



# P.S.F.S. News

The Newsletter of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society

March 1995

*March Guest:*

## Julian May

### Our Guest: Julian May

Julian May is the author of over 260 published books. She was born in Chicago and now makes her home in the state of Washington. Her first science fiction novelette, "Dune Roller" was published in *Astounding* in 1951. It was well-received and has since been anthologized 9 times. Feeling that it was not possible to earn a living writing science fiction in the 1950's, the author turned to other fields. She wrote more than 7000 encyclopedia articles on science and natural history and then wrote juvenile non-fiction. Her published books for young people include books about sports, history, and a wide range of scientific topics.

In 1980, when she felt the time was right, Julian May returned to the SF/fantasy field. Since then she has written only adult books which include: *The Many-Colored Land*, *The Non-Born King*, *The Golden Torc*, *The Adversary*, *Intervention*, *Jack the Bodiless*, *Diamond Mask*, *Magnificat* (forthcoming), *Black Trillium* (with Marion Zimmer Bradley and Andre Norton), *Blood Trillium*, and *Sky Trillium* (forthcoming).

A new series, which she describes as "Travis McGee goes galactic", will be published by Harper-Collins and Del Rey beginning in 1996. The titles are *The Perseus Spur*, *The Orion Arm*, and *The Sagittarius Whorl*.

Julian May's books have been translated into 8 languages. The author's hobbies include fly fishing and electronic music-making. She was the wife of the late SF anthologist and publisher G.E. Dikty and has 3 adult children.

### Membership Status

(Note: Status changes from Inactive to General or General to Active become effective after the meeting has adjourned)

**First Timers:** Bruce Berkepile, Caroline Ferguson, Shelley Hunden, Bruce Bloom

**Returning Inactive:** Louis Kessler

**Members at the February Meeting:** 53  
(48 active, 4 general, 1 inactive)

**Non-Members at the February Meeting:** 4

### P.S.F.S. Birthdays

If you don't see your name here and you would like to, please send your name and birth date (year not necessary) to: P.S.F.S. Birthday List, Philadelphia S.F. Society, P. O. Box 8303, Philadelphia, PA 19101.

Mar 1 Roxana Pierson	Apr 5 Pamela J. Fernsler
Mar 2 Lee Weinstein	Apr 15 Michael Jeffrey Cohen
Mar 9 Barbara Cook Attiya	Apr 17 Leonard Carpenter
Mar 15 Terri Wells	Apr 17 Michael Fisher
Mar 18 Eddie Hoffing	Apr 18 Frank J. Curran III
Mar 21 Gail Fairman	Apr 18 Marie Schwarzl
Mar 22 Eric Hilton Penn	Apr 21 Jeffrey Kasten
Mar 28 Ira Kaplowitz	Apr 25 Terry S. S. Graybill
Mar 29 Dennis Brown	Apr 27 Giorgio Lombardi
Mar 31 Michele Weinstein	Apr 30 Peter Hottenrott
Apr 2 Marian Oswald Meschkow	

# Minutes

## February General Meeting

Minutes of the General Meeting, held on February 10, 1995, 8:00 p.m., in the South America Room at International House, 37th & Chestnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA.

The meeting was called to order at 8:07 p.m.

**Proxies:** none.

## Corrections to the Minutes

*Minutes were approved as printed.*

## Officers' Reports

**President:** We'll be holding our second SF Day at Barnes & Noble in Jenkintown on Saturday, February 25th. Greg Frost has agreed to join us in addition to Darrell Schweitzer. Barnes & Noble has asked us to come back on Saturday, March 25th.

In the Philadelphia Daily News there is a guest editorial by Mattie Brahen.

Gordie Dickson will not be able to be our GoH for Philcon because of health reasons. Oz said he would be willing to speak to the Society via speakerphone as a special event. After getting several opinions Oz said he will speak with Tony Finan and set something up (possibly a national hookup).

Oz said he is arranging for "someone who was there at the beginning" to speak at our 60th Anniversary Banquet.

