

PSFS News

The Newsletter of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society

March 1997

Our March Guests:

Phil & Kaja Foglio

Phil Foglio's father inadvertently witnessed the first atomic test at Alamogordo, which explains quite a lot about Phil himself. He grew up in New York, where he acquired the ability to talk fast without saying anything important. Although he enjoyed drawing, he had decided upon a career in the exciting world of computers until he realized that, to do so, you had to be good at math. (This was in the old days, before the computer would do all the math for you.) So, to his father's disappointment, he decided to become an artist.

He attended the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts, an old, prestigious school which went out of business the year he graduated. He assures us that there is no connection. While at school, he discovered science fiction fandom and became a regular contributor to fanzines. He was awarded the field's highest accolade, the Hugo Award for Best Amateur Artist, in 1977 and again in 1978.

Once out of school, he created book covers and miscellaneous illustration work, before finally drifting into comic books. He adapted Robert Asprin's novel *Myth Adventures* into comic book form, and he has been the scripter on several obscure comics such as *Starblazers*, *Dynamo Joe*, and *His Monster* for DC Comics.

As a writer, he's had several short stories published, as well as a novel, *Illegal Aliens*, a collaboration with friend Nick Pollotta.

In 1989, Phil started his own publishing company, Palliard Press, which puts out *XXXenophile*, his humorous, Eisner Award-nominated adult comic, and *Buck Godot - Zap Gun for Hire*, a humorous science-fiction comic. Palliard Press now publishes the *XXXenophile* trading card game, which, he swears, started out as a joke.

Phil has been a busy boy working for Wizards of the Coast. He has revived *What's New*, a popular comic strip about gaming that originally appeared in *Dragon* magazine. *What's New* is now found in *The Duelist*TM and focuses primarily on the trading card game phenomenon. He has contributed to various *Magic: The Gathering*[®] expansions

and is the principal artist for the *RoboRally*TM family of games, which teaches people about embracing fatalism, the transitory nature of existence, and basic computer programming. His dad would be very happy.

Kaja Foglio has been making up stories and drawing all of her life. It wasn't until her last year in college, however — when she got to know some professional artists — that she realized it was possible to do such things full time; before that, she thought an artist was something you *were*, not something that you did for a living. But her mother knew better. When Kaja would talk about careers in astronomy or historical research or theater, her mother would always say, "You should be an artist; you should write stories!" This didn't sound very practical to Kaja, but mom turned out to be right and now gets to say "I told you so" whenever Kaja is too busy with art to do anything else. Kaja doesn't mind, though; it's very nice making a career out of her art, and her mother's continued support is the envy of many artists whose disapproving families have always told them to "get a job."

Kaja began working for Wizards of the Coast on the *Arabian Nights*[®] expansion, and, with the exception of *The Dark*TM, has worked on every *Magic: The Gathering*[®] expansion since. She has been perfecting her craft expansion by expansion, trying to increase the realistic look of her art while still trying to keep the deep, rich colors that she loves to work with. She is working on a number of projects, not only in the gaming industry but also in the science fiction and comics fields. She estimates that she will be done with all of her current workload sometime in the next century.

Travel is Kaja's favorite hobby — she has been "mobbed in five countries" by Magic fans, and is always ready to add more countries to the number. Her next trip is to China and Hong Kong, where she will sail up the Yangtze looking for curiosities and inspiration. Her goal is to visit all seven continents. Maybe the penguins in Antarctica play Magic?

Announcements

Copies of any official PSFS correspondence should be sent to both the Secretary and the One Year Director for filing in the Society's official records.

The Philcon web site is: <www.netaxs.com/~philcon>.

Newsletter Submissions can be e-mailed to rak@netaxs.com

General Meeting Minutes

These are the minutes of the General PSFS meeting held on February 21st, 1997, at International House. The meeting was called to order at 8:16 pm.

Proxies: None.

Corrections to the Minutes: Alan Clarke should be Alan Clark. 7557 Burholme should be 7957 Burholme. The minutes were approved as corrected.

Officers' Reports:

President: Hi! Glad to see everyone here in the middle of Summer (I really wish that was a joke). I've had a very interesting month, none of which relates to the Society. I'm really, really glad to be here. For once I'm glad to get away from my life.

