

# Pulsar

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A publication of the Portland Science Fiction Society

## Better Late Than Never!

(curses, foiled again—Ed)



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Issue 298

August 2003

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## From the office of the President

By Debra Stansbury  
president@porsfis.org

Wow, has it been hot! Sheesh. Somebody needs to turn down the halogen lights in the big Blue Room or something.

So, what's up? What has PorSFIS and its intrepid President been up to this last month?

Went to Westercon. Had some fun, was a bit bored at times, caught a cold. All in all, pretty good time ☺

Boxed up the 218 books that various PorSFIS members have donated to our SF for Schools Program and had Dancer deliver them to Edith Fuller! (I put stickers in them first. With our colorful new logo and our website address on them.) Woo hoo! Now, let's collect some more!

July's alt.porsfis—finally, one I wasn't too sick to attend! ☺ Kier provided the chicken mole, and a nice silly DVD (UFO) for us to make fun of, Mahjongg and Harry Potter abounded....a good time was had by all, and we even had two new people show up! How wonderful!

Annual Picnic! It's this month, boys, girls and others ☺ Bring your chairs, bring your potlucky item—Remember, if your name begins with Portland, you're bringing the burgers, buns, and toppings and spreads! (Hm...should I mention my Mom's Potato Salad again? Nah, I don't want to get on people's nerves!).

The Pulsar...something to keep in mind—we're going to need a new editor come next January. Kris Picio (our current fabulous editor) only signed on for a year. Please consider it—if two or three people wanted to take it on rotation, I'd be just as happy. However—I \*will not\* be the editor. I put in my five years, I'm done. If no one steps up, this duty will fall to the Secretary. Please volunteer!

Debra ☺

## Fractured Fairy Tales

### Part 2

By Wendy Hubbard

God! She thought in desperation as she ducked behind a tree, struggling to catch her breath. Her long red hair, tangled with leaves, straggled across her face. Where? Where do I go? The soft tug on her skirt frightened a small, strangled scream from her as she jumped. Trembling, she looked down into the face of a fox, its grin showing its small, sharp teeth. Moving slowly, as if not to frighten her further, it stepped close and carefully took the hem of her skirt in its teeth, gently pulling. The maddened roar of the rampaging villagers storming up the trail decided her; dropping to her knees, she followed her four-legged savior into the thick underbrush.

Read Part 3 in the up coming September Pulsar!

.....

This story is being brought to you by the official Witch Hunters of Greater Metropolitan Chicago... The preceding installment was brought to you by Waldo's Wizard School, offering classes in disguise, evasion, and concealment. Classes offered weekends and evenings, satisfaction and anonymity guaranteed.

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# A Brief History of the Calendar

## Part I

By Roger Wells

### Prooemium

Why was February short-changed with only 28 days? Why are the ninth through twelfth months named “the seventh” (September) through “the tenth” (December)? Why is leap year’s extra day added at the end of the second month—or is it really the *last* day of February? And why is it that the US tax day is *not* the Ides of April?

I started with a simple step-by-step outline for the development of the calendar. The conversations I invent are, of course, fictitious and mostly quite silly. I often found that a couple lines of flippant dialogue conveyed concepts more effectively and succinctly than paragraphs of straight text. Even though this article is somewhat longer than I originally envisioned, I have omitted much detail. Much of what I write is theory, albeit theory supported by many scholars. While I have very limited knowledge of Latin, I understand that nouns, including the month names, have different endings to indicate cases. In using the form *Januarius* yet *September*, for example, I suspect I am mixing cases; nonetheless, these are the forms almost always used by the authorities I have consulted, and I follow their example. Originally Latin used only upper-case letters and used I and V in place of J and U. I found it easier to use the modern letters J and U, and to use mixed case, as is prevailing practice.

### c. 750 BC: Original Calendar

Tradition holds that the Roman calendar was established by Romulus:

“Listen, you really do have to get this together for our new community.”

“Jeesh, what’s the rush? We didn’t build the City in a day, after all.”

The original calendar had ten lunar months, starting with the new moon after the spring equinox.

“That won’t take care of a full year.”

“The priests want the calendar to be able to advise the farmers; who does farming in the dead of winter?”

