



PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044 - (301) 445-5650 - Issue #21 - January 1992

VIDEO MADNESS! December Meeting Notes by Loree Cook-Daniels

The December meeting was moved to a Saturday and to Jaime's house, where we proceeded to take over everything -- every inch of the living room, every inch of the kitchen and dining room, and most inches of the upstairs "viewing room" and the back porch. Wow! Lots of people!

Of course, before we could dig into either the goodies or the videos, we had to conduct BUSINESS:

GAYLAXICON UPDATE

Carl passed around pictures of the lovely Guest Quarters we'll be staying at and informed us that negotiations with Tristan for a new picture for the T-shirts are going smoothly. Linton said that he would be willing to sell any chapter member's memorabilia at his book dealership.

COMICS NEWS

Northstar will finally come out in *Alpha Flight* #106. This is a comic about Canadian superheroes under the Marvel label. John Dennis, a "friend" of continued on page 3

LSF AND THE TREK LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN

an explanation by Carl Cipra

A misunderstanding has arisen regarding Lambda Sci-Fi's stand on the letter writing campaign to get a gay/lesbian character (or characters) included into "Star Trek: The Next Generation." Two individuals that I know of believed (or still believe) that LSF no longer supports this effort; and I don't know if this misunderstanding is more widespread. Since this misunderstanding was apparently sparked by an article in last month's newsletter, I feel that it is incumbent upon me (as current newsletter editor) to try and clear things up.

First of all, however, let me state that the membership of continued on page 2

SECOND ANNUAL LSF BOOK EXCHANGE

At the upcoming January 12th meeting, all LSF members are invited to participate in a "blind book exchange." In case you missed (or weren't around for) the first one, here's how it works:

First, go out and purchase a copy of a "favorite" science-fiction or fantasy book. It can be either new or used, your choice. If the book is part of a series, then pick the "best" one from the series. (Or, if you're feeling particularly affluent, give the whole series!) I suppose your contribution could even be a hardback; but I suggest that only paperbacks be given.

Next, insert a piece of paper with your name on it. This is an important step. That continued on page 4

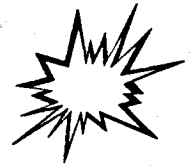
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**THE BUNNY BOOK:
A NOVEL FOR ANYONE WHO BELIEVES LIFE AND DEATH
ARE, AFTER ALL, A WONDER**

By John D'Hondt. GLB Publishers, San Francisco, 1991. \$11.95.



Reviewed by Loree Cook-Daniels

You know how some books seem made for summer beach reading, when you're lying in the hot sun and want to transport yourself into another world? *The Bunny Book* is just the opposite. It's made for reading on a cold night, when you're wrapped in something soft and warm and drinking something hot and smooth. To borrow one of the bunnies' favorite words, it's best read when you're feeling "cozy" and willing to abandon yourself to strange mysteries that are best contemplated in the rich, dark quiet of night.

The Bunny Book was conceived by Peter and John. Because I know and love these men, reading the parts of the book that evoke their apartment, their haunts, and Peter's dying were particularly bittersweet. By the time Peter was really sick, I was 3,000 miles away and our primary link was already gone. So I was spared, until now, the details of how it was. Yet even these painful parts of *The Bunny Book* are suffused with the hope and meaning that John found in his relationship with Peter and the bunnies, and in the mysteries and understandings these connections brought

them.

John and Peter's stories are interwoven with the stories of Rosemary, her daughter, her aunt, and her friends -- all of whom, like Peter and John -- are touched in various ways by the bunnies. Rosemary meets the bunnies after she gets into an auto accident and literally stumbles across their city. She is both transformed and confused by her experience, and tries to share it with her relatives and friends. Their disbelief and condescension make it difficult for Rosemary, but perhaps that is to be expected. After all, isn't a transformative experience, by its very nature, something that is so profound and uniquely meaningful that it is difficult to explain to someone else? By the end of the book, though, it's clear that the bunnies have had an impact, one way or another, on everyone who has come into contact with them.

John (it's impossible for me to call him by his last name or the even-more-distancing phrase "the author") uses the passages about Peter, memories from his own childhood, the stories about Rosemary and her circle, illustrations, and asides to "Dear Reader" as conduits for

information about bunnies as much as he uses them to advance storylines and evoke moods. Much of the information is factual, drawn from research into mythology, history, and anthropology. These explorations of humans' relationships with rabbits and hares cumulatively present a picture of profound connection between human and bunny that is simultaneously compelling, scary, and wonderful. Like the book itself.

The Bunny Book is not for someone who wants logic and coherence. It jumps from story to story, from one perspective to a completely different one. It mixes fact with fantasy, and things that make sense with things that don't. It tells us things we want to hear and things we don't. It is, in short, itself a metaphor for the mysterious, confusing wonder that is life and death.