"The Once and Future" Vice President: Welcome to the Maui February meeting of the Society. Greg Frost said he's going to run another writers workshop like last year called "Sycamore Hill" and he doesn't know who all will be coming. He'll let us know when he finds out.

We got a call from a convention called "Swilcon", by a group at the University of Swarthmore. They needed advice about how to get in touch with local pros.

Oz announced Darrell Schweitzer & Mattie Brahen's engagement.

Stunt Secretary: I've got special forms for anyone who has an announcement, meeting, or special event you want listed in the newsletter. I also have blank forms for this year's directory. You can e-mail me at rak@netaxs.com.

Treasurer: Not here.

2 Year Director (Tina): said she was playing Treasurer tonight and to pay your dues.

2 Year Director (Avi): The Wookiee says, "Green is keen."

1 Year Director (Tasha): My socks match my sweater, which is no small feat. Tasha is now doing book reviews for the Newsletter. She will slip in some Hugo suggestions.

Special Business

Election of the Replacement Secretary: Was not voted on.

Committee Reports:

Programming: Oz introduced David Hartwell to the membership. Oz announced the programming committee members: Oz, Pam Fernsler, Tasha Kelly, Tony Finan, and Becky Jollensten. (See the last page for future guest speakers.)

Special Events: Movie: *The Return of the Jedi*, Saturday, March 15th, approximately 8 p.m., location TBA.

Book Discussion: March: *Time Master* by R. L. Forward, Sunday, March 16th, 7957 Burholme. **April:** *Door #3* by Patrick O'Lery, day, place, and time TBA. **May:** *Timescape* by Gregory Benford, day, place, and time TBA.

Philcon '97: has reared its ugly head, said Tony. (See last page for meeting day, time, and place.) Tony will have two rolls of quarters available for the next meeting.

Babylon 5 Dissection Discussion: Next meeting is Saturday, March 22nd, 4 pm, at TonyTinaTimandBecky's House (a/k/a T³B). Bridget asked if it could start at 5 since several of those who would attend must be at a 2001 committee meeting that afternoon. Tony said he could either start the meeting while they were at the 2001 meeting or wait until he has a bunch of people with Post Meeting Stress (PMS) syndrome descend on his house. Tony changed the start time to 5 pm eft.

Philm Con: the next meeting will be Tuesday, March 11th, 8 pm, at T³B.

Art Group: See Bridget Boyle for more information.

Movie Discussion: The next movie will be a double feature. On Sunday, March 23rd, we'll show *Flesh Gordon* (x-rated) at 2 pm and *Twice Upon a Time* (animated) at approx. 4 pm. Attend either or both at Bruce & Shelly Bloom's, 28 Rosedale Rd., Wynnewood, PA. For more info. or directions call (610) 642-6061. There's free on street parking.

No Fund: We have three boxes of stuff, please take it all.

Publicity: The head of Publicity had resigned. We need a volunteer to become the new head.

Science Committee: March 3rd through March 8th was Space Week according to the Educational and Government Space Week International Association. The National Space Society is still celebrating the July week. See Hank Smith for interesting events with a scientific bent.

Phillip K. Dick Award: The award is given for a distinguished paperback original science fiction book (usually a novel, but can be a short story collection); a first time U.S. publication which may have been previously published elsewhere. The award was founded by Tom Disch at Norwescon in the early 1980's. P.S.F.S. got involved in the late 1980's when he turned over the administration to David Hartwell and H.A. Budrys. Budrys retired a couple of years ago and Gordon Van Gelder joined. There are five judges who make nominations from the books they've been able to obtain and read, the list of which is posted in January. The award is given at Norwescon who gives free roomnights to the winner and runner-up and \$300 cash toward the award itself. Its presentation is timed just before the Nebula is voted on and just before the Hugos are nominated to bring attention to good paperback originals in the S.F. field. The winner is officially announced at the end of March. The award is for \$1500. \$1000 is given to the

