

Pulsar

A publication of the Portland Science Fiction Society

Special Anniversary Edition

Issue 300



Happy 25th Anniversary OryCon!

Issue 300

November 2003

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From the President's Desk

By Debra Stansbury
president@porsfis.org

Hi—so, I bet you're wondering "What does the President's Desk have to say?" Well, first of all—it's so booorring! President of the United States' Desk gets to have fun, and all the desks at Enron just brag, brag, brag in the Desk Chat Rooms. I tell you, my lot is so sad. I—I've started hanging out with end tables! <sniff>

Oops, sorry there folks. I'm pretty sure that this section is for the person who sits *at* the desk, not the desk itself (but it was so depressed I had to give it a minute. Maybe I'll polish it later and cheer it up a little, get the soda stains off).

You know, we have so many new members now (WOOO HOOO!) <ahem> that I thought—"not all of them have had a chance to meet you, Debra, and you are the President." So here is a little about me, Debra Stansbury, sometimes referred to as President for Life of The Portland Science Fiction Society*.

I blame my love of SF and of Fantasy on my Dad (a great man). Thanks to his library I was introduced to Heinlein and Tolkein at an early age. I followed this up by devouring everything in my school library by Norton, McCaffrey, Clarke, Asimov, Del Rey....and so on. (Okay, I also read a lot of books with horses in them and adventure stories, but that's not relevant to this tale.) Growing up in the wilds of Idaho (or rather, deserts of Idaho...) I didn't have a lot of fan interaction, however.

When I was in community college here in Portland however, my Dad (see a trend?) brought me home a flyer that said there was a convention coming up soon. That was Con V, I believe. It was an eye opening experience for me. People with similar interests, interesting people with similar interests! Costumes, music, authors, fun and interesting panels...and you could also just stand around in Hospitality and listen to some of the most fascinating conversations...if you had something to add, you could even join! I loved it.

Yes, there are some odd people in fandom, even by fandom's standard, but you know, that's okay. I respect their right to be odd, just as the fen I've met have respected mine. I think this above all other things has convinced me to give back to the SF community, to try to make others happy or at least feel welcome.

What sort of things have I done?

I started with OryCon, first. In fact, I've been a member of the OryCon committee for several years now. I started in Treasure Hunt, moved to Opening Ceremonies for several years, and this year I'm apprenticing under Hospitality. I will also be running Hospitality for Gamestorm this coming March, something I alternately look forward to and have nervous attacks about <grin>

Then, I joined the SF Museum as a member of the board of directors. Things are still moving slowly on that front, but we still have hope and are still working hard at creating a place where SF and Fantasy Memorabilia can be passed down to generations to come.

About six years ago, in 1998, a friend of mine and I started attending meetings of a group I'd heard vague things about for years—The Portland Science Fiction Society. At our first meeting we were both asked if we wanted to edit the newsletter—the Pulsar. We both said no. A couple of months later, they asked me again...and I said yeah, sure, it doesn't look too hard. (By the way, it was! It was cut and paste and photocopy! Eeek!). I wasn't even a member yet. (And I stayed the Editor for five years, took us out of the cut and paste era and into the twentieth century, before handing it over to Kris Picio, who has taken it into the twenty first century!)

The following January or so, they were looking for officer nominations...specifically, for President. Sam Butler was getting tired and wanted to step down. I told them no!...not president...how about apprentice president? So I was elected Vice-President.

Cut to five years later—I'm in my fourth term of Presidency, and hopefully am doing a well enough job that no one will try to assassinate me or anything! (I keep offering to finance a coup, but no takers so far...). I've had the good fortune to work with and for some great people, and that above all else is what keeps me here ☺

*Yes, many do refer to me as President for Life—in fact some started doing so during my first term of office! I am very flattered, (well, when I'm not scared that they're trying to tell me something) but I know that my position relies on me continuing to do the job I was elected to, and doing it to the best of my ability!

And just what have I done for The Portland Science Fiction Society? Some days, it doesn't feel like much, I have to admit. We've lost a few members through both death and attrition, and we've gained a few. We've had room parties and picnics, our SF for Schools program...I've tried very hard to keep things energized, to encourage new members, to get people involved and interested in our Society. I am eager for ideas to help get our name out there, and to bring in new people, new life and new hope for The Portland Science Fiction Society. We've been around over 25 years now, sometimes just by the skin of our teeth and the help of a few dedicated members, like John Andrew.

What do I want for The Portland Science Fiction Society? I have a dream (no, I'm not MLK) that one day I'll be sitting on the bus and the person next to me will be reading some SF or Fantasy novel and I'll offer them one of our cards—and they'll say "Oh, yeah, I've heard of them!" I know, it's not a big dream, but it's a stepping stone, it's a start. Someday I hope to have so many members in The Portland Science Fiction Society that we need a bigger meeting room, that we get the bulk mail discount for our newsletter, or that if you're a fan in Portland and you haven't joined, or don't attend a meeting, that you know several people who do and more than one keeps threatening to get you a gift membership—Now *that's* a big dream! ☺

How to make my dream a reality? It's a slow process, I know. We've taken some great strides, though, I feel. Matt Picio did such a fabulous job getting us squared away with the State of Oregon, getting us reinstated from the Legal Limbo we had drifted in for the last ten years. We

have a fantastic Website, an email list that now has over a hundred members, our introductory rate is helping draw in some new people, we have a great Editor and another in the wings for when her term ends, we've donate a couple hundred books to the Portland School Libraries, our picnics and room parties keep getting more and more fun—I think we're on the right path. We just need to keep it going ☺

So, how can you help? (You knew this was coming, didn't you?) Ask. Volunteer. Donate. We have a room party coming up at OryCon—Kier Salmon is in charge of that. Offer to help. Offer to bring something she needs. We will also have a Fundraiser at OryCon—a Chocolate Tasting on Sunday. Bring some chocolate! Tell your friends—make them come and buy chocolate! Donate books to our SF for Children program, hand out cards to people on the bus, drag your friends or loved ones to a meeting—these are all ways to help The Portland Science Fiction Society, (but not the only ways, to be sure). We're the Portland Science Fiction Society—be loud and be proud! ☺



Letter from the Editor

Hello everyone,

Yep that's right. This is issue 300. We've made it. The Portland Science Fiction Society has been putting out the Pulsar now mostly monthly for 300 issues. Lay out and delivery methods may have changed but the one thing that hasn't is the fact that the Pulsar is out there for fan and fen.