The first four months were probably named after Roman deities, with some influences from the Greek calendar:

1. Martius, named for the Roman god of war
2. Aprilis, perhaps named for Aphrodite, the Greek equivalent to the Roman goddess Venus; more likely from the Latin word *aperire*, to open.
3. Maius, probably named for the goddess Maia
4. Junius, probably named for the goddess Juno

"So, how's it coming with the remaining months?"

"Alright already. If it will get you off my case, name them the fifth month, the sixth month, the seventh month, and so on; it's not as if we're naming something for the whole darn world to use thousands of years from now, jeesh!"

However it came about, the final six months were named:

5. Quintilis, the fifth month
6. Sextilis, the sixth month
7. September or Septembris, the seventh month
8. October or Octobris, the eighth month
9. November or Novembris, the ninth month
10. December or Decembris, the tenth month

The Romans did not number the days of the month. The first of the month, the new moon, was the *Kalends*. The first quarter moon marked the *Nones*, and the full moon was the *Ides*. Days were reckoned to the next marker. If the priests determined that the first quarter moon would be on the eighth day of the month, the second day of the month would be reckoned as *anti dies VIII Nones*—8 days to the *Nones*. The sixth day of the month would be *anti dies III Nones*, the seventh day would be *pridie Nones*—day before the *Nones*, and the eighth day would be the *Nones*. Note the peculiar Roman characteristic of counting inclusively; the day before the day before the *Nones* is reckoned as *three* days before the *Nones*, counting the day itself, *pridie Nones*, and the *Nones*.

"Do you realize this means that, not only do we depend on the priests to decide when a new moon starts the next month; they have to let us know halfway through the previous month so we can start counting down to it."

"Yeh. Let those priests earn their living for once; that's what they get for ragging us about this calendar."

### c. 713 BC: The Winter Months

**It took only a few decades for the Romans to realize a need for calendar dates throughout the year:**

"Sure, I'd love to go to dinner with you. What day did you have in mind?"

"Duh, well . . ."

**Numa Pompilius, traditionally the second King of Rome, introduced Februarius and Januarius, in that order.**

"I thought we'd add a month named for Janus at the start of the year, and something for Februa, the purification festival, to end the year. Janus being the god of gates, doors, beginnings, endings, and all that."

"But these are still lunar months; we have only, darn this math, where's my calculator?"

"Calculator?"

"My slave. That's only about 354 days. We have to keep this new-fangled calendar in step with the seasons so the farmers plant at the right time."

"Now, why did the gods make twelve lunations fall short of a full year?"

"Who knows the minds of the gods? I have enough trouble with that son of mine, chasing all our maidens, even in winter."

"I know. We'll take a few days off Februarius when necessary and add another month; call it Mercedonius or Intercalaris. That's the end of the year, and the month of purification; perfect place to do it."

"How do we decide when it's necessary?"



"Well, if we do it right, every other year should suffice. But we'll let the priests decide. That'll give them something to do these cold winter nights."

"I hope you realize, if we add this Januarius to the start of the year, the names of those months Quintilis through December no longer come out right."

"Details, details. A thousand years from now, who will notice?"

### near 600 BC: The Roman Republican Calendar

**Sometime between 616 and 597 BC, Tarquinius Priscus, traditionally the fifth king of Rome, introduced what is commonly referred to as the Roman Republican Calendar:**

"Those priests are getting way out of hand, your majesty, with all their arbitrary power over the calendar."

"Between them, and the populace wanting a republican form of government, of all things, and your daughter, chasing every young man in the City . . ."

"OK. Forget the lunar business and give fixed lengths to the months, so the priests can't arbitrarily change them. How about eight months of 30 days and four of 29 days, plus the occasional fun and games with Intercalaris."

"According to my Greek mentor Pythagoras, even numbers are bad."

"So, make it four months of 31 days and eight months of 29 days."

"Let's see; how about Martius, Maius, Quintilis, and October for 31 days. That sorta spreads it out."

"But that makes the year come out to 356 days. Isn't a even number of days in the year even worse?"

"Blast! Can't have an odd year with twelve odd months."

"Dunno. Seems I've had nothing but odd years, your majesty, between those priests and my daughter and all."

"Let's give Februarius 28 days. After all, it is the purification festival, so that should take care of any ill omens. Maybe even do your daughter some good."

