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Pulsar

The Portland Science Fiction Society Newsletter



Issue 293

March 2003

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Letter from the Editor

Hello there all,

Just a short note from me. February has never been one of my favorite months and though this one was one of my best in past years it still messed with me right at the end and somehow I ended up with missing files for the March Pulsar.

So if you were thinking there should be more here than there is... You were right. Yay you!

All I really want to say is its time to Vote for officers. The ballot is included in this issue or if you picked this up off the newsstand and you are a member of the Portland Science Fiction Society you can get the Ballot at the March 8th Business Meeting.

VOTE! VOTE! VOTE!

Kris Picio
Pulsar Editor-in-chief
editor@porsfis.org



From the office of the President

By Debra Stansbury
president@porsfis.org

The Columbia Memorial Service

I'd like to thank everyone who pulled together to make this a special event, including Matt Picio for the website work, Kris Picio for the Program Book, Cecilia Eng for the idea and the music (and for her father Fr. Lincoln Eng who was one of the speakers.)

If you were unable to attend, John Bartley captured the event with his digital camera, and I recorded it on audio tape, as well. If you would like a copy, please contact me and we'll figure something out. I believe Kris still has copies of the Program available, as well.

alt.porsfis

I noticed there weren't a lot of people at John Andrew's debut alt.porsfis. Is February just a bad party month? Or was it a lack of information/reminders? Please let me know. People offer to host these nights out of kindness and generosity, a gift to their PorSFisian friends....if their hospitality is rebuffed, they may rethink participating again!

Elections

Don't forget, March 8th is the last day to get your votes in! If you have a family membership, you might want to make a copy for your loved one before you fill it in. By the way, your anonymity will be preserved despite having your name on your ballot. That part will be removed before counting commences.

Afters

I heard a lot of favorable comments about February's Afters being held at the Pizzacato's. Please let me know your thoughts prior to the meeting so that I can decide where to hold March's. I know some people like McMinamin's, so do we hold it there, or at Pizzacato's again, or somewhere else? If you don't speak up, I will decide for you!

Brainstorming

There will be some more brainstorming done at the March Meeting. We accomplished a lot at the January meeting, but we didn't cover it all. Like Fundraising, for example. (I'm not sure we're the bake sale type, but surely there are some ways we can make some money—to offset costs, and to use to buy books for schools, as examples.)



New ideas

In January we discussed some fine ideas and concepts and had a lot of positive energy—it's time to start putting our money where our mouths are. I am looking for volunteers who can guarantee follow through to help me with a project or two. I am also looking for an artist to draw up our idea for a totebag and t-shirt. Please step forward—your Society needs you! ☺

Membership Drive

Have you hinted to your friends that it's time they joined PorSFis? We don't bite much! To help you sell them on the idea, PorSFis is now offering an Introductory Rate. This is \$10 for a year's membership, and is available to new members (and to anyone who has not been a member since before 1997). In order to make this work, these special members will receive their Pulsars via email, rather than through the Postal System. And yes, you can give this Introductory Rate as a gift to your non-PorSFis friends!



Donations to offset room expenses

After some discussion at the last meeting, it was decided that, for now, we will continue to meet at PSU in the non-classroom space. This is made possible through the generosity of John Andrews, who subsidizes our meeting space. In order not to be such a burden on him, however, we will be putting out a donation jar at meetings from now on. **THIS IS ENTIRELY VOLUNTARY.** We are not going to be twisting arms, checking who donates or not, or making sad eyes if we don't 'make quota' or anything, so please don't feel obligated to give when you can't, or to not attend at all!

Presidential Projects

So what is occupying my Presidential moments? Well, right now I am putting together the Restaurant Guide for Gamestorm on the behalf of PorSFis—look for our flyer in the Program Book!



Business Meeting Minutes

The regularly scheduled Business meeting in February was set aside due to the Columbia Memorial. Should you be interested in receiving a copy of the memorial Pamphlet please contact editor@porsfis.org

Next month this space will return to its regularly scheduled usage.