winner and \$500 is given to the runner-up plus \$150 or so for certificates and presentations. No one on the committee gets reimbursed for their expenses. They have collected \$550 and expect more. Gary said the Society usually authorizes \$1100 and requested that amount for this year as a contingency budget. Hal Lynch moved, several seconds, to make it so. *(The motion was not necessary since it was a committee requesting a budget.)* Tony called for discussion. Oz asked if Norwescon had been asked to contribute funds this year. David said they put up \$300. They also, at their own expense, do photos and other publicity. David asked the Society to vote to support the award. Oz asked if they would be willing to split the shortfall with us. After some discussion Gary said he would contact Norwescon and ask. Someone called the question. Tony asked if anyone else wanted to speak on the subject. Someone asked if this could be discussed at the Board Meeting. Tony said no, the Society has to vote on it. Several members wanted to know why we're contributing so much. Gary said we have to match the amount that Norwescon gives and make up whatever shortfall there is after all the contributions are received. Gary said we will be asking Norwescon to share whatever deficit there is, but we don't know what it'll be at this time. Tony said for the record this is the same thing we voted on last year. Oz thought that wasn't correct, but Carol showed him last year's Newsletter. Tony asked how much we actually spent last year. Gary didn't know. Will publishers contribute if they see our Newsletter? Gary said it wouldn't make a difference. Can the Society could be informed sooner next year? David said the publishers don't do anything till the last minute so it would be hard to comply with her request. *(Note: This would't keep Gary from asking for his usual budget amount in, say, October instead of waiting till February. Also note that just because he asks for \$1100 doesn't mean he's going to spend it all. CK)* After several more minutes of discussion Oz moved, Lew second to extend business by 10 minutes. Passed. After still more discussion the Society finally voted 35 to 0 (with no proxies) in favor of Gary's request that was turned into the following motion: *That we authorize a contingent appropriation of up to \$1100 for the expenses and the balance of the prizes on the conditions that we ask Norwescon to put up half of the [deficit] that remains after outside contributions have been collected and that we initiate discussions now over what their contribution will be for future years.*

Old Business: none.

New Business: Todd said we need more and better lighting for the Art Show. He moved, several second, to give \$900 to Boston for a full lighting suite. After some discussion it was passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 pm.

Membership Status

Note: Status Changes from inactive to general or general to active become effective after the meeting has adjourned.

New Members: David Hartwell, Ronald & Sandra Tansky

Members at the February Meeting: 55
(50 active, 4 general, 1 inactive)

Non-members at the February Meeting: 3

Board Meeting Minutes

These are the minutes of the PSFS Board meeting held on February 25th, 1997, at Pete's office. The meeting was called to order at 8:15 pm eft.

Board members (current and future) present: Tony, Oz, Carol, Pete, Avi, Tasha, Tina, and Shelley.

Others present: Bruce Bloom.

Officers' Reports

President: Hi! Thanks to Pete for cooking. We'll be at Lunacon.

Vice President: Another Philcon '97 Special Guest is Lisa Mason. David Hartwell had a good time.

Secretary: Take forms.

Treasurer: working with Gary to turn over stuff. Gary is finishing Philcon '96 work. Already working on signature cards so turnover will go more smoothly.

Two Year Director (Tina): Not here.

Two Year Director (Avi): eeeeeeeeeee (Wookiee roar.)

One Year Director (Tasha): Putting together ways to use Roberts Rules of Order for calm meetings.

Committee Reports:

Programming: Tasha moved, Tony second, to create a new committee for special programming to be held at various (college) locations. Passed Unanimously. (See below for new committee budget.)

Old Business: none.

New Business: *The Budget:* Is recommended (by unanimous vote) by the Board as follows:

Meeting Space	\$3,000.00
Secretary	1,000.00
Publicity	500.00
Programming	5,000.00 (increase from 1996)
Special Programming	2,000.00 (new)
Treasurer	200.00 (increase from 1996)
Special Events	500.00
Milton Award	350.00
Refreshments	700.00
Oversight	100.00
P.O. Box	110.00 (increase from 1996)
Archives	100.00
Book Discussion	25.00
No Fund	0.00 (doubled from 1996)
Hotline	525.00
BoD Emergency	300.00
President Emergency	300.00
Bulk Mail Permit	85.00
Annual Banquet	600.00
Movie Discussion	60.00 (increase from 1996)
<u>Babylon 5 Discussion</u>	<u>25.00</u>
TOTAL	\$15,480.00

The next Board meeting will be held on March 18th at 7:30 pm at Shelley's (see Meeting Notices for details.)

Adjourned at 9:48 pm.