Curl up in a soft chair and read this book. At worst, you'll never think of bunnies in quite the same way again. At best, you'll never think of life and death in quite the same way again. It's a gamble worth taking.

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LSF and Star Trek

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Lambda Sci-Fi has always supported and continues to support the Star Trek letter writing campaign. Several LSF members have contributed (and continue to contribute) their own

time, money, and effort to this important cause. With that said, let me review the facts:

Back in October, 1991, LSF received the first issue of GNAPA (the Network Board newsletter), which included a request for chapter input on several items of business affecting

the Network as a whole. One of these items was: "c. Dealing with the Star Trek Letter Writing Campaign. The Transitional Coordinators endorsed the campaign, but have basically considered it to be a GI [Gay-laxians International] function continued on page 4

DECEMBER MINUTES

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LSF, has been signed to be the artist for a Wonder Woman comic book -- congrats, John!

INFO BITS

Arnold Schwarznegger (I think that's probably spelled wrong, but ask me if I care if I misspell ol' Arnie's name) will supposedly save Superman in the next movie.

"Swords & Sorcery" is the theme of the art show running at Georgetown's "Worlds of Wonder" fine-art shoppe through December 28th.

Carl picked up a questionnaire at a recent Con that is entitled "Culture and Folklore of SF Convention Fandom." If you want to participate in this survey, Carl will make you a copy.

Isaac Asimov, it was reported, now has congestive heart failure and has severely cut back on his writing.

Our new member Mel is interested in starting a week-night role-playing group in Dupont Circle. Among his interests: the Star Trek role playing game and AD&D. If you're interested, call him directly at (202) 232-5315.

NETWORK NEWS

Carl passed around newsletters from the Philadelphia, Southern California, and Albany (NY) chapters. He noted, however, that the last two LSF newsletters sent to the New Orleans chapter have been returned unclaimed. A moment

of silence for the passing of a chapter, please....

The Gaylaxicon symbol now legally belongs to the Network.

Carl reported that our last newsletter about our vote on financially supporting the "ST:TNG gay crewmember campaign" caused some concern with Frank Hummel and a LSF member who was not present at the meeting. Carl reviewed the language of the original motion, the discussion that took place last meeting, the LSF chapter's many involvements in this campaign, and his attempted responses to Frank and the other LSF member. Chapter members agreed that aside from a response Carl will write in the January newsletter, no further action was necessary.

On a possibly related note, we heard that Richard Arnold -- the closeted gay man who has been the biggest (at least publicly) roadblock to getting gays on ST:TNG -- has been laid off. However, it was noted that he had been fired and then quickly rehired before. Stay tuned for further developments.

CHAPTER BUSINESS

The NAMES Quilt will be shown IN FULL in D.C. on October 9-11, 1992. 4,500 volunteers will be needed, and LSFers discussed whether we should volunteer as a group. This will be discussed further closer to the time.

It was suggested that we put the words "Lambda Sci Fi"

around the Gaylaxicon symbol and do T-shirts for club members. I believe this idea was also tabled for later consideration. (People were beginning to get hungry about this time.)

We agreed to do another book exchange at the January meeting, and Carl stated he'd include the details in the January newsletter. We also decided to return to Jim's apartment (our "regular" Dupont Circle site) for the January 12th meeting, and finally it was time to...

EAT! Which we did, with great relish, lots and lots of goodies. And then we...

VOTED on which of dozens and dozens (well, it SEEMED like that many when I was trying to write them all down!) tapes we would watch. We finally decided not only which ones to watch, but in which order on which floor! Here's what we watched:

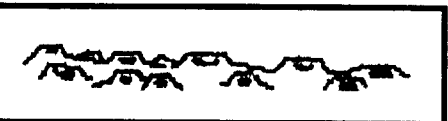
For Openers

1. A short filmclip from the David Letterman Show, featuring George Takei, Chris Elliott, and David Letterman
2. The ST:TNG "blooper reel"

Downstairs

1. "Spectre" (an unsold Gene Roddenberry pilot)
2. "It, the Terror from Beyond Space"

continued on page 4



DECEMBER MINUTES

continued from page 3

Upstairs

1. "Overdrawn at the Memory Bank"
- 2.. "Fantastic Planet"

The Grand Finale

"Curse of the Queerwolf"

A good time was had by all! Thanks, Jaime, for your wonderful hospitality and for doing all that clean-up for us!

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LSF BOOK EXCHANGE

continued from page 1

way, whoever gets the book in the exchange will know whose "favorite" it is; and the giver and receiver will get to know each other a little better.

Finally, wrap up the book. (Since it's just after the Holidays, you should still have plenty of left-over wrapping paper lying around.) But don't put any identifying marks or anything on it to say who it's from. (This is the "blind" part.)