John Bartley is **GEEKING FOR DOLLARS**
He is offering to perform computer consulting and related services—and to donate the proceeds (when referred by a PorSFIS member) to PorSFIS. TFN, of course. ('Til Further Notice) Phone is 503-BAR-TLEY (503-227-8539) Or email john@503bartley.com

Event Calendar

March 2003

- 2 Birthday of actress Gates McFadden (Dr. Crusher ST:TNG)
- 3 Birthday of actor James Doohan (Scotty -ST)
- 4 Publication of "The Wellstone" by Wil McCarthy (sequel to "The Collapsium")
Release on DVD of "1984" (1984 version starring John Hurt), "Half Past Dead", "Quest For Fire", "A Kid in King Arthur's Court", "The Ring", "Star Trek 4: The Voyage Home" and "Journey To The Center Of The Earth"
- 6 Final day for OMSI Omnimax showing of "Lewis & Clark: Great Journey West"
- 7 First day for OMSI Omnimax showing of "Coral Reef Adventure"
- 8 International Woman's Day
PorSFIS Meeting at Portland State University (two p.m.)
!!!!VOTING FOR OFFICERS!!!!
Brain Fair at OMSI (also Einstein's Birthday Party)
- 11 Release on DVD of "Below" and "Inspector Gadget 2"
- 14-16 GameStorm 2003 OSFCI Sponsored Gaming Convention at DoubleTree Inn, Columbia River in Portland, OR
- 16 Start of "Children of Dune" 6 hr mini-series on SciFi network
- 19 Birthday of actor Patrick McGoohan (The Prisoner)
- 21-23 12th Annual Telescope Optics Workshop in Bellingham, WA
Anime Oasis 2003 - Anime Convention in Boise, ID
- 21 Vernal Equinox 01:00 UT
Series Finale of "Farscape" on SciFi network
- 22 Birthday of actor William Shatner (James T. Kirk - ST)
Birthday of actress Mary Tamm (Romana I of Doctor Who)
Star Party - Vernal Equinox Celebration - OMSI East Parking Lot (weather permitting)
Alt.Porsfis hosted by Dave Moreland and Sue Renhard
- 23 "Dune" & "Children of Dune" marathon on SciFi Network
- 25 Release on DVD of "Who Framed Roger Rabbit", "Futurama - Season 1", "LEXX, Series 4, Volume 2", "Femme Fatale"

March

- 26 Birthday of actor Leonard Nimoy (Mr Spock - ST)
- 27 Birthday of author Kevin J. Anderson

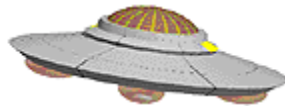
- 28 Premiere of movie "The Core"
Release on DVD of "Ghost Ship"
Premier of series "Tremors" on SciFi Channel (so good/bad they delayed it three months)
- 29 Birthday of actress Marina Sirtis (Counselor Troi -ST:TNG)

Looking Glass Bookstore

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PorSFis Members receive 10% off



April

- 1-8 National Dark Sky week
- 1 PorSFiS New Year**
Release on DVD of "Brainscan", ST - DS9, season 2", "The Ghost & Mrs. Muir" movie Publication of "Darwin's Children" by Greg Bear, "Dreamer of Dune" by Brian Herbert, "Snare" by Katharine Kerr, "Kushiel's Avatar" by Jacqueline Carey and "The Merlin Conspiracy" by Diana Wynne Jones
- 2 Birthday of writer Joan Vinge
- 4-6 Sakura Con at SeaTac (Anime Con)
- 5 Thirtieth anniversary of launch of Pioneer 11 (Jupiter/Saturn flyby)
- 6 Start of Daylight Savings Time
- 11 Premiere of movie "House of 1,000 Corpses", written and directed by Rob Zombie
- 12 PorSFiS Meeting at Portland State University (two p.m.)**
- 12 Third Annual World Space Party
- 15 Release on DVD of Hayao Miyazaki's Anime "Kiki's Delivery Service", "Castle in the Sky", and "Spirited Away" Special Edition as well as "Darkwolf" and "Cube" Special Edition
- 17-20 Norwescon 26 at SeaTac
- 18 Release on DVD of "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets"
- 19 Nebula Awards Ceremony at Radisson Plaza Warwick Hotel in Philadelphia
- 20 Birthday of actor George Takei (Sulu - ST)
- 22 Birthday of actor Jack Nicholson
- 22 Lyrids meteor shower peak
- 26 Soyuz 6 Launch to International Space Station
- 27 Alt.Porsfis hosted by Matt & Kris Picio**
- 28 Birthday of writer Terry Pratchett
Release of "Babylon 5 - Season 2" DVD
- 29 Birthday of Kate Mulgrew (Katherine Janeway - ST - Voyager)