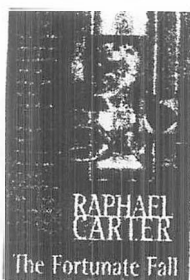
Shiny, Juicy, New Stuff

by Tasha Kelly

"Keep cool and collect."

— Mae West

— Books, that is. Welcome to my corner of the sf world.



The Fortunate Fall

by Raphael Carter

288 pp. HC, Tor

© 1996

Cover by Bruce Jensen

Keeping current with the sf publishing industry is always challenging, and mostly fun. The upside to trying to read a fair sampling of the novels published every year, especially by the newest writers, is discovering a particularly fresh voice in the field. There's nothing better than reading a book by an author whose name is still relatively unknown, for whom there are no scholars or fanatical critics, and finding that book more than simply *good enough*. What I seek by reading new authors is the thrill of the risk — will reading this neophyte's book pay off in a jackpot of wonder?

The Fortunate Fall by Raphael Carter is one of those new books worthy of your gamble. This novel was published in the summer of 1996 to what seemed like mild, positive notice, and I never heard it mentioned again in the sf forums. For a publisher to put a brand-new author's work out in hardcover and then to forego the advertising dollars, they take a risk on two fronts: without lots of media hype, many bookbuyers won't take a chance, and especially won't take a chance with a brand new writer at \$22 a pop. Through word-of-mouth, that ever-reliable barometer, *The Fortunate Fall* was recommended to me with exceptionally high praise, and I decided to cough up the hardcover price at Borders.

It's well worth the price, people. The story opens on a future a little over 300 years from now, in which just about everyone is wired with moistware — they can tune into and experience the net with all their senses, through chips in their brains. Our heroine, Maya Tatyanchina (in this version of Russia, matronymics are common) is a camera, a reporter on the net who projects everything she experiences directly into the minds of her audience. With the help of a screener, who monitors everything the camera feels and who also censors the camera's inappropriate or personal thoughts before they reach the audience, Maya embarks on a search for truth regarding a holocaust perpetrated by a former government, the fundamentalist Christian Guardians.

Since the overthrow of the Guardians, the psy-

chological damage of their widespread mass murder of dissidents has been carefully suppressed by the silly Postcops (wait until you find out how they got their name) and the more sinister and mysterious Weavers — individuals assigned to erasing certain unpleasant topics from the consciousness of the netusers. In mortal fear that the Weavers will uncover her plan to reacquire the public with knowledge of the Guardians' crimes, Maya, along with her super-competent screener, Keishi Mirabara, chase down a man who survived as the lab assistant/experiment of a man named Derzhavin, the Guardians' equivalent to the Nazis' Dr. Mengele. What comes next is a macabre revelation of secrets which include the last, live whale on earth, the true goal of the Weavers, and the discovery by Maya Tatyanchina of a long-lost part of herself.

The future, as seen by Carter, is slightly recognizable, but also logically strange. I find Carter's future believable on an instinctive level. The trait in common with the present which shows up in the author's future is the territorial, dominance-seeking behavior of the human species. We mass-murder each other out of righteousness and its shameful cousin, covetousness. We periodically institutionalize thought-control in our populaces to protect ourselves from uncomfortable thoughts. The road to hell. . . as the saying goes.

When you get to the powerful ending, I urge you to turn to the beginning and reread the first two pages of the novel. These pages' meaning will come much clearer to you than it possibly could have when you read them the first time around. Best of all, *The Fortunate Fall* leaves you with lots to mull over, rather than lots to forget when you put the book down. There is no question that Raphael Carter is a well-above-average newcomer to science fiction. The next book will no doubt be worth the wait, just as this first book is well-worth the hardcover price.



The Higher Space

by Jamil Nasir

241 pp. MMP, Bantam Spectra

© 1996

Cover by Bruce Jensen

What do you do when you really want to love a book — you come to it with high expectations — but the book disappoints? I got around to Jamil Nasir's *The Higher Space* a week or so after having finally read his first effort, *Quasar*, also out from Bantam Spectra in mass market paperback. I loved *Quasar*, mostly for its non-stop action and highly developed, atmospheric future. *The Higher Space*, however, could be happening in a suburb anywhere in America, right now. Nasir has removed the strongest asset of *Quasar* — its fantastic setting — from *The Higher Space*, leaving less avenues for the weaving of imaginative wonder. This alone did not disappoint me, but without the 'sensawunda', I cast a more clini-

cal eye on judging other aspects of the book.