In addition, the Nones and Ides were fixed at the 7th and 15th for months with 31 days, and the 5th and 13th of the other months.

While most authorities agree on this, some believe that strictly lunar months were in use until 448 BC and there is some dispute as to when Intercalaris was introduced. Few records survive.

“Records. You want we should keep records? I got enough what with this populace talking Republic and the priests making whoopee with the calendar and our daughters making whoopee all year round, now that they have dates even in winter.”

The Roman calendar had specific days for conducting political business and for various other activities, as well as special festival days. Originally, these were declared by the priesthood; however, by the time of the Republican calendar, there were established days for specific activities. In addition, every eighth day was a Market Day. Originally, these were simply the days when farmers brought their produce to market. However, as time went on, the market days, or *Nundinæ*, developed into days of special celebration; the word *nundinæ* survives as a word for *fair* in civil and old English law. The word derives from the Latin for *ninth*, again from the Roman practice of counting inclusively.

#### c. 450 BC: The Decemvirs Move Februarius

By the middle of the fifth century, the Roman republic had replaced the monarchy. One of the political bodies created was the Decemvirs:

“I propose we find something to impose a temporary, emergency tax increase on.”

“Are you kidding? They’ll skin us alive.”

“Well, we need to show the voters that we’ve accomplished something.”

“I know; let’s move Februarius to between Januarius and Martius.”

“What good will that do?”

“Who cares? It looks impressive and doesn’t cost the voters any money. Besides, now that the new year starts with the Ides of Martius, this will put the Intercalaris awkwardness close to the end of the year again.”

Whatever the actual reason, the Decemvirs moved Februarius to its current position in the calendar, between Januarius and Martius.

### 153 BC: Year Starts with Januarius

In 153 BC, the start of the year was established, or re-established, at the Kalends, or first, of Januarius. Februarius remained the month of the purification festival, and thus the appropriate time for the Intercalaris adjustment, even though now it would take place well into the year, as our leap year adjustment does to this day.

"You modern guys; and they say *we* were stuck on tradition."

Next Pulsar Part III : 46–45 BC: The Julian Calendar

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SEND in your articles to:

[editor@porsfis.org](mailto:editor@porsfis.org)

## Member Services

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](mailto:john@503bartley.com)

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## 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: August 23<sup>th</sup> 2003

Time: 6:30...ish

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

Location: Matt & Kris Picio's place  
926 NE 80<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Portland, OR 97213  
Tel: 503-253-1488

Theme: Italian and anything else we can think of!

Check the website at [www.porsfis.org](http://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'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](mailto: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 – Matt & Kris Picio

September – John Bartley & Lea Rush

October – Dave Moreland & Sue Renhard

November – Dave Moreland & Sue Renhard

December – Mike & Sharon

Updates and changes may occur. Check [www.porsfis.org](http://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](mailto:president@porsfis.org)

We also need volunteers for 2004 don't be shy step up and volunteer!



## Convention Calendar

### **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](mailto:info@foolscap.org)

Website: [www.foolscap.org](http://www.foolscap.org)

### **ANGLICON XVI**

Date: Oct. 3-5, 2003

Location: SeaTac Radisson Hotel  
SeaTac, WA.

Theme: British Media

Tel: 206-789-BRIT

Email: [anglicon@rocketmail.com](mailto:anglicon@rocketmail.com)

Website: [www.anglicon.com](http://www.anglicon.com)

### **ORYCON 25**

Date: Nov, 2003

Location: Double Tree Columbia River  
Portland OR

Website: [www.orycon.org](http://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](mailto:info@torcon3.on.ca)

Website: [www.torcon3.on.ca](http://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](mailto:john.c.andrews@att.net) or to the editor at [editor@porsfis.org](mailto:editor@porsfis.org) for inclusion in the list.

All species, races, creeds, colors, and planets of origin  
are welcome ☺

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## Movie Review

By John Andrews

### *Terminator 3: The Rise of the Machines*

\*Spoiler Warning\*

I have had a problem with this series since the second movie's end. They set up serious paradoxes at the end of the movie, as bad as the standard grandfather paradox. I don't know who wrote the script for this movie, but whoever it was, realized this and fixed many of the problems in this film. I can't tell you specifics without giving away the plot, but most of the holes are plugged.