**Vice-President:** Not here.

**Secretary:** The 1994 Directory will be out real soon now. Carol said the 1994 Directory is being transformed into the 1995 Directory. This is in keeping with the past Directories; one in 1991 the next in 1993. Carol will have a preliminary printout at the March and April General Meetings and the Philcon meeting on March 5th. The Directory should be available at the May General Meeting.

If you have anything you would like to see in the Newsletter please send or give it to the Secretary in writing.

**Treasurer:** As of 2-10-95:

Meridian Checking	23,914.50
Corestates Checking	11,950.64
Corestates Savings	2,902.12
<u>Vanguard</u>	<u>70,182.75</u>
Total	108,950.01

Pay your dues.

**Senior Two Year Director,** Barb Higgins: We will have two styles of the pin. The better one will be in blue and gold and be free for P.S.F.S. Members. The other will be more colorful and be for sale to the general fandom. The pins will be tie-tack backed.

**Special One Year Director,** Todd Dashoff: Not here.

**One Year Director,** Mark Trebing: Not here.

## Committee Reports

**Philcon 1995:** Anne McCaffrey will not be able to be our GoH. She has injured her hip which has cause her to suffer from severe arthritis and will not be traveling

until she gets a replacement. Oz said to give him your suggestions at the end of the meeting. (Jack Williamson has since agreed to be our GoH.)

**Programming:** March's guest will be Julian May.

**Book and Movie Discussions:** See "Upcoming Events".

**Special Events:** See "Upcoming Events".

**No Fund:** John Prenis has several boxes and bags of good stuff. Please take as much as you want.

**Publicity:** Pam Fernsler said the blue flyers are very popular. She requested anyone who has been on the Publicity committee in the past to contact her. Pam thanked Hank Smith and John Desmond for their help with Super Sunday and their work in the University area. She also thanked everyone who helped. If you've done anything to help publicize P.S.F.S. or if you would like to help please contact Pam.

**Space Sciences:** Hank Smith has information on several upcoming science related events, and a petition about NASA's Delta Clipper. See him if you're interested.

## Old Business:

**Scapegoat:** Oz brought up the fact that we have to un-table the motion to postpone the motion to abolish the office of Scapegoat. Tony Finan moved, Gary Feldbaum second, to postpone until next month. Tony's motion passed many to few. Rich said we have witnessed the birth of a new tradition.

## New Business:

**Refreshments:** Barb Higgins said that she noticed that people were taking sodas and donuts almost as soon as they arrived instead of waiting for the break. She thought this was a good idea. Carol said she agreed that people should be able to eat and drink whenever they wanted, however she felt that it would cause a disruption. She felt that it would cause the noise level to rise and she pointed out that the more noise we have to put up with, the less we'll be able to hear the important discussions of the meeting. Carol also felt that everyone attending the meetings should have taken time to eat before arriving and therefore shouldn't be hungry enough to want donuts before the break. ?? suggested a friendly amendment that we can eat when we want except when the meeting is going on. Barb felt that we can all be adults and be nice and quiet while we are getting our donuts and drinks. Lew Wolkoff felt we should be allowed to get donuts and drinks except during Guest Speaker programs. He also pointed out that Rose Wolkoff was only 15 and so we're not all adults here. (I think she's more "adult" than some fans I know that are over 21. CK) Diane Weinstein said she always goes downstairs to get her drink. Tony Finan moved, no second, to postpone the discussion [until breaktime]. ?? said it would relieve the stampede that occurs at the break. Joyce Carroll asked how much could it disturb things, the new Board is disturbed anyway. Oz Fontecchio said that after this debate he would like to see everyone refrain from walking in front of the Guest while (s)he is speaking. Barb said she didn't include during the Speaker's speech in her motion. Tony Finan suggested that we move the donut table to the back of the room. He also felt the donuts were a good silencer. Joyce Carroll moved, ?? second,

