



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians

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F&SF at the Oscars info passed along by Carl

Just thought I'd comment on the F&SF (and "F&SF adjacent") films that won Academy Awards at this year's Oscar ceremony.

The big winner was *Oppenheimer* – it's what I consider "F&SF adjacent." It won Best Picture, Best Actor (Cillian Murphy), Best Supporting Actor (Robert Downey Jr), Best Film Editing, Best Cinematography, Best Original Score, and Best Director (Christopher Nolan).

Poor Things won Best Actress (Emma Stone), Best Makeup and Hairstyling, Best Production Design, and Best Costume Design.

The Boy and the Heron won Best Animated Feature Film.

Godzilla Minus One won Best Visual Effects.

Barbie won Best Original Song ("What Was I Made For"). Interesting to note that the other nominees for this category included another song from the same film: "I'm Just Ken."

And, of course, how could I avoid mentioning John Cena's (mostly) nude appearance to announce the winner



for the Best Costuming category? Yowzah! F&SF connection? Yes, indeed, due to Cena's roles in *The Suicide Squad* (2021) and the HBO Max 2022 series *Peacemaker*. $\Lambda\Psi\Phi$

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 April 25th.

Here are the details for the next several discussions:

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

May 23 – *Spinning Silver*, by Naomi Novik (moderator: Zena).

June 27 – TBD.

July 25 – *The City We Became*, by N K Jemisin (moderator: Zena). $\Lambda\Psi\Phi$



***** April 14, 2024 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, followed by gaming at 3:00 PM. Hope to see you there!



What's Inside?

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From the *Doctor Who* Gay Fans Group! on Facebook

info passed along by Peter

Question: My partner (casual *Dr Who* watcher) asked me why there appears to be such a large proportion of *Dr Who* fans who are gay. So I thought I'd go to the source and ask you all what about the show appeals to you through the lens of gay culture/experience. I have my own answer, but wanted a broader sample of opinions. 😊

My Answer: I started watching the (Tom Baker) *Doctor Who* in 1978 when I was 13. I was deeply closeted but at the same time picked on in middle school for being a 'fag.'



Doctor Who is the outsider who is the hero. This is often true in science fiction, which is why there are a lot of queer fans of science fiction, fantasy, and horror.

The weekly Saturday morning episodes of *Doctor Who* showed me a world with an asexual male hero who often helped the downtrodden and the underdogs. In a society repeatedly showing me images of heterosexuality, it was refreshing watching a show where the hero didn't kiss or sleep with the girl. While the Doctor was not a gay role model, he was not a straight role model; and in a world of Captain Kirks and Commander Koenigs that was refreshing and appealing.

Minutes of the March LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

Movie News

Rob showed a creepy video of Josh Brolin reading a poem to his *Dune 2* co-star Timothee Chalamet. [Ed. Note: Check it out: [out: Bing Videos](#)]

There was an extensive discussion about the new *Dune 2* movie. "Beautiful desert scenes with zero depth." The Giedi Prime scenes were filmed in infrared; and Karl said it reminded him of the Nazi Nuremberg rallies. A big question – why was there no Navigator from the Spacing Guild in the movie?

There is universal agreement that the *Madam Web* movie is horrible.

Peter cited upcoming genre movies, including: *Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire* and *Godzilla x Kong*.

TV News

Regarding *The Three-Body Problem* (Netflix) – if you couldn't finish reading the books by Liu Cixin, then watching the movie might help. Andy stopped watching Apple TV's thriller series *Constellation*. Rob is watching Max's series *The Regime*, about an alternate-history modern European authoritarian regime.



The modern incarnation of the show was rebooted by an icon in the queer media community, Russel T. Davies. He added queer sensibility – and content – to the show. Captain Jack Harkness, an openly queer character, was introduced in the ninth episode of the modern series and became a recurring character.

Before the 2005 reboot of *Doctor Who*, I don't think there was any mainstream science fiction media with major explicit queer characters. (1994's *Babylon 5*'s Commander Susan Androvna Ivanova was a lesbian, which was revealed in a blink-and-you-miss-it scene in the 1995 episode "Divided Loyalties.") It was amazing and exciting and helped solidify my love of the new show.