At the meeting, all the wrapped books will be piled up together; and everyone who brings in a book to exchange will be assigned a number. Later, one by one, the assigned numbers will be drawn and the participants will pick one of the packages from the pile.

And there you have it: a "blind book exchange." (Afterwards, I suppose you can even do some unofficial swapping around if you've already read the book you chose.)

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LSF and Star Trek

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with Frank Hummel as contact person. Do we wish to do more, personally or financially?"

This item of business (along with all the others) was discussed and voted on by the 30 or so LSF members who attended the November 10th meeting. The following points were raised during the discussion leading up to the vote:

(a) Lambda Sci-Fi barely has sufficient funds to support its own newsletter costs at present (especially with the additional cost of annual Network dues, payable this January).

(b) The Network doesn't appear financially stable enough to spend funds in support of the letter writing campaign either. The Transitional Coordinators already have a backlog of unpaid Network bills; and the need for incorporating the Network will require an additional major

expenditure in the near future.

(c) There was some dissatisfaction expressed about the Network and the Affiliates being expected to help pay the bills for an activity begun by a person who didn't consult anyone else when he began it.

Lambda Sci-Fi's response was reported to the Transitional Coordinators in a letter dated 11/12/91: "No, this chapter does not wish 'to do more, personally or financially.'" In other words, the LSF membership voted that they are unwilling to put LSF's limited financial resources into the letter writing campaign and that they do not feel that the Gaylactic Network's limited financial resources should be committed either. The vote was overwhelmingly in favor of this decision.

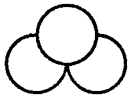
The LSF newsletter (issue #20, "November Minutes") reported the vote as follows: "We also voted . . . not to

continue to support the Star Trek letter writing campaign 'personally or financially' . . ." When the controversy came to my attention and I re-read the article, I was certainly able to understand how someone who wasn't present at the November meeting could misinterpret LSF's position. (And it should be noted that neither of the two individuals cited in the opening paragraph of this article attended the November LSF meeting.)

I hope this present article will serve to clear up any misunderstanding; and I sincerely apologize for any controversy caused by my not having edited that newsletter item more carefully. (If such a situation ever arises again, I also hope that individuals with concerns about newsletter articles will attempt to get an explanation before they raise a ruckus.)

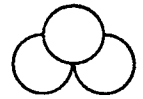
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IS IT GAY, SCIENCE FICTION, OR GAY SCIENCE FICTION?

Mirage by Perry Brass (reviewed by Randy Hagan)



On the distant planet Ki, humanity is divided into three parts. First there are the all-male, gay Dark Men -- also known as Same-Sexers. The narrator and his mate come from this group. Next, there are the straight and violent Off-Sexers. Finally, there are the priestesses of the planet's goddess, Ki. They serve as, among other things, the intermediaries between the other two groups, resolving conflicts that may arise.

During the "honeymoon" of a pair of Same-Sexers -- the book's main characters -- an Off-Sexer is inadvertently killed. The ensuing diplomatic crisis forces the two of them to travel to present-day Earth in search of a person to bring back to Ki to serve as a surrogate in their punishment for the murder. Since their Terran quest places them in present-day gay life in New York City and Washington, DC, Brass has plenty of opportunities to make observations about what it's like being gay in those cities.

Unfortunately, as interesting as these observations might be, they weaken the story. The author keeps shifting the focus of the book. First, it's about the search by the couple Greeland and Enkidu for a replacement. Suddenly, the experiences Enkidu has are used as

a way to comment on living gay today. Then, repeated expositions by Enkidu about his passion for Greeland are brought into the story. Individually, any could have been the main focus for a book. Together, they elbow each other for the reader's attention.

It's difficult to off-handedly dismiss *Mirage*. Brass seems so serious and sincere about telling the story. He even includes quirky bits of information, such as the fact that the alien pair live in a building that was once a funeral home. Details like that may work in post-Brautigan neo-fiction; but, when it comes to science fiction, the story itself must be the main focus. Storytelling technique is more important than, and different from, literary technique.

It's fair to suspect the story began with the idea of gay aliens trying to understand East Coast gay male culture. It must have seemed like a wonderful way for Brass to comment on things around him. But the book ends up trying to be more than it can be -- social observation/satire, a tale of a quest motivated by passionate love and, too much in passing, a visit to an alien society. Brass focuses well enough when the story is called to be just one or another of these

things, but they don't mesh as smoothly as they might have with a little more explanation.

Oddly, the scenes on Ki are more interesting and satisfying than the ones on Earth, seeming to have more potential for the sense of brave wonder so vital to science fiction. There are not just some potentially interesting characters to get to know, but a whole world to explore. Make no mistake, some good, always-necessary details are included; but there's no real depth to what we're shown on Ki.