As the story opens, we meet Bob and Vicki Wilson, a comfortably married, professional couple in their late 30s/early 40's. He's a corporate lawyer and she's a real estate agent. Okay so far. Into their lives pops one Diana Esterbrook, a nerdy teenager with an overwhelming obsession with computers. She moves in with the Wilsons temporarily while Bob prepares to represent her parents (who adopted her) in a custody battle with her birth mother.

The story up to this point, and indeed, throughout, is engaging. The reader will sense a plot-kink about to be thrown in, or there wouldn't be the need for 200-odd more pages. The kink here involves a wending of magic and mathematics, cleverly named thaumatomathematics (the Greek root, *thau*, means "miracle"). Young Diana, rather socially maladjusted, creates graphical mappings of complex equations meant to represent the patterns and dynamics of organic life. According to Diana's mentor, Dr. Al-Haq, the creator of thaumatomathematics, it could take a lifetime to find and include all the variables a human life has acting upon it, and thus one's equations and extrapolations may never be complete or accurate. However, if one can achieve this mathematical perfection, one's own future can be predicted quite accurately. Diana, needless to say, is much further along on the path to such perfection than any fifteen-year-old has business being.

This first kink isn't enough, though, to drive the story alone. Throw into the mix a slaving, hulking were-creature, a mysterious old man in black who follows Bob Wilson around, and an autistic child who climbs trees to place shamanistically-protected garlic heads on the window frames of the Wilsons' house, and you've got a really wacky "what-the-hell-is-going-on-here?" kind of book. Mysterious happenings build to the inevitable climax in which we get a compelling glimpse of "the higher space." Exactly what that is, you'll have to find out for yourself by reading the book.

The biggest problem I have with the book is that Bob Wilson, our point of view protagonist, doesn't seem to see the connections which are made rather obvious to us, the readers. As Mr. Nasir provides transparent links between various events and objects, Bob stumbles through them obliviously, unwilling to let the utter strangeness of his experience sweep him into the spirit of solving the mystery of Diana Esterbrook and thaumatomathematics. Bob has a sidekick, an engaging, eager private investigator who wants to do all the much-needed but risky snooping necessary to answer Bob's questions — but Bob chastises him and does his best to discourage him at every turn! This annoyed me, rather than providing me the pleasure of watching a fractious relationship drive the plot. By the end, I felt the answers came clear despite Bob's efforts. I realized that by the end of this book I found it hard to like Bob.

The wimpiness that defines Bob Wilson puzzles me, however, since *Quasar* handled a similar set-up quite

differently. In that book, a man becomes embroiled with the life of a troubled young woman and tries to solve the mystery of her insanity. Very similar to *The Higher Space...* except that in *Quasar*, Theodore Karmade is willing to brave the deadliest underground tunnels populated with mutants and killer-things called Maggots just to get to the bottom of Quasar's multiple personality disorder. What happened between the first book and the second? Bob Wilson is a bit cranky and not at all courageous. Such character "flaws" can actually enhance a plot — in classical tragedy, for instance. In *The Higher Space*, however, we've got a rousing sf mystery which calls for a protagonist with a strong sense of curiosity and stick-to-itness.

But, even with this problem, the book is fun and worth reading, especially for the way-cool description of "the higher space." I also highly recommend *Quasar* for a fast read, jam-packed with revelations. It will probably bring to mind visions of the movie *Total Recall* — and since I liked the movie, this counts as a good thing! Remember the part where the prostitute bares her three (count 'em, three) breasts? Yeah, well, I guess that's a discussion for another time and place.



Call the PSFS Hotline
(215) 957-4004

PSFS & Philcon Meeting Info
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Questions? Comments? Contact any Board Member at the above numbers or use the Hotline.

To send e-mail to the board, write to bored@cyber.com

Science Fiction for March

by Henry Leon Lazarus

The advantage that fantasy and science fiction have over general fiction is control over the background. General fiction writers can pick their backgrounds carefully, researching them from the myriad aspects of real life. Fantasy authors have their full imagination to work with. Background can be as important as character in telling the story, sometimes even more important.