I Have to say its been a real pleasure serving as editor for the past year and I look forward to continuing to work with The Portland Science Fiction Society in future capacities. Yep next month (Issue 301) Is my last Pulsar issue but that doesn't mean you won't see anymore of me because I intend to keep you all on your toes with my submissions to the Next editor.

Right now though, I am pleased to Congratulate OryCon on its 25th Anniversary. Congratulations to all the volunteers out there who have made OryCon one of the best cons in Oregon. May your energy be always refreshed by caffeine and good eats in hospitality *grins*

Kris Picio
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Movie Review

By Ed Foster

Matrix Revolutions

Now that's the way to end a science fiction series. This movie rocks. From the preparations for the final stand, down to the closing credits music, this movie delivers on the promise the series made in the first movie.

If you are looking for a clone of "The Matrix" or all the answers to the questions the series asks you will Hate this movie but if you are willing to go in and "free your mind" you will find yourself embracing the concepts and coming out questioning and hopefully ready to hear the possible answers.

Now you folks know me and you know I don't like much but I Really enjoyed "Matrix Revolutions". It Deserves to be viewed and given the chance to expand your horizons. Just don't go into it expecting it to be either "The Matrix" or "The Matrix Reloaded" because George Lucas didn't write this series. If you want his drivel wait for the next Star War piece of crap to come out.

My rating: 8 out of 10



Chocolate Tasting

At Orycon!
2pm Sunday
Wilson Room



**Wanted:
Chocolate!
Volunteers!
Chocolate!
And
People to buy Chocolate!**

Interview with a Filker

By Kris Picio

Back at the beginning of the year I had opportunity to shove some questions under a Portland Science Fiction Society member's nose and coerce ...err I mean request some answers. I hope you enjoy the interview with the bright and sparky Callie Hill as much as I did.

PorSFis: Tell us a little bit about yourself.

Callie: I'm "thirtysomething", have lived in Oregon since 1985, work doing data mining in the ADP office in Milwaukie OR, live in a 1910 Craftsman-style house in SE Portland, have no children or pets, and LOTS of hobbies: mainly music, reading, and fiber arts (sewing, knitting, crocheting).

PorSFIS: What is filking in your opinion?

Callie: Three things:

- any song, story, or poem done in a filk circle
- specifically, parody works on a SF or SF-con theme
- original music on a science or SF or fantasy theme

PorSFIS: When and how did you get started?

Callie: I don't even remember. Ages ago, back in the late 80's or early 90's. I've always been musical, and finding a group of other night owls who like to do music too, was a neat thing!

PorSFIS: Tell us about "Echo's Children":

Callie: Cat Faber and I formed Echo's Children in 1997. We had started getting together on a fairly regular basis, when she'd visit Eugene (where I was living then) to see her then-boyfriend (now, husband). We'd spend a couple of hours, a couple of weekends per month, song swapping... and after we'd been doing that a while, we sort of realized that we were really in sync musically, and maybe we ought to get more serious about it.

PorSFIS: Why did you choose that name?

Callie: We needed to have a name for our duo, and we bounced various ideas back and forth, and somehow the idea of "Echo" came up... but both of us being fairly conversant with mythology said, "no, that's not quite it, Echo was limited to repeating what was said... but wait, 'Echo's Children', would be able to create as well as to repeat... and the name felt right, so we stuck with it.

PorSFIS: What is your favorite filk song?

Callie: Eep! I don't think I have one single favorite one, but many

- funny: Stairway to Fandom, Knights in White Satin, Won't Get Fooled
- filk-squared(filk of a filk): Beware of the Sentient Songbook, Kinsey Scale, The Vampire Blues
- serious: Word of God, The Dream, Lullaby for a Weary World, Expanding Circles, Falling Free
- inspirational: Hope Eyrie, Light Ships, She Is Always There
- whimsical: Drivel, Falling Down on New Jersey, The Murderous Little Toy, Sergei in the Milky Way
- computer filks: World Inside the Crystal, Heart of the Apple Lisa,
- of our repertoire: Word of God, Web of Love, How Far Back Does Music Go?
- literary: Collars, In A Gown Too Blue, Butter Bug Blues, No Quarter
- folk song covers: Everything Possible, Heart of the Appaloosa

PorSFIS: Which artists inspired you?

Callie: - visual arts, or performing artists?

- performers: Jeff and Maya Bohnhoff. Steve Macdonald. Urban Tapestry. Broceliande. Heather Alexander.
- lyricists: all of the above, and: Steve Savitsky, Leslie Fish, Cat Faber
- visual artists: Mark Ferrari. Bob Gould. Kirsti McElligott (who did the cover art for our first two CDs). Michael Whelan. Nene Thomas. Arthur Rackham. Several pre-Raphaelite artists.

PorSFIS: How did you end up on the David Weber CD?