to call the question. Tony Finan moved, no second, to table. Carol Kabakjian pointed out that no one has to walk in front of the Speaker or the front table to get to the donut table. There are several sets of doors at the rear of the room. If you are on the far side of the room just exit the nearest door, use the hall to cross the length of the room, enter that door and then move to the table. Tony moved, no second, to form a committee to look into the situation. Roger Foco recommended only quiet donuts. Oz asked, "as opposed to the loud exploding kind?" Tony asked for a point of information. Do exploding donuts violate the weapons policy? Oz said they probably would, but this isn't Philcon. Oz called for a vote on the motion "to allow people to eat donuts during the meeting, but not during the speech". Passed 33 to 5 with 1 extension.

**Babylon 5:** Rich Kabakjian moved, several second, to have someone from the Society write a letter on behalf of the Society indicating that this organization would like to see [Babylon 5] shown sometime other than "kiddie" time on Saturday. Oz asked if there was any discussion and found none. He called for the vote. Passed unanimously. Oz called for a volunteer to write the letter. Barb Higgins volunteered. She was given Society stationery and Oz asked her to include the demographics of the Society. Lew Wolkoff said the fact that Barb is writing a letter is good, but that everyone else should also call and/or write. He said it will be the total number of calls and letters that will count. He suggested making a sample letter that everyone could re-write in their own handwriting. We could post the sample letter in various places, like book stores. The address to write to is 5001 Wynnfield Ave, Philadelphia, PA, 19131.

#### Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 pm.

## ***Proposed P.S.F.S. Budget***

Item	1994	Projected	1995
Meeting Space	2600.00	3168.00	3000.00
Publications (1)	2000.00	1531.73 (2)	1500.00
Publicity	305.00	260.35	250.00
Programming	4000.00	2453.09	4000.00
Treasurer	50.00	18.55	50.00
Special Events (3)	725.00	275.00	575.00
Milton Award	150.00	0.00	150.00
Refreshments	600.00	240.54	500.00
Oversight	100.00	0.00	100.00
P. O. Box	45.00	39.00	39.00
Archives	50.00	10.59	50.00
Book Discussion	25.00	0.00	25.00
No Fund (4)	0.00	0.00	0.00
Hotline	525.00	596.00	525.00
Other	100.00	649.55 (5)	100.00
Bulk Mail Permit	75.00	75.00	75.00
Education Comm. (6)	65.00		0.00
Space Sciences (6)	0.00		0.00
Sunshine Comm. (6)	50.00		0.00
Dinner/Dance Comm. (6)	20.00		0.00
60th Anniv. Prog.			750.00
Philip Dick Award (7)	1500.00	1500.00	0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12985.00</b>	<b>10817.40</b>	<b>11689.00</b>

- (1) This category was "Newsletter" in 1994. The original "Publications" line was created for the *New Variant*. This category will now include all Secretarial expenses.
- (2) This amount includes expenses from the 1994 "Newsletter" and "Publications" categories.
- (3) This budget includes "Halloween Party" and "Picnic".
- (4) This line item shows a doubling of last year's budget.
- (5) This amount includes the cost of the auto folder.
- (6) These items had a budget last year, but were not discussed for this year.
- (7) Gary asked for a budget of \$600.00 in 1995 to match Norwescon's contributions of up to this amount.

## ***Board Meeting Minutes***

### February Board Meeting

The Board Meeting scheduled for Monday, February 13, at Barb's. Called to order at 8:00 p.m. Present: Oz, Rich, Todd, Barb, Mark (by phone). Others: Tim Binder, Devon, Logan.