Paul Witcover's alien background in *Walking Beauty* (hard from Harper Prism) is such. The inhabitants of this unusual world live in fear of losing their men to the scent of beauty that comes at night that the women watch their mates all tied down. Around them the fire flies light the night and a Catholic-like church runs the world. In the end, when all the answers were given to the puzzles of this strange environment, I was left with the feeling of having visited a strange place that I could never fully understand. This should be an award nominee.

Sometimes backgrounds can be so compelling that they live on after their designer's death. In *Foundation's Fear* (hard), Gregory Benford takes Isaac Asimov's vision of galactic empire and gives his own slant to Hari Seldon at the time of the creation of the two Foundations. Other authors in later books will attempt to complete the vision of a new empire created by the two foundations.

Broken Blade (paper), Ann Marston's final tale of the third generation to wear the kingship sword, captures some of the fun of the first book while the granddaughter is chased around her world trying to stay the invasion of her land.

I'm not sure what market William Shatner (with the aid of Bill Quick) intended *Delta Search* (hard) for. This tale of a young man with secret information buried in his DNA and sought by the evil government is too simple for adults and way too violent for most teens.

The tale of a musicologist/singer brought to a fantasy world where music creates magic has had many generic variations. But L. E. Modesitt, Jr. manages, with careful attention to his background, to give *The Soprano Sorceress* (Hard from TOR) a solid underpinning and a sense that the story has finally been told right.

Steven Brust and Emma Bull have done the necessary research to bring 1849 England to life. *Freedom and Necessity* (Hard) is really a historical novel told through letters and journal entries that make up its tale of plots and secret societies. It's really a historical novel, but I mention it here because it is impossible to put down and I want to rave about it.

Dave Wolverton concludes his *The Golden Queen* series by taking his adventures to a planet with ancient ruins and a man who has brought his version of Greek gods to life. They're followed, of course, by the *Lords of the Seventh Swarm* (Hard). The book is light fun and can be read on its own.

I'm a little late in getting to Gene Wolfe's 4th and concluding book in his *Book of the Long Sun* series, *Exodus from the Long Sun* (hard), because I had to borrow it from a friend who is a Gene Wolfe fan. It concludes the tale of the hollowed-out starship that has taken so long to get to its destination that its inhabitants, human, android and robot, have forgotten they are on a ship and have regressed in technology, thinking that the computer screens provide them access to their gods whom they sacrifice to. It didn't work for me.

All the Del Rey books this month are parts of thirty year old series. Anne McCaffrey has been filling in her science fictional history of the world of Pern, where dragons fly to kill the thread from the Red Star. During the second fall, many traditions are established, like the *Dragonseye* (Hard) and, of course, bad holders have to be worked with. I never felt that the movie needed a sequel, but three sequels later we have the conclusion to Arthur C. Clarke's masterpiece, *3001: The Final Odyssey* (hard), in which a revived Frank Poole (left adrift in space by HAL) tours the future and must confront the builders of the

monoliths, aided by HAL and Dave. If primitives on a planet ripe for development have access to higher technology in *The Howling Stones* (Hard by Alan Dean Foster), what are first contact specialists supposed to do? This fits in his long running *Humanx Commonwealth* series but with independent characters. *Star Wars* fans will probably want the novelization of the movie trilogy in one volume (paper).

All of the Baen books this month have villains who deserve the twirling mustache and are solid punching bags for the heroes. Doranna Durgin returns to the story of Jess the horse who was converted to a human and still has to find her own way, fighting a cabal of evil magicians in *Changespell* (paper). S. M. Sterling returns to Joat, now grown up, from *The City Who Fought* (paper). She has her own ship with an intelligent AI and she's fighting the same villains who now want to spread a brain-destroying disease on their enemies in *The Ship Avenged* (hard). Holly Lisle creates an ancient evil in the far future fought by a young bounty hunter, *Hunting the Corrigan's Blood*. The type of monster is hinted at by the name of the ship she is hunting. Also look for the paperback of James Hogan's search for Utopia through alternate Earths, *Paths to Otherwhere*.