Callie: Actually, that's a great story. We had met David at BaltiCon in 1999, when he was author GoH and we were music GoHs. It was a fantastic con, they treated us SO well... we debuted a song (No Quarter) set in the Honorverse, about the then-current book in the series (Echoes of Honor). We'd kept in touch with David via email since then, and I'd seen him and his wife Sharon at CopperCon in Phoenix, also in 1999, where I debuted another Honorverse song for them (Fair Was the Blossom). Last June (2002), David emailed and said that Jim Baen, his publisher, was planning to include a CD with the Honorverse book published last fall (War of Honor). And that there were going to be all kinds of various "goodies" on it, and David thought our music should be included, so we should contact Jim.

So I emailed Jim and said basically, "David said to contact you. Here's who we are and what we do, and a link to our website where you can see the lyrics he's talking about and hear samples of our music. *Do* you want this for the Honorverse CD?"

A couple hours later I got an enthusiastic YES as a reply. So I compiled the lyrics and the MP3s, and sent them off to the address directed, and a few months later, voila!

PorSFIS: Where and how often do you perform?

Callie: How often: several times per year. Where: mostly at local cons, or at cons we've been invited to as guest performers. In 2003, we are planning to perform at FilKONtario in Toronto Canada, and at Norwescon in Seattle. We don't have any other performances planned at this time, but we do try to keep a current list of our performances on our website: www.echoschildren.org. Also, in the past we've done gigs at coffee houses, farmers markets, and weddings, and we'd definitely be open to more such opportunities.

PorSFIS: Are you working on any new songs right now?

Callie: Um, what's "new"? If you mean since we released *A Dancing World* in 2001, yeah, there are at least a dozen songs that Cat has written and we have arranged since. Some of which we performed at OryCon; Cat has a thing about always including new material in a set... sometimes I have to remind her that we want to also include familiar pieces that people can sing along on!

PorSFIS: What is the best piece of advice you were ever given as a performer?

Callie: If you make a mistake, KEEP GOING... if you don't get flustered and stop, most people won't realize that you didn't intend to do whatever it was.

PorSFIS: What is a good resource for people looking to get into filking?

Callie: If you want to hear the music, any filk circle at a con -- and most of the local/regional ones have such. Or the CDs in the dealer's room at tables like Friends of Filk. Or the books -- same source.

PorSFIS: What do you see as the future of filking?

Callie: Frankly, I haven't given it much thought. I think it'll continue to be a sub-genre of folk music. I'd like to see some improvement in the overall standard of musicianship. I'd like to see better filk circle etiquette (I have a pet peeve about people who wait until their turn to even START digging out the music they want to perform!). I'd like to see more one-shot or double-shot kinds of showcase opportunities for lesser-known performers.



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)
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Admitted in Oregon and Washington

alt.PorSFis

Usually on the fourth Saturday of the month the Portland Science Fiction Society commits alt.PorSFis, a social gathering in varying locations. All are welcome to attend. However this month the Portland Science Fiction Society is **Also** hosting a room Party at OryCon on Friday Night to celebrate the **Society's 25th Anniversary!**

Date: November 14th

Theme: **Give us your Silver!**

Time: 9:30...ish

Location: Watch for Posters put up around OryCon with the room number.



Check the website at www.porsfis.org to find times, locations, directions and maps to future alt.porsfis's.



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.

2003

August – Matt & Kris Picio

September – John Bartley & Lea Rush

October – Dave Moreland & Sue Renhard

November – Dave Moreland & Sue Renhard

December – Mike & Sharon

2004

January – To Be Announced

February – Jim & Linda Pilcher

March – To Be Announced

April – To Be Announced

May – To Be Announced

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

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

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

Featured Short Fiction

Exotics Files 2057: Jesse

By Kris Picio

The North Western Alliances boarders reached all the way to south into what had been northern California. They went east as far as the borders of old Montana and encompassed several Rocky Mountain States. United North America was disputing that eastern boarder however. Vandoran mediators had stepped into prevent mass bloodshed between the two strongest Imperion regencies on Earth

But Jesse didn't really care about that. She was an under-Commoner, only a step above the casteless that lived in the ruins of the old cities and scavenged for food among the scraps left by those in the new Cities. Her mother was a whore registered to Titus Manufacturing's agricultural division and so Jesse had spent her childhood traveling from one mega-farm to another working in the fields with the other harvesters from the time she could walk while her mother took care of the workers needs in other ways.

What Jesse did care about, though, was that with the possibility of war on the horizon the Corporations would be recruiting more security forces either to fight in the border skirmishes or to be sent to protect their assets from attack. At 18 Jesse now had opportunity to either follow her mother's profession or to attempt the security forces training.

Tall and well muscled after years in the fields she knew what she wanted. On the first full day of her majority when the Corp field overseer came by her section of field she hailed him.

"What da you want." The Corp said with an eye towards Jesse's half filled hover crate that hung just above the low strawberry plants she was picking from.

"Yesterday was my day of majority. Boss man gave me my new citizen I.D. chit this morning."

"Yeah. So?"

"Vid says war's coming... says the Corp needs volunteers for the sec'forces."

"So?" The Corp said looking her up and down now. He'd gotten 9 other field hands volunteering on his rounds this morning but the law said he couldn't ask for them to do so while he was on duty.

"So I am volunteering."

The Corp nodded. "Good. Take your crate in an go get your things. Trucks' leaving tonight at sundown for the processing center."

Jesse high-tailed it out of the field pushing the crate along as fast as she could. Her things were in her Mama's room and she wanted to get in there and out again before her mama started her work that day.

That evening she was on the truck to the processing center and in a months time she was leading her squad through field training. She was well fed, clothed, and had been taught to read and write. In three months time she and her squad received the top honors in the security forces training program. The Vandoran mediators hadn't diffused the situation with the boarder conflict yet and small group of agitators were stirring up trouble among the small mountain communities near the disputed borderlands. There was a growing movement against the Vandorans occupation and the Corporations, who were seen as collaborators.

Jesse's unit was assigned to pacify one such community.