### Officers' Reports

**President:** Several pros have turned us down for Philcon GoH, most of them for reasons of health. (See February General Meeting Minutes.) We still need to pursue someone for GoH. Oz proposed Jack Vance or Jack Williamson. (Jack Williamson later accepted — RK)

**Vice-President:** Not here.

**Secretary:** "Hello."

**Treasurer:** Not here.

**Senior Two Year Director,** Barb Higgins: Barb will get info on the pins tomorrow.

**Special One Year Director,** Todd Dashoff: Todd had a lovely evening touring Conshohocken Friday night.

**One Year Director,** Mark Trebing: No report.

### Committee Reports none.

### Old Business: None.

### New Business:

**1995 Budget:** Ed supplied Oz with copies of the proposed budget. The proposed budget was discussed at length. Barb Higgins moved, Rich Kabakjian and Todd Dashoff second, to recommend the proposed budget as printed in this newsletter. Passed unanimously.

### Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

## ***Upcoming Events***

For details, call Ozzie Fontecchio (215) 342-1672.

### Movie Excursions:

Contact Ozzie if you have any suggestions.

### Book Discussions:

March — *Grass*, by Sherry S. Tepper. 2:00pm Sunday March 26th at Mattie Brahen's, 6652 Lyndford St., Philadelphia

April — *Bill the Galactic Hero*, by Harry Harrison. Time and place TBA.

# The Lazarus Review

by Henry Leon Lazarus

When you try to predict the future, it's easy to foresee something like an automobile. It's even quite easy to see the possibility of traffic jams. But to foresee smog — that takes genius.

Neal Stephenson in *The Diamond Age* (Hard from Bantam Spectra) takes the concept of nanotechnology (microscopic machines) beyond anything I've ever seen and, in this month's book of the month, gives us the odd side effects. For instance, consider a book whose words change on the page as you read it, becoming both computer game, instructor, and story teller. The main character, a young orphan, is given such a book and it shapes her and molds her into something special in this outre future.

Connie Willis's expensive novelette *Remake* (trade) tells of a future Hollywood where the only actors are long dead and copy written. A young girl who wants to dance in the movies starts showing up on old ones.

Maggie Furey continues the very readable saga of Aurian, who finally has her baby while her friends have to save her and recover the *Harp of the Winds* (paper). If the background were better thought out and didn't have its silly aspects, this series with its excellent characterization and details that bring the world to life would be a true classic.

Paperback reprints include Robert Silverberg's ecological disaster of a future earth novel *Hot Sky at Midnight*, Arthur C. Clarke and Gentry Lee's magnificent conclusion to their Rama series in *Rama Revealed*, and I. Asimov, Isaac's final memoir.

Octavia E. Butler takes a view of a worst-case scenario of future California. A young girl develops a view of God as change, as she grows up somewhat protected from the thieves, drug pushers, and drug-crazed pyromaniacs of this horrible future where water is more expensive than gasoline and cars have virtually vanished. When her home is destroyed, she is forced on a trek to find a new home and finds followers on the way. *Parable of the Sower* (paper from Aspect) is impossible to put down, frightening in its possibilities, and yet offers hope.

Aspect also has some major paperback Greg Bear reprints in *Queen of Angels*, a mystery in future Los Angeles in which only you the reader solve the puzzle, and *Eternity*, sequel to *Eon*, about the return of a hollowed-out asteroid to a future world on the edge of nuclear war.

Tor does Greg Bear one better in *Songs of Earth and Power* (hard) which is a reprint and re-smoothing of a decade-old duology. In Los Angeles a young man steals a song that leads him to a fantasy world in the first half, and has the same creatures chasing him in the second as he learns how that song relates to creation. Apparently Greg Bear started his writing career with a version of the first half and now it is in its completed form.

Also from Tor is Patricia C. Wrede's fun tale of a young lady who had come to town to collect her mother's effects, including *The Raven Ring* (hard), a magical ring wanted by all the wrong people.

Mike Resnick, who specializes in translated tales of Africa, has an homage to the English explorers who went native in *A Miracle of Rare Design* (hard) — a neat story of a writer who becomes one native alien after another in an

effort to find himself.

