one of the things that got me to buy the anthology is the fact that I recognized the names of a couple of my favorite authors as contributors: Nancy A. Collins and Nancy Holder. Like the stories in the Captain Midnight anthology, the quality of the stories in this anthology are (um) "variable" – but they all successfully evoke the time period in which they're set. Some of 'em are a lot of fun. And it certainly didn't hurt my enjoyment that I could visualize actor Billy Campbell as the title character.

Once again, if you're up for some light entertainment – and if you're feeling a bit nostalgic – give *The Rocketeer: Jet-Pack Adventures* a try.



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**** 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-generated (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. Due to renewed Coronavirus concerns, the Lambda Sci-Fi meeting for Sunday, February 13th, will be held virtually via Zoom. We'll keep you informed of the status of future meetings.

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 1-4, 2022 **COSTUME CON 40 ("Rogues, Royals, and Renegades")**. North Bethesda Marriott Hotel and Convention Center (Rockville MD). Membership: \$95 for full attending membership. On-line registration: <http://costume-con40.org/shop/>
Webpage: <https://costume-con40.org/>

April 29 – May 1, 2022 **RAVENCON 15**. Virginia Crossings Hotel by Hilton (Richmond VA). GoH: Terry Brooks; Music GoH: Rhiannon's Lark. Membership: \$40 before 4/5/2022; \$50 at the door; day badges available.
Webpage: <https://ravencon.com> On-line registration at: <https://ravencon.com/store/Registration-c23522469>

May 27-30, 2022 **BALTICON 56**. Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel (Baltimore MD). GoH: Nancy Springer; Artist GoH: Odera Igbokwe; Special Guests: Seanan McGuire, Wen Spencer, CJ Cherryh.
Membership rates not yet announced. On-line registration at: <https://www.balticon.org/wp56/registration/>
Webpage: <https://www.balticon.org/wp56/> E-mail at: balticoninfo@balticon.org

July 15-17, 2022 **SHORE LEAVE 42**. Delta Hotels Baltimore Hunt Valley (Hunt Valley MD). Guests: Brandon Routh (Superman/Clark Kent, Ray Palmer/Atom); Adam Baldwin (Jayne, *Firefly*), Jewel Staite (Kaylee, *Firefly*), and others. Weekend membership: \$105; daily rates available. Web page: www.shore-leave.com

Sept. 30 – Oct. 2, 2022 **CAPCLAVE 2022**. Hilton Washington DC/Rockville Hotel & Executive Meeting Center (Rockville MD). GoHs: Ursula Vernon, Irene Gallo. Membership: \$55 thru May 31st; \$60 from June 1st to Aug. 31st; \$65 from Sept. 1st to Sept. 15th. On-line registration at: <https://www.capclave.org/capclave/capclave22/registration.php>
Webpage: <https://www.capclave.org> Info at: info@capclave.org



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Happy Valentine's Day to everybody at Lambda Sci-Fi!
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