The fighting was intense. Vandoran armored units were brought in as back up and Jesse's unit was fighting along side one of the heavy warriors when a homemade grenade landed under the bug in lucky toss. Jesse shot the grenadier but the explosion destroyed the Vandoran's underarmor, exposing its soft and vulnerable underbelly. It began a retreat and Jesse's unit had no choice but to stay with it to protect it.

The enemy, sensing the bug's weakness, pressed the attack and Jesse found her squad getting mowed down around her while the Vandoran

panicked and fled rather than use its superior fire power to fend off the attacks. She didn't feel the first shot that punctured her leg armor due to the adrenaline in her system. But she did feel the one that pierced the lighter armor just under her arm and threw her onto her back just before a rocket fired from a building off to her right took out the Vandoran.

The concussion knocked her out.

She woke up staring at a NWA trooper who was scanning her with a medi box.

"Got a live one here." He called back over his shoulder. Jesse passed out again when the NWA Troopers moved her to a stretcher for evac.

She was taken to a mobile hospital where the staff was distressed to learn they had saved the life of United North American security force member. The dirt and bodily fluid from the Vandoran had so coated her uniform and armor that all insignia had been made unrecognizable.

Jesse woke up handcuffed to the railing on the side of her hospital bed.

"Nurse" she called weakly when she discover the handcuffs.

The nurse that was tending to a wounded trooper two beds down looked over at her then hurried over.

"Good lord child I can't believe you finally woke up." The nurse said

Jesse frowned. "How long have I been unconscious?" she asked.

The nurse patted her shoulder. "Honey you have been out since they brought you in three days ago. You almost died."

Jesse took that information in and in looking around but didn't recognize any of the men in the ward as belonging to her unit.

"Why am I handcuffed?" Jesse asked, pulling against the metal cuffs as the nurse checked her vitals and the flow of her IV.

The nurse stopped writing with her stylus on Jesse's chart and looked at her. "Honey, all prisoners have to be restrained. You are in the NWA's Trooper recovery ward...in the Missoula territory. The Troopers that brought you in thought you were one of ours."

Jesse blinked and frowned trying to assimilate the information while the nurse replaced her chart and went back to her rounds of the other patients in the ward. The Missoula territory was more than several hundred miles from the disputed border. She pulled at the handcuffs again but they were solid. Her wounds had been tended, she could feel the pull of the newly rebuilt muscles under her skin but the return of her health really didn't matter. She was a captive of the enemy. She might as well be dead.

She was allowed to recover in the ward for another three days before they came for her.

"Prisoner UNA3365 you are being transferred to MuirTech Corporate custody, R&D labs division. Stand and accept your restraints." The Trooper said as he unlocked the cuffs on her left wrist. When she hesitated, the Trooper slapped her with his gauntleted hand. Resigned and now bruised, she stood up next to the bed and let him bind her wrists behind her and place her in a set of shackles.

The transport was waiting outside the hospital entrance and she was thrown in with 15 other prisoners. Some she recognized from their ragged mismatched uniforms as the fighters that had been working as agitators in the border towns. Even though terrified she remained stoic and true to her security force training.

The transport landed them inside of a high security compound in the middle of a driving rain. They were herded out and through a garage door into a hangar like building with extremely high ceilings. As they entered two heavily armed troopers removed their restraints.

"Fall In!" The booming voice of a Trooper hollered at the prisoners. It echoed a bit in the large place.

"Each of you has been assigned a number and a cage." He said as the two Troopers that had removed their restraints at the door lined them up in a row.

"When we have tattooed you with your number you will..."

One of the men down the row from Jesse bolted. He was halfway back to the open door when the Trooper that had been speaking shot him. The heavy pistol fired three rounds and left the man dead before he hit the ground.

"Now as I was saying..." he looked over the line of wet and shivering prisoners. "Once you have been tattooed go to the cell that matches your number and step inside. Remove you clothing and toss it outside of the door. Any attempt to escape will result in death. Any attempt to fight will result in painful punishment. Any bullshit at all will get you hurt."

The prisoners stood under his watchful eye and one by one were tattooed with their prisoner number. Jesse gritted her teeth as the tattoo machine was placed just above her left breast and activated. She couldn't completely suppress the moan as the needles of ink penetrated her skin and marked her with her number.

She sullenly went to the cell that the number indicated. Her urge was to run as quickly as possible while the Troopers were busy with the other prisoners but one look at the Trooper captain with his hand on his gun dissuaded that. She stepped inside the empty cell and removed the hospital gown that had been her only poor covering and tossed it outside the door.

The door slide shut a moment later and sealed. The cell was 10 foot by 10 foot and completely devoid of any feature. She looked out through the clear thick plastic and waited. The wait didn't take long.

Behind her the sound of falling liquid drew her attention. When she saw the oily white liquid she screamed losing for the first time in her entire life the studied detachment that had kept her emotionally dead, and therefore protected from the harshness of life.

She screamed and beat her hands bloody against the clear plastic. She clawed the walls and wedged her self as far up into the corner as she could trying to get away from the nanite solution that was rapidly beginning to flow towards her.

She banged on the walls and begged with tears running down her face but the troopers watched impassively. When she saw the men in lab coats filing into the building she sobbed falling to her knees to beg for release or even death. But none of it did any good.

The nanite solution touched her and she screamed, leaping away from the fluid, but there was no where to go and the cell she was in filled rapidly. Soon she was treading in the solution, swimming to keep her face above the level but the top of the cell was pressing against the top of her head. She held her breath for as long as she could before her own body forced her to let it go and take in the nanite solution. When the tingling in her back began she tried to scream.

She never really passed out from the pain; she was never able to escape from it that way. Her back burned. She thrashed and contorted in the nanite bath. She swam through it banging again and again against the walls and ceiling, frantic for a way out.