As a diversion, *Mirage* is fine. Enkidu's passion for Greeland keeps the reader interested in whether the quest will be successful. But, in trying so hard to be so many things, a reader who is intrigued by only one aspect or another of the story will soon grow impatient with the slippery focus of the book. That's unfortunate. If a single main focus had been chosen and kept to, it might have been great.

More by Brass would be welcome, but only if he's willing to let the story relate itself to the reader, only if he's willing to truly let his creativity loose, instead of keeping it on a too-short leash.

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** INFORMATION ABOUT LAMBDA SCI-FI: DC AREA GAYLAXIANS **

Lambda Sci-Fi is a Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror fan club for Gay people and their friends. Annual membership fees are \$10, for which you will receive this monthly newsletter and a membership directory. Newsletter submissions are always welcome.

Meetings are held on the second Sunday of each month at a private residence. The next Lambda Sci-Fi meeting will be held at 2:00 PM on Sunday, Jan. 12th, at Jim C.'s apartment: 1414 17th St., NW, #14 (near Dupont Circle). Please bring some munchies or soft drinks if you can. (If you want to participate in the book exchange, see instructions in the article elsewhere in this newsletter.) 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.



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Con Calendar
 by Carl, Peter, and Noel



January 3-5, 1992 **EVECON 9**: Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza National Airport (Arlington, VA). Features gaming (including live action games), workshops, and panels. Cost is \$20 until December 14, 1991, and \$25 at the door. Room rate is "\$75 one bed, \$85 two beds." Make checks payable to "FanTek" and send to: FanTek, 1607 Thomas Road, Ft. Washington, MD 20744.

March 13-15, 1991 **DEMICON 3**: Holiday Inn Chesapeake House (Aberdeen, MD). This is a convention "designed for people who are into role-playing games and wargames." Cost is \$16 until February 15, 1992 and \$20 at the door. Room rate is \$69 for one occupant and \$10 more for each additional occupant. Make checks payable to "Harford Adventure Society" and send to: Harford Adventure Society, c/o The Strategic Castle, 114 N. Toll Gate Road, Bel Air, MD 21014.

April 17-19, 1992 **BALTICON 26**: Hunt Valley Inn (Hunt Valley, MD). Guests: Donald Kingsbury, Christopher Rowley, David R. Palmer, Shiela Finch, Thomas T. Thomas, Christopher Hinz, Elizabeth Moon, Josepha Sherman, Michael F. Flynn (the past nine Compton Crook Award winners for the "best new novelist of the year"); Featured Artist: Guy Frechette. Cost is \$25 until December 31, 1991, and \$27.50 until March 15, 1992. Make checks payable to "Balticon 26" and send to: BSFS, Box 686, Baltimore, MD 21203. Hotel rooms cost \$74 per nite for up to four people in a room.

July 17-19, 1992 **GAYLAXICON IV**: Guest Quarters Hotel (Philadelphia, PA). Guest of Honor: Tanya Huff; Artist Guest of Honor: Tristan Alexander. Cost is \$15 through December 31, 1991, \$20 through April 30, 1992, \$25 through June 30, 1992, \$30 at the door. Make checks payable to "Gaylaxicon IV" and send to: Gaylaxicon IV, PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044.

August 14-16, 1992 **TREKCON '92**: Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza (Rockville, MD). A Trek/fantasy/sci-fi/media con. Guests: James Doohan ("Scotty"), John deLancie ("Q"), William Campbell ("Trelane"), Robin Curtis ("Saavik"), Marc Okrand (Klingon linguist). Cost is \$32 for weekend pass, \$16 for daily pass. Make checks payable to "TrekCon '92" and send to: TrekCon '92, PO Box 211, Burtonsville, MD 20866.

September 3-7, 1992 **MAGICON**, the 50th World Science Fiction Convention: Orange County Convention and Civic Center and Peabody, Clarion, and Quality Inn Plaza Hotels (Orlando, FL). Guests of Honor: Jack Vance and Vincent DiFate. Toastmaster: Spider Robinson. Cost (attending) is \$95 until March 31, 1992 and \$110 until July 15, 1992. Make checks payable to "MagiCon" and send to: MagiCon, PO Box 621992, Orlando, FL 32862-1992.

November 13-15, 1992 **PHILCON '92**: The Adam's Mark Hotel (Philadelphia, PA). Principal Speaker: Greg Bear, Guest Artist: Boris Vallejo. Cost is \$20.

September 2-6, 1993 **CONFRANCISCO**, the 51st World Science Fiction Convention: Moscone Convention Center (San Francisco, CA). Guest of Honor: Larry Niven; Artist Guest of Honor: Alicia Austin. Cost (attending) is \$70 through December 31, 1991, \$85 after December 31, 1991; and cost will rise appreciably after that. Hotels will be announced in upcoming progress reports. Make checks payable to "ConFrancisco" and send to: ConFrancisco Registration, 712 Bancroft Road, Ste. 1993, Walnut Creek, CA 94598.

