



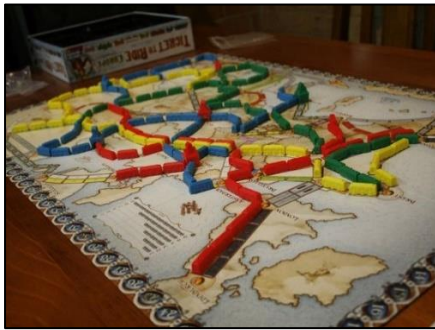
Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 408 – March 2024

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LSF Tabletop Gaming Party March 16, 2024

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

When: Saturday, March 16; 2:00 PM to 11:00 PM or so.

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



Dinner: For those who are interested, we'll order pizza for dinner. To get in on the pizza order, please bring \$10 in exact change. 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.

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: <https://www.lambdascifi.org/peterrob>

Questions: Contact Peter at: peter@lambdascifi.org

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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 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. The next book discussion will be held in person on March 28th.

Here are the details for the next couple of discussions:

March 28, 2024 – *The House in the Cerulean Sea*, by TJ Klune (moderator: Zena).

April 25, 2024 – *The Caledonian Gambit*, by Dan Moren (moderator: Tim).



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***** March 10, 2024 Meeting *****

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, March 10th**. 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, followed by gaming at 3:00 PM. Hope to see you there!



What's Inside?

Page 2: Minutes of the February 2024 LSF Meeting.

Page 3: *Gunfight on Europa Station* (book review).

Page 4: Info About Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians and Con Calendar; Life on Mimas?

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



LAMBDA SCI-FI IS 34 YEARS OLD!!!



First meeting: March 14, 1990

At the second meeting (April 11), members decided to call the club Lambda Sci-Fi, based on the newsletter name suggested by Al Weiner (first newsletter editor).

Minutes of the February 2024 LSF Meeting taken by Scott

Film News

Andy described travelling out to the Udvar-Hazy Center to see *Dune Part 1*, in preparation for the *Dune Part 2* movie opening on March 2nd. Everyone chuckled over the *Saturday Night Live* skit about the *Dune* popcorn box. Kurt Russell and his son Wyatt Russell star in *Monarch: Legacy Monsters* in the MonsterVerse franchise. Jim loved the black-and-white version of *Godzilla Minus One*.

Teresa described the movie *Lisa Frankenstein*. Here is the plot summary: "A misunderstood teenager and a reanimated Victorian corpse embark on a murderous journey together to find love, happiness, and a few missing body parts." The Chinese language version of the *Three Body Problem* is available; the English language version will be available soon.

David described an upcoming genre film by Bong Joon-Ho titled *Mickey 17*. It's based upon the Edward Ashton novel *Mickey 7*. The plot: a disposable employee on a human expedition is sent to colonize an ice world. After one iteration dies, a new body is regenerated with most of his memories intact.

TV News

The HBOMax series *True Detective* (Season 4) includes Lovecraftian themes.



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Other News

Andy is enjoying the good digital special effects of the *Halo* series. Carl passed around the current issue of *The Advocate*, which features with *Star Trek* actor George Takei and his husband on the cover and includes a delightfully-illustrated article about them. Carl also passed around a newspaper article on comic book industry's Todd McFarlane and his collection of genre-related memorabilia. LSFers Peter and David are off to attend the Gallifrey convention. Carl described genre author Ben Bova's second posthumously-published novel: *Sam Gunn Junior*. Rob reported that genre author Joan Slonczewski has a new book coming out.

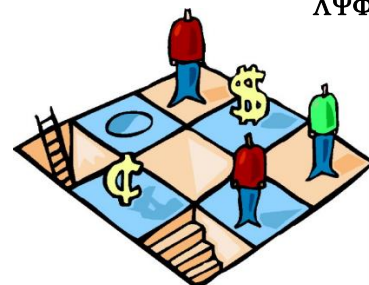
There was discussion about the current Hugo Awards controversy. In January, the Hugo Awards released information about the awards issued in 2023. Controversy ensued as it was revealed that some authors received enough preliminary votes to be nominated for major categories, but were ruled "ineligible" by Hugo Awards officials without explanation. Indications are that the Chinese government was involved with these decisions.

Upcoming LSF Events

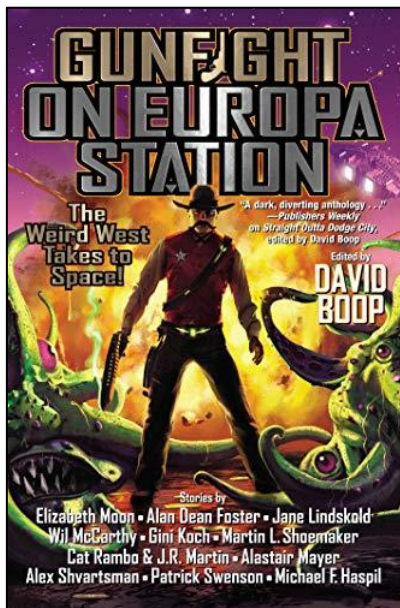
Book discussions: *The Space Between Worlds* by Micaiah Johnson (February); *The House in the Cerulean Sea* by TJ Klune (March).