This film starts ten years after the second film. John Conner is now about twenty-three. Sarah Conner has died. (Leukemia, not enemy action.) And he has been drifting on the road since. He has an accident on his motorcycle and breaks into an animal hospital for medical supplies. Meanwhile, two terminators have arrived, an obsolete old model and a new terminatrix. The terminatrix, in addition to all the powers of the second film's evil terminator has an arm that can morph into multiple weapons, several useful hidden attachments, and the power to take over other machines. In addition to her primary mission of killing John Conner it also has a secondary list of Conner's lieutenants to eliminate as well.

The vet of the animal hospital, who will be one of the lieutenants (And much more) is sought by the terminatrix and it (I have trouble not calling it she.) stumbles across Conner's trail. As it is trying to kill Conner and the vet, the old terminator arrives, leading to an extensive battle/chase scene. Eventually they escape for a time and things are explained.

Judgment Day was not prevented as the second film thought, only postponed and "today" is Judgment Day. So the three set off to stop Skynet, now a military project from being activated. The terminatrix in hot pursuit.

There isn't much real reason for a sexy, tight red leather-clad terminatrix this time. (Other than serving as eye candy for the primary audience for this sort of movie: teenage males, R-rating not withstanding.) I think that, maybe, the producers and/or writers just decided that another male terminator would be redundant and too much like the second film. (A rare feeling in Hollywood.) and decided that a terminatrix could be fun to write. I did find the story interesting and, occasionally, fun. It also allowed the catch phrase of these movies to be: "She'll be back".

This movie is packed with action. Except for the pause for explanation, after the first battle, the action never stops. No time to catch your breath. I did have a little problem with coincidences. Conner just happens to break into that hospital, the vet has to come in that evening for an emergency, she had met Conner before and he was the first boy she ever kissed, the terminatrix attacks at just that time just as the other terminator arrives and the vet's father just happens to be in charge of Skynet.

Overall this is an enjoyable movie and a worthy addition to the series. However, I hope that there are no more in the series. The trilogy really has come to a fitting end that can not be comfortably be expanded on, and, as I mentioned, most of the paradoxes have been resolved (One more thing: Arnold will be too old soon.)

Overall Rating: 7

## PorSFis Event Calendar

### August 2002

- 1 Peak of the Alpha Capricornids meteor shower
- 5 Release of "Agent Cody Banks", "House of Wax (not in 3-D)", "Of Unknown Origin", "Soylent Green", "The Haunting (1963)", "The Omega Man", and "The Thing (50th Anniversary Edition)" on DVD
- 6 Peak of the Southern Iota Auquarids meteor shower
- 8 Premiere of movie "Ella Enchanted"
- 9 **PorSFis Picnic hosted by Dancer Cloninger - 2:00 p.m**  
Release of "Deep Space Nine, season four" on DVD
- 10-15 Workshop on Cometary Dust in Astrophysics - Crystal Mountain, Washington
- 11 Galileo enters Solar Conjunction
- 12 Release of "Babylon 5, season three", the TV remake of "Carrie", "House of 1000 Corpses", and "Rocky & Bullwinkle, season one" on DVD  
OMSI Star Party at Rooster Rock State Park (weather permitting) - 9:00 p.m.  
Peak of Perseids meteor shower
- 14-17 Sixth Annual International Mars Society Conference - Eugene, OR
- 15-17 Dragonflight (Gaming) Con - Seattle, WA
- 17 Release of "Memoirs of an Invisible Man" on DVD
- 19 Asteroid 2002 NY40 near-Earth flyby (0.004 AU)  
Release of "Day of the Dead" collectors edition , "Iron Giant, special edition", three disc set on manned spacecraft on DVD
- 23 **AltPorSFis hosted by ???**  
Premiere of new animated Duck Dodgers series on the Cartoon Network
- 25 Peak of the Northern Iota Auquarids meteor shower
- 26 Release of "LOTR - The Two Towers", "The Brood", "Amazon Women on the Moon" special edition, "Stitch (direct to video sequel to "Lilo & Stitch")" on DVD
- 27 Mars Closest Approach to Earth in 60,000 years
- 28-31 Oregon Star Party - Indian Trail Spring, Oregon
- 29-Sep 1 WorldCon61 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- 30 Launch of Progress M-48 Supply Ship to International Space Station

## Movie Review

By John Andrews

### *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*

The saving grace of this movie is its basic premise, that of bringing together a number of victorian era literary characters as an action team. Otherwise, this would be just another standard action movie.