She was unable to tell what was happening to her back but it felt as if it was splitting open and strange sensations tore through her. She pulled her arms and legs in but the sensations continued and it felt as if she was moving in the bath. Exhausted she finally succumb to sleep as the pain eased. She hung suspended in the nanite bath while her body was transformed.

When she felt her heels hit the floor and the return of weight she nearly panicked. Her body felt heavy and she realized the nanite bath was being drained away. She heaved, coughed and tried to rise up only to feel like there was some sort of heavy wet blanket laying over her. Too tired to try and move it she lay crying, too frightened to open her eyes and see what had been done to her. Her body felt different but she couldn't understand how.

The last of the nanite bath coughed and thrown up she lay weakly beneath the wet something that covered her.

"Oooh look at this one" It was an excited feminine voice. "Look at the work the nanites did. That new programming worked so wonderfully. This is exquisite."

Jesse felt a touch but couldn't define where she was being touched.

"Careful Doctor she is unrestrained."

"She? Oh a female! Excellent. Not to worry Sargent the process is quite draining on the subjects. She will be quite weak for a bit yet. Please help me here I want a better look."

Jesse felt more hands on her and suddenly she was being rolled over on to her side. She twitched, terrified and felt her body respond, pushing something away from her.

"Jesus! Doctor!"

Jesse felt her body move and her eyes popped open at the feeling of air moving across her wings. Wings?

"I'm okay Sargent she just knocked me over."

Wings? Jesse looked down at her self ... her body was softer some how. But she could feel new muscles every where. She turned her head to look back. Soft white feathers covered wings that, as she flexed her back muscle slowly, moved on her back.

"Hey there" a woman in a lab coat said as she came into view. She reached out and touched one of Jesse's still wet wings. Jesse pulled away and her wings folded back coming to rest against her back like a long soft white cloak.

"Man Marketing is going to love this." The woman said watching Jesse back away. "The newest MuirTech Exotic. The Angel!"

Yo ho ho and a barrel of Fun!



It's been 25 years (and counting) for the Portland Science Fiction Society and it's time to have a Party! In fact, we're going to have a Pirate Party Friday Night At OryCon, starting at 9:30pm!

Watch for Posters with the Room Number, me mateys!



There'll be song, merriment and much quaffing of (dry) grog!
I dare you swabbies to come!

"It's our 25th Anniversary—Give us your Silver!"

Convention Calendar

ORYCON 25

Date: Nov 14th-16th, 2003

Location: Double Tree Columbia River, Portland OR

Guests: Nina Kiriki Hoffman, Ken Goddard, Toni Weisskopf, Martin Greenberg, Gail Butler

Membership: \$45 until October 31st, \$50 At-the- Door.

Website: www.orycon.org

Greetings Con Goers!

RUSTYCON 21

Date: Jan. 16-18, 2004

Location: Bellevue Doubletree, Bellevue, WA

Guests: Octavia Butler, Todd Lockwood

Membership: \$40 to 11/30/03, \$55 At-the-Door.

Website: www.rustycon.com

NORWESCON 27

Date: April 8-11, 2004

Location: SeaTac Double Tree Hotel, Seattle WA

EMail: info@norwescon.org

Website: www.norwescon.org

WESTERCON 57/CONKOPELLII

Date: July 2-5, 2004

Location: The Wigwam Resort, Litchfield Park, AZ

Guests: C..J. Cherryh, David Cherry, Heather Alexander, John Hertz, Diana Gabaldon

Theme: Mythology of the Southwest

Membership: \$65 to 10/31/03, \$70 to 1/31/04, \$75 to 5/31/04. .

E-Mail: info@conkopilli.org

Website: www.az-sf.org

WORLDCON 62/NOREASCON 4

Date: Sept. 2-6, 2004

Location: Hynes Convention Center/Boston Sheraton Hotel/Boston Marriott Copley, Boston, MA.

Guests: Terry Pratchett, William Tenn, Jack Spears, Peter Weston

E-Mail: info@noreascon.org

Website: www.noreascon.org

FUTURE CONVENTIONS:**Worldcon 63/Interaction**

Glasgow, Scotland

Aug. 4-8 2005.

(Note: NOT over US Labor Day.)

2005 NaSFic/CascadeCon

Seatac, WA

Sept. 3-6,2005

Worldcon 64/LACon 4

Anahiem,CA

August 23-27. 2006

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.

All species, races, creeds, colors, and planets of origin
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Fractured Fairy Tales

Part 3

By Wendy Hubbard

Squinting in a vain attempt to see as she followed the fox's bushy tail through the leafy tunnel, the woman realized that, though it would not have provided much concealment in the bright light of day, in the gloom of night she was as invisible as if she were in a tunnel made of stone. Moving as quietly as she could, she ignored the sticks and rocks that snagged her skirts and scratched her hands as she crawled. "Cuts will heal in time... I can't say the same for what that mob might do if they caught me." She thought to herself. Soft fur in her face stopped her; the fox had halted and she hadn't noticed. It sat down in front of her and whined. She reached out carefully with her hands and felt nothing. Cautiously rising up to her knees, she stretched the kinks out of her back and finally pulled her hair back from her face, removing the strands that had been in her mouth for what seemed like hours. Her breathing, finally slowing from her panicked flight, sounded loud in the silent emptiness surrounding her.

Read Part 4 in the up coming December Pulsar!

.....

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When:

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Social Meetings—4th Saturday of every month

Orycon

Room Party Friday Night (watch for signs!)
Chocolate Tasting Sunday at 2pm in the Wilson Room
Or in the Office all weekend long!



Shuttle Recap

By Matt Picio

As I'm sure you all know, in February of this year, the space shuttle Columbia disintegrated upon re-entry, killing all 7 crew members on board. After a seven month investigation, the CAIB (Columbia Accident Investigation Board) released its final report on the tragedy.