April

- 29 Release on DVD of "Treasure Planet", "The Matrix" Special Edition, and "Darkness Falls"
- 30 Birthday of writer Larry Niven

May

- 1 Space Day
- 2 Premiere of movie "X2", the second X-Men movie
- 5-11 Astronomy Week
- 5 Eta Aquarids Meteor Shower Peak
- 6 Release on DVD of "It Came From Beneath the Sea"
- 8 **Third Anniversary of PorSFIS E-List**

Mike Parker spends his time and energy researching the Event Calendar every month and getting it in on time so that you fine fen will have it all here in one place for your perusal. If you have any events you would like to see added to the calendar please email them to Mike at MIKPAR@prodigy.net or here to me at editor@porsfis.org prior to the submission deadline for inclusion in the Pulsar. Featured Artist



alt.PorSFIS

On the fourth Saturday of the month the Portland Science Fiction Society commits alt.PorSFIS , a social gathering in varying locations. Usually, alt.PorSFIS involves movies, food, drink conversation and relaxation. All are welcome to attend.

Date: March 22nd 2003

Time: 6:30...ish

(Note: if you come early you will be put to work on party prep and cleaning.)

Location: Dave Morelands

Check the website at www.porsfis.org to find directions and a map. When it comes to snacks and things, as with most alt.PorSFIS's's's's's, it's a bring your own and a bit to share kind of thing. If you have any questions feel free to email Debra at president@porsfis.org

So please come join us
At
alt.PorSFIS

alt.PorSFis Location Schedule

Every month Portland Science Fiction Society Members volunteer to host alt.PorSFis at their home. Here is the schedule as of this month.

January – Sue Renhard

February – John Andrews

March – Dave Moreland

April – Matt & Kris Picio

May – Shava Navard

June – Marc & Patty Wells

July – Kier Salmon

August

September

October

November

December

Updates and changes may occur. Check www.porsfis.org for the most up to date information.

If you don't see a month filled you are welcome to volunteer to host alt.PorSFis. Just contact Debra Stansbury at president@porsfis.org

Convention Calendar

GAME STORM

Date: March 14-16, 2003
Location: Double Tree Columbia River
Portland OR
Tel: (503)283-2111
Theme: Gaming Convention
Website: www.pdxgames.com



SAKURA-CON 2003

Date: April 4-6, 2003
Location: Seattle Airport Hilton
Sea-Tac, WA
Tel: (206) 244-4800
Theme: Anime Con
Website : www.sakuracon.org

NORWESCON 25

Date: April 17-20, 2003
Location: SeaTac Doubletree Hotel
SeaTac, WA
Tel: (206) 246-8600
Theme: Dragons, Drakes and Wyrms.
Email: info@norwescon.org
Website: www.norwescon.org

WESTERCON 56

Date: July 3-6, 2003
Location: SeaTac Doubletree Hotel
SeaTac, WA
Tel: (206) 246-8600
Fax: (206) 431-8687
Email: info@wester56.org
Website: www.wester56.org

FOOLSCAP V

Date: Sept. 19-21, 2003

Location: Bellevue Hilton

Bellevue, WA

Tel: 425-455-3330

(Call Hotel directly. Mention Little Cap Z & Foolscap for con rate)

Email: info@foolscap.org

Website: www.foolscap.org

ANGLICON XVI

Date: Oct. 3-5, 2003

Location: SeaTac Raddison Hotel

SeaTac, WA.

Theme: British Media

Tel: 206-789-BRIT

Email: anglicon@rocketmail.com

Website: www.anglicon.com

ORYCON 25

Date: Nov 7-9, 200

Location: Double Tree Columbia River
Portland OR

Website: www.orycon.org

WORLDCON 61/TORCON 3

Date: Aug. 28 - Sept. 1, 2003

Location: Metro Toronto Convention Center, Royal York Hotel
Toronto Ontario, Canada.