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There was a discussion of James Cawley of the fan film series *Star Trek: New Voyages* and his museum in Ticonderoga NY (yes, as in *USS Ticonderoga*), and his licensing conflicts with Paramount Pictures.

Have you watched the animated *Nimona* comedy/drama film on Netflix? The LSF book club read the first book in the series.

Other News

Andy and Jim discussed "the Volume," which enables 360-degree live visual effects and real-time adjustments, streamlining the post-production process – a vast improvement over green screen production. The Volume has been used in *The Mandalorian* series and *Star Trek: Discovery*. They also expressed how much they've enjoyed the Disney+ documentary series *Light & Magic*.

Rob described his new "Wyrmspan" game, which is a spinoff of the "Wingspan" game. He plans to run a session of "Wyrmspan" at the upcoming LSF gaming party.

Carl described the Chilean beer ad for Cervesa Cristal that was added to the *Star Wars* movie without permission. [Ed. Note: See for yourself at [ALL STAR WARS CHILE BEER ADS - YouTube](#)]

Rob reviewed the upcoming LSF events. Book discussion: *The House in the Cerulean Sea* by TJ Klune (March); *The Caledonian Gambit* by Dan Moren (April). There will be an LSF Gaming Party on Saturday, March 6th.

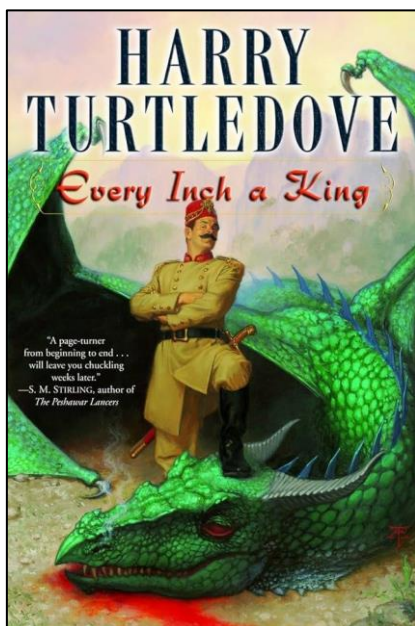
Then Carl brought out a small custard pie with candles to honor LSF's 34 years of existence. Three founding members of the club were present (Peter, Carl, and Jim W).

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Photo courtesy of Wess

Every Inch a King
 by Harry Turtledove
 (Ballantine Books, 2007)
 reviewed by Carl



As I've said on a number of occasions, I'm a big fan of the works of Harry Turtledove, particularly of his works of alternate history. I must have read more than a couple of dozen of his novels and I don't know how many works of short fiction. That's why I'm amazed that I hadn't previously heard of this 2007 novel. I almost literally stumbled across it a couple of months ago while searching Amazon.com for a biography of Pedro I, the first Emperor of Brazil (which happens to have the same title as Turtledove's novel). As it turns out, I really got a kick out of it.

Every Inch a King is a variation on the "Ruritanian romance" story, which is generally set in a fictional Central or Eastern Europe country and features look-alikes (a royal personage and a commoner) who switch places. The original version is Anthony Hope's 1894 novel *The Prisoner of Zenda*: Englishman Rudolf Rassendyll meets his distant look-alike relative King Rudolf of Ruritania, and Rassendyll helps the Ruritanian loyalists foil a plot to depose the new King. Hope's novel spawned 5 film versions. (My favorite is the 1952 ver-

sion starring Stewart Granger as the look-alikes.) Other than Turtledove, a couple of other F&SF authors have written variations on the "Ruritanian romance" – Edgar Rice Burroughs's *The Mad King* (1926), and Robert Heinlein's *Double Star* (1956). There's even a direct parody in one of my favorite movies, *The Great Race*, the hilarious 1965 steampunk-ish slapstick comedy featuring Jack Lemmon as the look-alikes (the nefarious Professor Fate and the bumbling Crown Prince Friedrich Hapnick of Carpania).