The space shuttle Columbia was named for an American sloop that circumnavigated the world more than 200 years ago. It was the first operational shuttle and the first reusable spacecraft. Since its debut in 1981, Columbia completed 27 missions before its destruction on February 1st, 2003, only 16 minutes before its scheduled touchdown. Columbia carried a crew of seven: David Brown, Rick Husband, Laurel Clark, Kalpana Chawla, Michael Anderson, William McCool, and Ilan Ramon. During its 16 day STS-107 mission, Columbia and her crew traveled more than six million miles.

The CAIB investigation lasted 7 months. The 13 members and their staff of more than 120, assisted by some 400 NASA engineers examined more than 30,000 documents, conducted more than 200 formal interviews, and examined physical evidence, video footage, and reviewed more than 3,000 inputs from the general public. Over 25,000 searchers combed the Western U.S. for shuttle debris.

According to the CAIB report, there were a number of factors that contributed to the destruction of Columbia. The physical cause was a breach in the Thermal Protection System on the leading edge of the left wing, caused by a piece of insulating foam which separated from the external tank. This breach allowed superheated air to enter the interior of the wing, penetrating the leading edge insulation and melting the aluminum structure of the wing. The progressive failure of the wing led to increasing aerodynamic forces that caused a loss of control, subsequent failure of the wing and breakup of the orbiter. The nature of the breakup precluded crew survival.

In addition to the physical cause, the CAIB identified a number of organizational causes. NASA culture and organizational practices detrimental to shuttle safety developed over the years since the Challenger accident. Years of resource constraints, shifting policies and priorities, and schedule constraints also contributed to the accident. NASA also apparently ignored key issues with the shuttle's design, assuming that since nothing had gone wrong in the case of those particular issues, nothing *would* go wrong. NASA culture also made it difficult for the engineers to effectively communicate issues and concerns to NASA's upper-level management.

The 248-page final report is available for download from NASA's Columbia Investigation page at:

<http://spaceflight.nasa.gov/shuttle/investigation/index.html>

There are 2 versions of the report – both are quite large, the smaller is 10MB in size.

NASA is currently undergoing a number of changes to allow it to return the shuttle to flight. The agency has conducted a number of tests to identify the root cause of foam loss from the external tank. This problem plagued a number of shuttle missions before STS-107. NASA has also conducted a number of impact tests on Reinforced Carbon-Carbon (RCC) panels identical to those used on shuttle wings. Unlike the independent tests conducted during the investigation, NASA's tests showed no visible damage. NASA intends to run additional tests to determine what level of debris impact is critical to the orbiter. Also in the works are an on-orbit tile inspection procedure and a repair kit. The agency is also reviewing its internal procedures, organization and culture. NASA is currently working towards a return-to-flight date between September 12th and October 10th, 2004.

The accident has again called into question NASA's ability to properly execute its responsibilities. Critics have attacked its perceived surplus of funding, its perceived lack of funding, and the agency's reliance on a system that is more than twenty years old. The accident has also reignited the debate between manned and unmanned exploration of space.

Interestingly, the debate may have contributed to the recent explosion of media coverage of the X-Prize: the private race to space funded by private investors and chaired by Peter Diamandis. The X-Prize promises to award \$10 million to the first team that successfully launches the same craft above the 60 mile “border” of space within a two-week period. The X-Prize competition has attracted a number of teams, including aviation maverick Burt Rutan, who built the “Voyager” aircraft. Also in the running is Armadillo Aerospace, led by computer game designer John Carmack. There are 23 other teams participating, from the United States, Russia, United Kingdom, Romania, Israel, Argentina and Canada.

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Remember When?

Sam Butler went digging and found this story from the paper. The image is a little hard to read so he has kindly included the text.



SCIENCE FICTION CONCLAVE HELD AT PORTLAND

PORTLAND, Sept. 3 1950 - [AP] - There is a convention here that wouldn't have been startled if a delegation had whizzed in from Mars.

Trans-oceanic rocket air ships are antiques. Inter-planet travel is for kiddies' comics. Atom bombs, for example, are relics of by-gone eras.

Delegates debate dianetics, among other things. Scientists may one day get around to formal papers on this topic.

The assembly is the eighth World Science Fiction convention. Fans and authors attend. Actually, the meeting is for the readers. The men who write the stories are here to learn how to amaze their fans.

Take Edward E. Smith. He is an old-timer at writing science fiction. Back in 1914 he invented an atom bomb and blew up a planet. He mentioned this casually -- while sipping lemonade.

A-Bomb Story in 1928

Smith nods assent at the mention that his atom buster was prehistoric so far as John Q. Public can remember. He was ahead of the fiction market. His bomb story sizzled until 1928, when it was published.

A chemist by profession, Smith is general manager of a Chicago firm that makes doughnut mix. He became a science fiction fan -- and then an author.

His atom bomb idea came from reading about early radium research. Scientists then generally believed the atom was indestructible. So he smashed one in a fictional bomb.

Got \$75 for It

"I blew that planet completely to hellangone. I made a nova out of it. It was roughly comparable to what the hydrogen bomb would be if they used a ton of lithium hydride. I got \$75 for it." The price was for the story, not the bomb.

Right now he's busy creating a new universe. "It's quite a job," he said.

At that point in Smith's discussion, a group of fans nearby began taking apart the topic of Dianetics. This subject takes as a premise a belief that each individual human cell has a memory.

"It follows then," asserted one delegate, "that under the proper conditions a person can remember things that happened to his mother and father before he was born."

No one laughed at the idea.



LITERATURE ABUSE

AMERICA'S HIDDEN PROBLEM SELF-TEST FOR LITERATURE ABUSERS

How many of these apply to you?