Media books written by the creator of the computer game can actually be quite good. Jane Jensen brings her game about Gabriel Knight, *Sins of the Fathers* (paper from ROC) to life. While occult detectives have been overdone, Gabriel is new to the game and has to redeem the mistake of his which hunter ancestor in New Orleans, thus making the story fresh. I was almost tempted to go out and buy the game. *The Kronos Condition* (paper) is darker than many of Emily Davenport's books and since it takes place mainly in a dream world about teens with super powers, not as intense. I've enjoyed her earlier books better.

Ian Slater presents a convincing case that there might be war with the militias in the near future in *Showdown* (paper from Fawcett). While this is far more for the lover of military fiction with its emphasis on weapons and battle tactics, it is interesting.

Two excellent books: Robin Hobb's second in her Farseer series, *Royal Assassin* (Bantam Spectra), and Joan D. Vinge's latest tale about the telepath Cat, *Dreamfall* (Aspect), are out in paper.

Pocket has another erotic horror anthology *Kiss and Tell*, edited by Jeff Gelb and Michael Garrett. Ugh!

Finally, X-Files will want to own *The X-Files Lexicon* (trade from Avonova,) put together by N.E. Cence.

Henry L. Lazarus <hlazar@netaxs.com>

PSFS News

PSFS News is the Newsletter and Corporate Minutes of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society, published monthly as a benefit of membership. It is available free to Active and General Members of the Society, and to any SF club or organization wishing to trade newsletters. Non-members or Inactive Members may subscribe at an annual cost of \$10/year.

PSFS News welcomes submissions, and is seeking to expand. Anyone wishing to contribute articles (book or movie reviews, discussion group or convention reports, announcements, etc.) is encouraged to do so. We prefer that articles be e-mailed (send to rak@netaxs.com), but they may be mailed if necessary to the P.O. Box. Deadline is two weeks before the next general meeting.

PSFS News is produced on a Macintosh using ClarisWorks 4.0, and is printed on a DeskWriter 320. Emailed articles may be either submitted as plain text, or as attached ClarisWorks files (use machinery or binhex if available). Other file formats may be possible. Artwork or photos are also welcome in any Mac graphics format, or we can scan originals if mailed to us.

Philcon '96 Debriefing Minutes

International House, 1 Feb 1997. Called to order at 2:10pm.

Chair — Philcon 96 was a success, the transition to Philcon 97 is going great.

Vice-Chair — Hi.

Treasurer — We achieved a surplus. (There was much rejoicing)

Secretary — There were no complaints at the gripe session that Philcon could control. Thanks to Pam Fernsler for finishing this for me.

Hotel Liaison — Bills being paid. Management was ok. Sandy Black did a good job and will be our contact person next year.

Art Show — Lighting budget needs to be increased. LA-Con III is sending us 500.00 rental for our equipment. Funds match last year. Usual problems, usual solutions. Things ran smoothly. Thanks to all who helped.

Dealers Room — Thanks to Mitch for security and Don as well. More dealers than space. Things seemed to go well. A load master needs to be assigned specifically for dealers. (Some note here about T-shirt's Check with John Prenis)

Green Room — Under budget. Thumbs up on the check-in procedure (thanks Sharon!)

Programming — Overall things went well. Lynn heard people requesting more art panels. Darrell said, with computer failure his dept. was stretched to its limits. Vicky asked that Costuming be given set hours that will not change or be relocated. It resulted in a lost panel.

Programming Ops — A discussion ensued as to the practicality of word processing & labels. It boiled down to upgrading a database and better timing.

Science Programming — Lynn suggested more for children. Hank said all went well.

Information — Had a staff and things went well.

Quartermaster — Apologies to Bob for not being there from Don.

Registration — Due to lack of proper tabled we improvised and it worked better, may use it next year. Totals not tallied yet. Willing to use Triplicate form next year.

Publicity — Flyers were sent, Hank handled the press and PR in the green room. Newspaper ads should be better proofed to include Time, date, etc. Joni has a Jim Burns piece that might be used in the future.

PSFS Sales — New Triplicate form worked well. Need three separate cash boxes. John Prenis wishes to state his opposition to the sale of bootleg anime tapes in the dealers room.

Babysitting — Went well. Request a beeper in case the

number of children surpasses the volunteers capacity. Discussion followed as to new communication technologies. Bob Coran is looking into them.