Email: info@torcon3.on.ca

Website: www.torcon3.on.ca



FUTURE CONVENTIONS:

Worldcon 62/Noreascon 4

When: Sept. 2-6, 2004

Where: Boston MA

Worldcon 63/Interaction

When: Aug. 4-8, 2004

Where: Glasgow, Scotland

John Andrews, that's right the Portland Science Fiction Societies very own Treasurer, puts the Convention Calendar together every month. If you know of a convention coming up but don't see it listed send the information to John at john.c.andrews@att.net or to the editor at editor@porsfis.org for inclusion in the list.

Go forth and recruit! All species, races, creeds, colors,
and planets of origin are welcome ☺

GIFT MEMBERSHIPS AVAILABLE

Memberships are still just \$20 a year, \$30 for the whole
family! What a deal!



Book Review “A Game of Thrones”

By Kier Salmon

When I saw George R.R. Martin had a new book published I grabbed it off the rack. I loved his Tuff Voyaging and have been waiting for more for a long time. But I quickly learned it was "an epic." I had to try three times before I got past the intro and prologue. And Chapter one. But perseverance paid off. And By chapter three I was beginning to grasp the shape of the world it was situated in.

It's certainly different from his early works, and a lot longer and more complex. The touch of the dire wolves and their distribution and eventual fate is good. Martin doesn't pull nay punches either. His world might be chock full of magic and oddball ghosties and things that go bump into the night, but his characters are flesh and blood, sweaty, dirty, ignorant and honorable in their turns. And they pay the prices for other's deeds just like has actually happened in such societies.

Wheels turn within wheels in his complex court and the bluff barbarian does not save the day, but rather ends up bad ended. Of all the complex characters I am most intrigued by Daneiris, the posthumous daughter of the deposed king and her very interesting marriage and her reaction to it. Still, good as the yarn is, I've found that I haven't been burning to read it and interruptions happened constantly.

But I probably will buy the sequel when it comes out. It's a big enough epic and complex enough society that I am interested and intrigued to see where it goes.

Zelda

Randall

Paul



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Book Review “Terrapin”

By Daniel R. Reitman

“Terrapin, or Captain Megaloman and his Trusty Sidekick Squidley Save the World Once Again” By Tilper Manaday Lithodendron, Seattle (2001). Trade paperback, 298 pp.

Sometimes, an unknown author will come out with a novel instantly recognizable as a classic. But sometimes, the unknown author comes out with a novel instantly recognizable as garbage. Usually, when the novel is published by an obscure press, straight to paperback, it is a strong indicator which category applies. In the case of “Terrapin, or Captain Megaloman and his Trusty Sidekick Squidley Save the World Once Again”, unfortunately, the indicators are right.

In Terrapin, two neighbors, one an unemployed and probably unemployable engineer and the other a maladjusted investor, find a long-distance matter transmitter in a hitherto undiscovered room beneath the engineer's garden shed. The expected squabbles over whether to use it for The Benefit of Humanity, or to profit a bit in the process, or to play around with the universe, ensue, but aren't quite answered, as they attract the attention of the IRS, a television preacher, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the local self-appointed militia in the process.

The attempts at satire fall flat from heavy handedness and the numerous pop culture references, slightly tweaked to discourage trademark litigation, probably do no more than relieve Microsoft, Paramount, AOL Time Warner, and the like that their products were not accurately named.

It's hard to like a character who introduces himself with "I'm

Squidley. I bought Picosoft." (p. 5) It's even harder to like writing that wallows in banal repetition and bad descriptions:

“Squidley couldn't sleep. It wasn't just the summer sausage, though that was certainly a part of it. It wasn't the religious programming on the television; right now it was some equal-time satan worship thingie except the babe on the altar was wearing a chaste bikini instead of being naked. He watched her for a minute and lost interest immediately. The summer sausage as more pressing, but that wasn't what kept him awake.” (pp. 126)

There isn't much to recommend Terrapin. The use of a literal deus ex machina provided by aliens as a plot device, characters who only barely escape caricature, subplots that fail to affect the story or impact on the theme, if there is one, and blunderbuss attempts at humor that tend to more the blunder than the buss leave the reader under-whelmed long before the end. The combination fails even to achieve so-bad-it's-good status. The reader looking for rising talents in the SF world is advised to go elsewhere. If “Terrapin” is any indication, Tilper Manaday will not be among them.