1. I have read fiction when I was depressed, or to cheer myself up.
2. I have gone on reading binges of an entire book or more in a day.
3. I read rapidly, often 'gulping' chapters.
4. I have sometimes read early in the morning or before work.
5. I have hidden books in different places to sneak a chapter without being seen.
6. Sometimes I avoid friends or family obligations in order to read novels.
7. Sometimes I re-write film or television dialog as the characters speak.
8. I am unable to enjoy myself with others unless there is a book nearby.
9. At a party, I will often slip off unnoticed to read.
10. Reading has made me seek haunts and companions which I would otherwise avoid.
11. I have neglected personal hygiene or household chores until I have finished a novel
12. I have spent money meant for necessities on books instead.
13. I have attempted to check out more library books than permitted.
14. Most of my friends are heavy fiction readers
15. I have sometimes passed out from a night of heavy reading.
16. I have suffered 'blackouts' or memory loss from a bout of reading.
17. I have wept, become angry or irrational because of something I read.
18. I have sometimes wished I did not read so much.
19. Sometimes I think my reading is out of control.

If you answered 'yes' to three or more of these questions, you may be a literature abuser. Affirmative responses to five or more statements indicates there is a serious problem. Once a relatively rare disorder, Literature Abuse, or LA, has risen to new levels due to the accessibility of higher education and increased college enrollment since the end of the Second World War. The number of literature abusers is currently at record levels.

SOCIAL COSTS OF LITERARY ABUSE

1. Abusers become withdrawn, uninterested in society or normal relationships.
2. They fantasize, creating alternative worlds to occupy, to the neglect of friends and family.
3. In severe cases they develop bad posture from reading in awkward positions or carrying heavy book bags.
4. In the worst instances, they become cranky reference librarians in small towns.
5. Excessive reading during pregnancy is perhaps the number one cause of moral deformity among the children of English professors, teachers of English and creative writing. Known as Fetal Fiction Syndrome, this disease also leaves its victims prone to a lifetime of near-sightedness, daydreaming and emotional instability.

HEREDITY

Recent Harvard studies have established that heredity plays a considerable role in determining whether a person will become an abuser of literature. Most abusers have at least one parent who abused literature, often beginning at an early age and progressing into adulthood. Many spouses of an abuser become abusers themselves.

OTHER PREDISPOSING FACTORS

Fathers or mothers who are English teachers, professors, or heavy fiction readers; parents who do not encourage children to play games, participate in healthy sports, or watch television in the evening.

PREVENTION

Pre-marital screening and counseling, referral to adoption agencies in order to break the chain of abuse. English teachers in particular should seek partners active in other fields. Children should be encouraged to seek physical activity and to avoid isolation and morbid introspection.

DECLINE AND FALL: THE ENGLISH MAJOR

Within the sordid world of literature abuse, the lowest circle belongs to those sufferers who have thrown their lives and hopes away to study literature in our colleges. Parents should look for signs that their children are taking the wrong path - don't expect your teenager to approach

you and say, "I can't stop reading Spencer." By the time you visit her dorm room and find the secret stash of the Paris Review, it may already be too late.

What to do if you suspect your child is becoming an English major:

1. Talk to your child in a loving way.
2. Show your concern.
3. Let her know you won't abandon her--but that you aren't spending a hundred grand to put her through Stanford so she can clerk at Waldenbooks, either.

Remember that she may not be able to make a decision without help:

1. Perhaps she has just finished *Madame Bovary* and is dying of arsenic poisoning.
2. Face the issue: Tell her what you know, and how: "I found this book in your purse. How long has this been going on?"
3. Ask the hard question - Who is this Count Vronsky?
4. Show her another way. Move the television set into her room. Introduce her to frat boys.
5. Do what you have to do. Tear up her library card.
6. Make her stop signing her letters as 'Emma.'
7. Force her to take a math class, or minor in Spanish.
8. Transfer her to a Florida college.

You may be dealing with a life-threatening problem if one or more of the following applies:

1. She can tell you how and when Thomas Chatterton died.
2. She names one or more of her cats after a Romantic poet.
3. Next to her bed is a picture of: Lord Byron, Virginia Woolf, Faulkner or any scene from the Lake District.

Most importantly, remember, you are not alone. To seek help for yourself or someone you love, contact the nearest chapter of the American Literature Abuse Society, or look under ALAS in your telephone directory.

PorSFis Event Calendar

November 2003

- 1 13th Anniversary in-store sale at Wrigley-Cross Books
- 2 Birthday of Author Lois McMaster Bujold
- 3 Taurids meteor shower peak
- 4 Release of Star Trek:DS9, season 6, and "Finding Nemo" on DVD
Publication of "The Wolves of Calla" by Stephen King - from the
Dark Tower series
- 7-8 9th Annual Imaging the Sky Conference - Salem, OR
- 7-9 NerdCon 2003 (Gaming con) in Gresham, OR
- 7 Premieres of "The Matrix Revolutions" and "Elf"
- 8 PorSFis Meeting**
Total Lunar Eclipse Star Party at OMSI - eclipse at moonrise
- 9 Smithsonian Magazine's CultureFest at OMSI (12:00 p.m. to 4:00
p.m.)
- 11 Birthday of Author Kurt Vonnegut
Release of "Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines", "Naked Lunch"
and "FairyTale: A True Story" on DVD
- 14-16 ORYCON 25**
- 14 Premieres of "Looney Tunes:Back in Action" and "Eternal
Sunshine of the Spotless Mind"
- 17 Leonids meteor shower peak
- 18 Birthday of Author Alan Dean Foster
Release of "LOTR: The Two Towers (extended edition) on DVD
- 19 50th Birthday of actor Robert Beltran (ST-Voyager)
Premiere of movie "Spongebob Squarepants"
- 20-23 AmberCon NW (Amber RPG Con) in Portland, OR
- 20 Progress M1-11 Soyuz FG launch to International Space Station
- 21 Premiere of "The Cat in the Hat"
- 22-23 Oregon Book Fair
- 22 AltPorSFis hosted by Dave Moreland and Sue Renhard**
- 23 Birthday of Author Steven Brust
- 25 Release of "Bruce Almighty", "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, special
edition", "Xmen II", and "Star Trek - complete motion picture
collection" on DVD.
- 26 Premieres of "Timeline" and "Haunted Mansion"
- 29 Christian Doppler's 200 birthday - Let's do the red shift, again!!