Logistics — Thanks to Masquerade for the use of the Truck. This department needs some overhaul. Everything should be labeled and inventoried at sight. Quartermaster needs someone briefed on procedures as soon as con opens. Much discussion ensued as to how to shape this up.

Gaming — there were some mishaps. Some items may have been taken by a helper. A call for reimbursements was taken. Unanimously in favor of reimbursement for the cost of the missing items.

Exhibitions — Went very well. The post office (post Awful) was a no-show. The Scream people were right across from the Film room which worked well.

Media Ops — Anime went well due to John Prenis donation. Film attendance was down from previous years. TV for masquerade went well. Cable system didn't work. Tech services and engineering did a run around until the cable company was called. They wanted a fee. Thanks to Jenkin-town Hobby and Showcase Comics for their donation. Magic Tournament was canceled due to small attendance.

Masquerade — The Philcon Video tape went out before Christmas. Thanks to Dr. Gandolf and Dot. Need to order 1997 award ribbon.

Ops — Same problems, same solutions. Thanks to the Hotel Staff, Sandy Black, Bobby Bright, and James Nelson. Todd has a list of found items. Check with him if you lost something.

Volunteers — Had good help on Friday and Saturday. Sunday a problem with a person working 7 hours at the Art show entrance. An issue (which doesn't appear to be resolved) about gopher refunds was raised. Another issue was raised about keeping the raffle items for next year and giving the smaller items away to those who want them. This took the form of a motion and was approved (don't know the tally, it was not recorded.)

Transportation — Thanks to Marc Gordon for his timely help. Need someone next year who has a bigger car and knows the roads better.

Other business — during the meeting someone incurred a \$15 parking ticket. A motion was brought forth to pay it, tied 8-8. Oz cast a vote to pay for. Carol suggested it come out of Philcon budget for gas, tolls, parking.

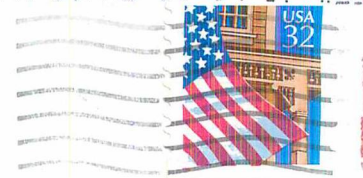
Meeting adjourned at 5:54.



Philadelphia Science Fiction Society
P.O. Box 8303
Philadelphia, PA 19101-8303
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South Florida SF Society
P.O. Box 70143
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33307-0143

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Meeting Notices

General Meetings

Unless otherwise specified, General Meetings are held on the 2nd Friday of each month in the South America Room at International House, 37th and Chestnut Streets, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Business meeting starts at 8 pm. Program starts at 9 pm.

Date

March 14, 1997
April 11, 1997
May 9, 1997
June 13, 1997
July 11, 1997
August 8, 1997
September 12, 1997
October 10, 1997
February 13, 1998
March 13, 1998

Guest/Agenda

Phil & Kaja Foglio, artists
TBA
Linda Nagata (from Hawaii)
Bruce Jensen, artist
Hugo Predictions Panel
John Kessel
Maureen McHugh
James Patrick Kelly
Jonathan Lethem
Stuart Moore

Date

Board of Directors

Tues., March 18, 1997, 8 pm

Host/Location

Shelley Handen, 28 Rosedale
Rd, Wynnewood; (610) 642-
6061

Philcon '97 Committee

Sat, March 15, 1997, 2 pm

**International House (see
above for address)**

About the Society

The Philadelphia Science Fiction Society (PSFS) is a non-profit organization that meets monthly to discuss and promote science fiction and fantasy in literature, the arts, and popular culture. Meetings are held the second Friday of each month at International House, 37th and Chestnut Streets, Philadelphia. Meetings consist of business proceedings from 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., followed by a guest speaker involved in some area of Science Fiction or Fantasy, such as writers, editors, artists, publishers, etc.

In addition, PSFS sponsors an annual science fiction conference, Philcon, and has many social interest subgroups; such as the Book Discussion Group, which meets monthly to discuss a work of science fiction or fantasy; and the Special Events Group, which attends science fiction and fantasy movies and other events.

Membership in the society is open to everyone. Becoming a member is easy. Attend your first meeting; we'll say "Hello." At your second meeting, you can nominate yourself for membership or ask someone else to nominate you. At the next meeting you attend following your nomination, you're eligible to be voted in as a General Member. Our current dues are \$15 for a full year (\$24 for couples), and attendance at 4 meetings each year maintains the status of Active Member.