An LSF Gaming Party will be held on Saturday, March 16.

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Gunfight on Europa Station
 edited by David Boop
 (Baen Books, 2022)



Western themes and sci-fi themes can mesh together well. If you have any doubts about this, I ask you to consider the following: the TV series *Firefly*; the animè series *Cowboy Bebop*; and the 1981 movie *Outland* (starring Sean Connery, a near-future space thriller based on *High Noon*, the classic 1952 Western).

I stumbled across *Gunfight on Europa Station* while wandering around in Amazon.com. I'd read three similar Baen anthologies edited by David Boop: *Straight Outta Tombstone* (2017), *Straight Outta Deadwood* (2019), and *Straight Outta Dodge City* (2020). They're all "Weird Western" anthologies that combine American Wild West themes with Fantasy, Dark Fantasy, Science Fiction, and Horror stories. I enjoyed all three anthologies, so I figured this anthology would probably provide a good read, too. And it does!

Unlike Boop's previous anthologies, all the stories in *Gunfight on Europa Station* are located firmly in the "space opera" sub-genre. (Combining "space opera" and "horse opera" ... hmmm.) But don't let the cover fool you; most of the stories are *not* about wild-and-woolly gunslingers on alien

planets. The only exception is the final story in the anthology: Wil McCarthy's "Doc Holiday 2.0" features a reconstituted version of the famous Tombstone gunfighter (*and* Wyatt Earp) on a mining planet somewhere out there. But all the stories in the anthology *do* effectively include some version of "the frontier mentality" with "outer space" settings. And I must say that the quality of these dozen stories is pretty consistent; I found it difficult to decide on just a *few* favorites.

"The Penultimate Stand on Pina Gracchi" by Michael F. Haspil is an action-packed story about a new group of mercenaries ("hired guns") hired to supplement local security forces and break up an "uprising" by miners – but they determine that the miners do in fact have legitimate gripes against the mining company, and it's obvious that the local security forces are full of trigger-happy thugs. It was impossible to avoid comparisons with the use of the Pinkerton Agency to break up miners' strikes in the U.S.

"Showdown on Big Rock 27" by Anita Ensal (aka Gini Koch) is another action-packed story. It's a story about the overworked and outnumbered crew of a Galactic Police ship attempting to help a family of asteroid wranglers fight off murderous claim jumpers out in the Asteroid Belt.

In Alan Dean Foster's "Hydration," a prospector (of sorts) has crashed her crawler out in the deserts of Nonus III and runs across alien life forms that could either save her life – or suck her dry.

I think that Alex Shvartsman's "Winner Takes All" strays furthest from the "Western" theme – but it's still a *really* entertaining story! A special team of secret Commonwealth operatives – and an accountant – are sent to a non-Commonwealth planet to track down and capture "the Lady," an AI terrorist and the most wanted criminal in the Commonwealth. What a hoot! And a great surprise ending!

In "Riding Out the Storm" by Martin L. Shoemaker, a lawman and his assistant are sent into the Martian outback on Mars to bring a murderous cri-

iminal mastermind back for trial. But a massive dust storm traps them in a remote research facility. Deaths, mysteries, and escapes ensue.

Claim-jumping, suborned legal officials, and suspicious deaths drive the action in Jane Lindskold's "Claim Jumped." Will an innocent man uncover the truth before he's convicted of crimes he didn't commit?

Editor David Boop has put together yet another anthology of highly entertaining stories; and if you want a really good read. I can definitely recommend the stories in *Gunfight on Europa Station*.

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Thousands of men have spun a trail of daring adventure and pioneering in the spaceways. There are statues in virtually every park on the planet dedicated to their truly magnificent achievements. Statues of rugged men, with set chins and purposeful eyes. Pioneers who blasted open the greatest frontier of them all, so you cannot blame us if doggedly we persist in revering their magic names, to honor their memories.

- Sam Moskowitz,
 "Man of the Stars" (1941)

Up here [in space], you're free. Really free, for the first time in your life. All the laws and rules and prejudices they've been dumping on you all your life... they're all *down there*. Up here it's a new start. You can be yourself and do your own thing... and nobody can tell you different.