Here's a quick view of the plot: Otto of Schlepsig is a wandering scoundrel currently performing as an acrobat in a third-rate circus in the middle of nowhere in southeastern Europe. One day, Otto reads a newspaper article describing how Prince Halim Eddin (from the Hassockian Empire) has been invited to become the new king of Shqiperi, a tiny backwater country. Based on the photograph accompanying the article, Otto sees that he's pretty much a dead-ringer for Prince Halim – and he immediately comes up with a mad plan to assume Prince Halim's identity and replace him as the incipient King of Shqiperi. So, accompanied by his friend Max of Witte (a sword-swallowing giant), Otto heads for Shqiperi to engineer the scam of a lifetime. Adventure, feats of derring-do, narrow escapes, dragons, trolls, werewolves, beautiful willing maidens, and a touch of magic – an action-packed adventure narrated with a delightfully scurrilous and droll sense of

humor by Otto himself. What a hoot!

In many respects, *Every Inch a King* isn't your typical Turtledove novel (if there is such a thing). First off, it's set in some kind of alternate world that differs from ours in a number of ways. Yes, it's set in some kind of late 19th Century Europe-analog; but it just takes a little time to figure out the analogs for the countries in our world. For example: the "Hassockian Empire" is the Ottoman Empire; the "Dual Monarchy" is Austria-Hungary; "Schlepsig" is Germany; "Shqiperi" is Albania; and so on. It's further complicated by the fact that there seems to be a geographical "flip." For example, Torino/Italy is located east (not west) of Shqiperi/Albania. And then there are those dragons and trolls and werewolves out there in the mountainous wildernesses! Again, what a hoot!

Just as a side note, I also stumbled across an interesting piece of Albanian history that made it obvious to me where Turtledove got some of the ideas for *Every Inch a King*. There's a popular account of a German acrobat named Otto Witte who claimed he had briefly been mistaken for the new King of Albania at the time of Albania's separation from the Ottoman Empire and that he had been crowned and reigned for a few days. Witte's story is questionable, however, because it lacks any evidence to back it up and because it dates from 1913, which suggests that he made up his story after seeing the first film version of *The Prisoner of Zenda*.

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**"The Creature from the Pit"
 (1979)**

When Peter was telling me about his Facebook response (see page 2), he also described a rather more salacious image from one of the Tom Baker episodes.

Specifically, he mentioned an amorphous creature that extended a very suggestive...um...appendage to communicate with (among others) the Doctor. Ye Olde Editor findeth this image more than a little intimidating. ☺



**** 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.

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.** We 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

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

Oct. 11-13, 2024 **CONFABULOUS 2024**. Crowne Plaza Suites MSP Airport/Mall of America, previously Crowne Plaze AiRE (Bloomington MN). A fan-fun LGBTQ+ convention with a relaxed feel (gaming & discussion panels). Full Membership: \$60. Website: <https://confabulous.org>

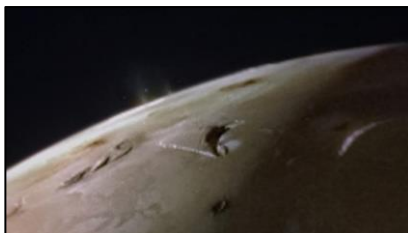
NASA Pictures

info passed along by Carl

NASA's James Webb Space Telescope has delivered plenty of spectacular images of deep space since its launch in 2021. On January 29th, 19 images of spiral galaxies were released to the public.

But those haven't been the only incredible cosmic images. Other images have come from such sources as the Juno orbiter circling Jupiter and the Mars rover Perseverance.

For more images, look to the following sitesg: [NASA](https://www.nasa.gov) and <https://www.aol.com/spiral-galaxies-volcanic-eruptions-jupiter-110534120.html>



Volcanic plumes rising from Jupiter's moon Io (Juno orbiter)



Spiral galaxies (James Webb Space Telescope)



Spiral galaxies (James Webb Space Telescope)



Solar eclipse by Phobos, moon of Mars (Perseverance rover)

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