The year is 1899. A person known as "The Phantom" is making attacks on various European countries, trying to start a war in which he can make a killing selling advanced weapons to both sides. The british government recruits Alan Quatermain (King Solomon's Mines) to lead a team to stop the Phantom. The team consists of Captain Nemo, (and the Nautilus) an invisible man, Mina Harker, (Dracula)(Okay so she's not a gentleman.) Mr. Hyde, (& Dr. Jekyle) Dorian Gray, and an american secret service agent. They are sent to Venice to protect a secret peace conference from being bombed by the Phantom. It turns out that there is no conference and they have been decoyed to allow a traitor among them to steal their secrets. (ie: plans of the Nautilus, a bottle of Dr. Jekyle's potion.) So they take off to the Phantom's secret base to stop him.

I have to say that I was somewhat disappointed with this film. After the idea of the characters is introduced, the movie is pretty much like a lot of action movies Not bad, but nothing special. Their take on Mr Hyde was interesting. He's more of a monster rather than a very unpleasant man. Except for the coloring, he's very much like the Hulk and done the same CGI way. (Too bad they couldn't use the two best-known victorian

characters, Holmes & Watson, but I understand why they couldn't.)

A cute idea but nothing more. You can wait for it on TV.

Overall Rating: 5



# Journal of a Evil Security Chief

## Part 2

By `Dancer-chan Yomochi

Day 27: The Ladies returned out of sorts. Figured it best not to bother the Evil Witch when she's shooting lightening bolts out of her hands, or the Mad Scientist when she's holding a vortex canon. E-mailed the Mastermind from a safe distance.

Day 28: The first mission failed. Some oddballs called the "Slayerettes" messed up the mission by bumping onto the magic circle the Evil Witch had spent several days setting up and invoked some nasty demon instead of the army of undead cockroaches. The Ladies apparently spent the rest of their time hunting down the demon, only for some blond chick to show up and kill it. Mad Scientist is unhappy because she wanted to study it, Evil Witch is pissed because apparently it was her godson, or something of the sort. The Mastermind is annoyed that the plan failed. Have added "Slayerettes" to shoot-on-sight list. Wish I knew what they looked like.

Day 72: First crop of blackberries came in today. Two of Mastermind's bishonen had gotten into a fist fight so I disciplined them by making them pick the berries. It seems to be a very effective punishment, all the other bishonen are avoiding me like the Plague. \*grin\* I love my job.

Day 83: Had to reject my first henchmen applicant since taking the job. His record was perfectly clean, which is usually a good sign that that person is an FBI plant. Added his picture to the shoot-on-sight list just to be careful.

Day 93: More intruders. They were claiming to be geologists... they might have been actually, but I really didn't have any other choice once they hiked into the caldera. I feel a little bad about shooting them. Now I have to find some way to dispose of the bodies.

Day 94: Placed a request for a small pool with flesh eating piranhas for the Evidence Disposal Unit.

Day 115: Ladies have left again. Have added raspberries and thimbleberries to the perimeter.

Read the next exciting entries in the September Pulsar!

## Ask Ed



**Due to a recent letter he received Ed would like to place his answer here. The letter is as follows.**

**Sir:** Look, we just about had the entire year 200 Orycon mess straightened out when we discovered in the July 2003 Pulsar that, once again, you guys are mucking around with

Roger's and Marc's uncle Herbert's time machine. Now you're trying to put August of 2002 immediately after July of 2003. (i.e. Pulsar #297) Yuck. That month wasn't that interesting the first time around. And we have less than four weeks to get that one straightened out. Ed, this casual mucking with the fabric of time has got to stop. You want to do creative things with fabric, please join the local SCA costumer's guild.

*-The Time Police*

**Ed's response: You think I am messing with the fabric of time now? I suggest your check your family tree again bub because I am only getting started you \*\*\*\*\***

*Editors Note: The rest of Ed's reply has been censored due to content. Thank you so much for your patronage.*



Next Months Pulsar Topic: **“Topic? We Don't need no Stinking Topic!”**

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](mailto: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:

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