I was a little late in getting to the next two, so they should be in paper soon. Robert Reed is a creator of solid, three-dimensional characters in a very real world. *Beyond the Veil of Stars* (hard) is his answer to UFO fanatics who ask why SF readers don't believe. I'd believe if 1: glass circles appeared all over the world, 2: the sky introverts so we see the other side of the globe instead of the sky, and 3: a gateway is discovered that puts people in alien bodies on other worlds. Rebecca Ore's *Slow Funeral* (hard) is a slice of real West Virginia mountain people in conflict with the changes in the modern world, and who may be witches, told through the eyes of a non-practicing witch called back from California because her grandmother is dying.

In paper from Tor are *Lake of the Long Sun*, number 2 in Gene Wolf's current tetralogy, and the excellent *A College of Magics* by Caroline Stevermer about an alternate eighteenth century where magic works. I've already read this twice.

*The Eagle and the Nightingales* (hard from Baen) is the third and best of the Bardic Voices tales from Mercedes Lackey. This time two of the magical bards, one a flying bird-like creature, have to go to the capitol to deal with the advisor to the high king who is keeping the king from helping his country.

Steve Perry is good at action-adventure. Now in the sequel to *Spindoc*, the spy and her friend have ended up on her planet with other agents hunting for *The Forever Drug* (paper from Ace) in a good mindless fun caper.

*Lyon's Pride* (paper) continues Anne McCaffrey's long and enjoyable tale of the Rowan's highly psi-powered grandchildren and their continued fight with the hivers. There'll be more to come.

In the second *Seven Towers* novel, Rick Shelly shows how *The Wizard at Home* (paper from Roc) deals with his new godlike powers and how he deals with the gods who don't like him having them. I can't wait for the rest.

R. A. Macavoy's *The Belly of the Wolf* (paper from Avonova) completes a very complicated fantasy trilogy. Now an old man, Nazhuret is forced to return to his country and deal with the rebellion in his name after his friend, the king, is murdered. Along the way he is helped by the ghosts of his wife and of a wolf he killed and maybe the reincarnation of his old horse.

This is the sort of thing Gene Wolf tries and, to my eyes, doesn't succeed with. *Future Quartet* is a collection of stories and predictions for a dismal fifty years hence. Why do many science fiction writers think everything will go to pieces? I did enjoy the story, "Higher Education".

## Board of Directors

President, Oz Fontecchio..... (215) 342-1672  
Vice-President, Peter V. Radatti..... (610) 828-4566  
Secretary, Richard Kabakjian..... (610) 623-1139  
Treasurer, Ed Rutkowski..... (610) 277-0209  
2 Yr. Director, Todd Dashoff..... (215) 676-4194  
2 Yr. Director, Barbara Higgins..... (215) 725-8825  
1 Yr. Director, Mark Trebing..... (215) 943-3462

Questions? Comments? Contact any Board Member at the above numbers, or use the Hot Line; please call at a reasonable time.

# The Lazarus Review

by Henry Leon Lazarus

While March is the season of lions and lambs, it's also a season for publishers to set the stage for their next round of major books. It becomes a holding action with minor fun books and paperback reprints of solid hard covers.

David Weber's incursion into fantasy, *Oath of Swords* (paper from Baen) introduces a hero strong enough to chop Conan into mincemeat, stubborn enough to argue with the gods, and nice enough to break a hostage oath to get a rape victim to safety. It's fun enough to make me eagerly wait for more adventures.

Esther Friesner's *The Sherwood Game* (paper) doesn't hit the humor target often enough. The standard, almost Disney-like tale is about intelligent game characters, Robin Hood and the rest, who can be taken out into the real world in robot bodies, who have to deal with mean corporate executives.

The paperback edition of Lois McMaster Bujold's *Mirror Dance* is finally out. This is mainly a tale of Miles's clone brother coming of age, as Miles spends most of the story dead. Previous novels in this series have won Hugo Awards and this is the best one yet.