Rank: ½ out of 5



Columbia Report – What we know now

By Matthew P. Picio

At roughly 8am CST on February 1st, 2003, the space shuttle Columbia OV-102 suffered a catastrophic incident on re-entry that destroyed the vehicle and killed its crew of 7. NASA has launched an investigation into the incident, which is currently ongoing, and both NASA and the investigation team have released a number of reports to the public regarding the events of that Saturday morning on February 1st. Here is a summary of what is known so far.

Columbia was launched on its 28th mission, a “pure science” mission, on January 16th 2003, at 9:39am CST. On launch, an object which appeared to have broken off of the external tank was observed to strike the left wing underside area of the orbiter. The impact was observed during routine frame-by-frame analysis of the launch video the next day. NASA engineers analyzed the incident and provided reports. An internal NASA review identified several possible scenarios, none of which indicated heavy damage to the orbiter.

On February 1st, at 7:08am CST, Columbia performed a de-orbit burn using the OMS engines, standard procedure for re-entry. Entry initially appeared normal, but after a few minutes various sensors measuring temperature and pressure of various systems in the orbiter began showing anomalous readings. The majority of the sensors affected all had wiring that routed through the left side landing gear well, which seems to indicate that the landing gear well had been compromised. NASA now believes that plasma from the outside air penetrated the structure of the left wing and damaged the orbiter to the point of structural failure. Analysis of the 32 seconds of “corrupted” data before

complete loss-of-signal appears to indicate wing failure.

At this point, it is not known for sure whether the wing was damaged from the launch impact, or what the impacting material was. NASA believes that the material is insulation from the external tank, but various expert sources have speculated that the object in question may have been heavier insulation from the ET, or possibly ice buildup on the insulation, or from the propellant feed lines that run down the exterior of the ET to the orbiter.

More information can be found at the STS-107 Columbia Loss FAQ at http://www.io.com/~o_m/columbia_loss_faq_x.html

Official NASA information on the incident can be found at <http://spaceflight.nasa.gov/shuttle/investigation/index.html> and at <http://www.nasa.gov/columbia/>



Ask Ed



Question: In that Debra is President for Life, what is the official PorSFis position if she becomes undead?

The guy hiding behind the desk

Ed's Answer: Well then If I read the by laws right that would make her the President

emeritus

Question: In one of those still-dark-night-of-the-soul moments, I found myself wondering "What if there were no hypothetical situations?" Any comments?

Puzzled in Portland

Ed's Answer:uhm....I suggest Beer. Large Quantities of it.



Question: You know how it is, when a book is very thin, they often print the title of the book sideways on the back binder. Now, normally when they do that, the title will read from the top of the book to the bottom. At least, it seems to be that way with all English-language books. Well, a while back, I had occasion to do some research that required German-language books. Now, naturally, to limit the amount of German I had to read, I took the thinnest books I could; you know, the ones most likely to have their titles printed sideways on the binder. Well, guess what I discovered? With these German books, the titles read from the bottom of the book to the top.

Why are English and Germanic-language books different in this way?

Bemused in Bookland

Ed's Answer: Actually it has to do with Germans and their language...*hiccup* But due to the large quantities of Beer I ingested trying to make sense of Puzzled in Portland's Question I cannot answer your question with any clarity beyond that...

Note to Editor: Put the questions that do not require beer to be answered Higher on the list of questions sent to Ed.

Next Months Pulsar Topic: **“Back in the Day...”**

Portland Science Fiction Society
 PO Box 4602
 Portland, OR 97208

Pulsar, the newsletter of the Portland Science Fiction Society, comes free with membership. It is also available in trade, and can be purchased at Future Dreams/Burnside and Looking Glass Books, both in Portland, Oregon.

The Editor is Kris Picio.

The Deadline for Pulsar contributions is 7 days before the end of every month. Contributions are always welcome, and may be sent to the PO Box above, or to the editor direct at editor@porsfis.org

PorSFIS meetings are open to everyone. Check the Calendar of Events for meeting times and places. Membership per year: \$20 individual, \$30 family (1 newsletter per family membership)

Current PorSFIS Officers:

President	Debra Stansbury	president@porsfis.org	503-620-3068
Vice President	Shava Nevard		
Treasurer	John Andrews	john.c.andrews@att.net	503-771-2894
Secretary	David Moreland	dmoreland57@cs.com	
Webmaster	Matt Picio	igapw@porsfis.org	

PORSFIS WEBPAGE: www.porsfis.org

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