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Journal of a Evil Security Chief

Part 4

By `Dancer-chan Yomochi

Day 152: The Ladies left in the middle of the night.

Day 153: Seven army battalions in blue helmets are camped outside the perimeter. Better check the news.

Day 154: Shouldn't be too surprised, I always knew the Ladies had it in them. Never thought they'd take control of the global beer market however. Frightfully clever of them, I must say.

Day 155: The seven army battalions of Blue Helmets are having remarkably bad time of finding the hideout. All that extra Miracle Grow on the Blackberries really did come in handy. That and none of them seem to want to get anywhere near the bubbling lava pool.

Day 155, a little before midnight: A Special Forces group has just been apprehended at the entrance of the base. Interrogated them, (those still left alive, that is) then put them out of my misery. Since I'm still feeling a little peevish I let the wolves have a little exercise.

Day 156: *yawn* The Blue Helmets had a rather distressing night of it. The wolves kept them awake all night with their howling and stalking the sentries. Did I mention that they were special wolves? Evil Witch gave them the ability to communicate with thoughts and Mad Scientist had used gene therapy to turn them into prehistoric versions of themselves. I really like these additions; they make for great defense whenever we feel like a scrimmage game of soccer.

Day 157: They brought as spy disguised as a zoologist to infiltrate the base today. *rolls eyes* Do they really think I'm that dumb? I waited until he was inside the perimeter than shot him with a high powered laser. Need to sight my laser, I blew his head up when I was aiming for his neck.

Day 158: The army spent another unnerving night camped outside, then attacked at dawn. Was able to sight my new LaZar 3000.

Day 159: Put in a request for a large sized pool filled with flesh eating piranhas for the Evidence Disposal Unit.

Day 162: The Ladies returned after sunset, almost got shot by the new kid. They weren't happy. I must remember not to hire anyone while they're away. But their plan was a success.

Day 164: The Ladies have decided to move the base. Am glad, all the wildlife around the volcano is dying for no apparent reason. In unrelated news, our water supply is starting to taste funny.

Day 165: Moved into the new base. All personal who can't swim have been given one week to learn or become target practice. They've all been trying really hard.

Day 166: Am ambivalent about new base. As much as I like the sea, I don't really enjoy being under it all the time. Mastermind says this is only temporary, and Evil Witch spends all her time chatting with the local wildlife. Mad Scientist hasn't been seen since she sealed herself in her lab with her pet tank and an arch torch. I feel sorry for her assistants. They're all surprisingly bright lads and lasses (and more than a few are lookers) but they're at a complete loss outside the laboratory.

Day 172: All the piranhas are seasick, so the few henchfolk that still can't swim have been given another week to learn.

Day 178: Some weirdo with a vocabulary from the 60s made it into the base today. Was so angry that he made it that far that I shot him before I could learn what he meant by 'shagging'. Maybe he was a carpet salesman?

Day 179: Everyone can swim, much to my disappointment. The piranhas at least are feeling better.

Read the next exciting entries in the December Pulsar!

Read the previous entries in the Pulsar Archives at www.porsfis.org

Ask Ed



Yes folks that's right Ed has agreed to do his monthly column again and Here it is!

-The Editor

Ed's response: Agreed nothing! You said you would burn those pictures! We had a Deal!

Dear Ed, Is it true that you will be making a Secret personal appearance at OryCon 25 against the wishes of the Con Chair?

-Fellow Fan

Ed's response: Look, if I told you I was going to be there it wouldn't be a secret now would it, you moron?

Dear Ed, Is it true that you have been banned from all Convention activities on the west coast due to insurance reasons?

-worried in Portland

Ed's Response: That is an Utter lie. I was only banned from that one Convention in California and that wasn't my fault. In fact I am suing the Hotel for damages. The chandelier should have been able to hold much more weight!

Dear Ed, I hear your book release date has been pushed back due to charges of plagiarism and fraud that have been leveled against you. I want you to know I support you.

-fan of the first fan

Ed's Response: *snort* Thanks ... a lot. Your support and 2 bucks will buy me a beer during happy hour. Sheesh! Where do you people come from?

Ed's Speaks out

I was reminded today by an internet article of Fred Rogers' death. Fred Rogers died 8 months ago, and we've seen no one come forward with accusations of misconduct, blackmail, sexual abuse, or any such. There was no child pornography found in his basement, or signs of alcoholism, prescription or illicit drug abuse, or anything else of an illegal nature. Fred Rogers was exactly what he appeared - a really nice guy who loved kids, a wonderful caring man who chose to dedicate his life to educating and helping people. I am not that Guy. In this day and age where it seems like every person in the public eye has a secret, sordid past, or undisclosed indiscretions, Fred Rogers stands as an individual who lived life honestly, and lived a life worth living. He will be missed. If you want to be like anyone be like him.



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



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The Portland Science fiction society is looking for new members. There are several ways to join. Joining for the first time? You can fill out the form below and mail it with your check for \$10.00 to

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Or you can come talk to us at the **25th Anniversary PorSFis room party at OryCon** where we will take your money and ply you with compliments.

Or you can Stop by the **Chocolate tasting at OryCon on Sunday the 18th** and get a free tasting plate with your membership payment.

Any way you want to join is OK by us.

Yes, I want to be a member of the Portland Science Fiction Society, Here is my information:

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