- Ben Bova,
 "Zero Gee" (1972)

Quotes from
Science Fiction Quotations: From the Inner Mind to the Outer Limits
 edited by Gary Westfahl
 (Yale University Press, 2005)

* * Con Calendar * * by Carl

March 22-24, 2024 **OUTLANTACON/GAYLAXICON 2024** (“Atlanta’s LGBTQ+ convention for Sci-fi, Pop Culture, Multimedia & Gaming!”). Atlanta Marriott Northeast/Emory Area (Atlanta GA). Weekend membership: \$60 (purchase on-line at the website). Website: <https://outlantacon.org>

May 24-27, 2024 **BALTICON 58**. Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel (Baltimore MD). Guest of Honor: L.E. Modesitt Jr; Music GoH: Rhiannon’s Lark; Editor GoH: Sheila Williams; Artist GoH: Omar Rayyan. More info to be announced. Website: <https://www.balticon.org/> E-mail: balticoninfo@balticon.org

Aug. 1-4, 2024 **PULPFEST 2024**. “Celebrating Mystery, Adventure, Science Fiction, and More.” DoubleTree by Hilton Pittsburgh-Cranberry (Mars PA, 19 miles north of Pittsburgh). Weekend (\$40 if you stay at the DoubleTree, \$50 if you stay elsewhere) and single-day memberships available. Website: www.PulpFest.com On-line membership via: <https://pulpfest.com/plpfest-paypal/>

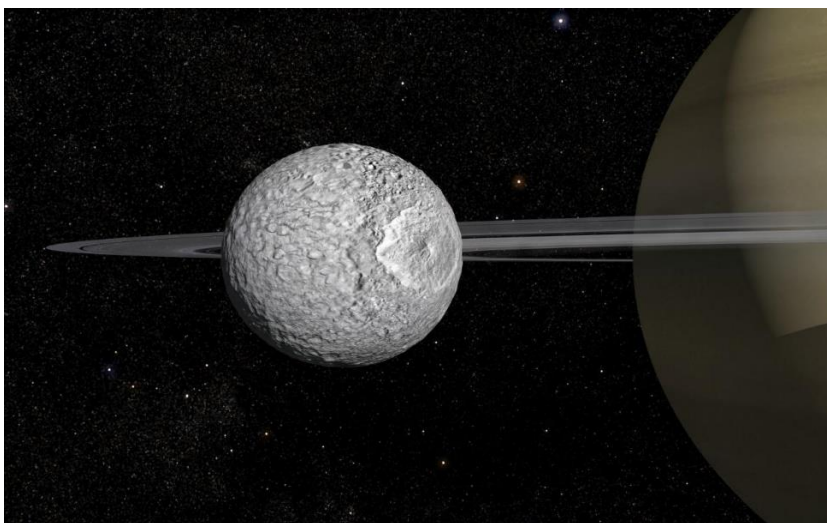
Sept. 27-29, 2024 **CAPCLAVE 2024**. Rockville Hilton (Rockville MD). Guests of Honor: Sheree Renee Thomas; Matt Diniman. Membership: \$55 from Jan to May 2024; \$60 from June to July 2024; \$65 from Aug to Sept 2024; \$70 at the door. Website: www.capclave.org Info: info@capclave.org

Life on Mimas?

info passed along by Carl

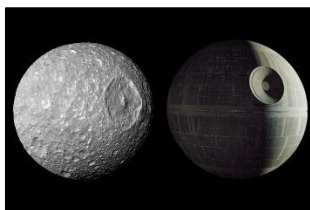
Mimas is the innermost moon of Saturn; it’s small (a little less than 350 miles in diameter) and roughly spherical in shape. Mimas was discovered in 1789 by the British-German astronomer William Herschel; and it was previously assumed to be a ball composed of frozen ice and a small amount of rock. But a study published in the journal *Nature* notes that its orbital irregularities suggest that it contains a liquid ocean some 20 miles beneath its surface – *and* that the temperature on the sea floor could be warm enough to sustain life.

Dr. Valery Lainey (Observatoire de Paris; one of the authors of the study) says that the eccentric orbit of Mimas, coupled with tidal friction, is believed to create enough heat to keep the ocean in a liquid state and that the ocean floor might even be warm enough for life to survive beneath the icy crust. “At least we know that the Mimas sea floor, where water is in contact with the rocky core, has a temperature of few to several tens of Celsius degrees. A good start for life development potentially.” It also suggests that more moons in the Solar System (such as the mid-sized icy moons of Uranus) could be potential locations for extraterrestrial life.



Mimas – “Death Star Moon” of Saturn

It’s interesting to note that Mimas has been dubbed the “Death Star moon.” Its surface features the oversized impact crater Herschel, which is about 86 miles across (about one third the size of the moon’s diameter). And this certainly makes it look like the famed Death Star from the first *Star Wars* film (Episode IV: A New Hope).



Saturn as Seen from Mimas, by Chesley Bonestell (1943)

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