Orson Scott Card's *Homecoming* series is now at volume four. To recap, this tale of a dialogue between God (as a computer) and Man started with the oversoul computer that has guided humanity for forty million years on the planet Haven is breaking down and has bred people to return to Earth and get help from the Keeper of Earth to fix it. *The Ships of Earth* (#3 in paper) did a good job of getting them to the stored ships with the fighting between two brothers in biblical fashion. *Earthfall* (hard) is a bit disappointing. There is a major fight in mid-voyage due to an inadvertent wake-up. On Earth, the fighting brothers have to deal with primitive mole and bat societies. There is a hint that the Keeper really is God and some personal correctness in how people were kicked off Earth.

*Lovelock* (paper) by Mr. Card and Kathryn H. Kidd is a fun tale of an intelligent monkey (created to be an observer) on a generation type colony ship who is trying to get a mate for himself.

David Wingrove's *Chung Kuo* series is a marvelous social science fiction tale of a Chinese Earth covered by continent-sized buildings. Slowly society has been teetering into break-down and now, in volume five, *Beneath the Tree of Heaven* (trade from Dell), the seven rulers become three and are barely in control of what is left. It's hard to keep track of all the characters in this massive series, but I'm addicted.

A dozen years ago James P. Hogan told the tale *Code of the Lifemaker* (paper from Del Rey) in which an alien robotic factory on Titan went haywire and a million years later produced an intelligent robot society that a human expedition had to deal with. Now the fake psychic has to use his scamming ability in *The Immortality Option* (hard) and deal with computerized copies of the aliens who built the original factory and who have been released by human technicians. It's a lot of fun even though I only had vague memories of the first novel.

*Diamond Mask* (paper) by Julian May is the penultimate book in her long *Galactic Milieu* series. Jack the

Bodiless's lover is introduced and the stage is finally set for the psionic rebellion.

Robert Silverberg has a minor but fun return to his favorite planet in *The Mountains of Majipoor* (hard from Bantam Spectra) where barbarians have captured some paleontologists and an out-of-favor prince is sent to rescue them to get himself back in favor.

*Mysterium* (paper) by Robert Charles Wilson is a minor tale about a small town sent cross-time and how they deal with the inhabitants' desire for atomic technology.

*Under the Healing Sign* (paper from Ace) completes Nick O'Donohoe's excellent tale of a veterinarian in a magic land, who has to treat unicorns and centaurs, rocs and werewolves. Much darker than the first, B.J. is now a practicing veterinarian and her new world is under attack.

*Cat's Paw* (paper) by L.A. Taylor is a nice mystery of a middle-aged woman trying to find what happened to her missing husband on a world where magic is against the law and thought not to exist. Some of the puzzle is obvious, the rest well laid-out with enough details to make this a quiet, fun read.

Richard A. Knaak's *Frostwing* (paper from Aspect) falls on that fine line between fantasy and horror. A gargoyle steals memories from an ageless man in his dreams. In modern Chicago he has to confront both the monster and his past to discover who he is. The puzzle is complicated, the magic is designed well, and the conclusion is well thought-out.

*Deathstalker* (paper from ROC) combines elements from every space opera Simon R. Green could think of in this tale of a young rebel's run from a mad empress in a decadent galactic empire. Fun, but overly long and unfinished.

Sean Russell's *World Without End* (paper from DAW) is an excellent first half of what may be a great story. Set in an alternate Earth's age of sail, it's a very British tale of a botanist on an expedition to retrieve more of the magical plant keeping the king alive. It's been three generations since the last of the mages died with all their secrets buried and that botanist may be their heir. I'm waiting eagerly the six months till the conclusion appears.

Majorie B. Kellogg's *The Book of Earth* (paper) is the first book of a minor series about the awakening of the dragons who created the earth and the young heiress who, in running away, finds them. This would be a lot better if coincidence didn't play such a heavy role because the characters and background are well drawn.

*Northlight* (paper) by Deborah Wheeler is a strong story of a colony that lost most of its technology in its run through gates from Earth and has forgotten why or even where they've come from. Solid characters and a well-designed world make for good reading.

*Montezuma's Pearl* (paper from Avonova) by David Lee Jones is a fun chase, in our time, after an Aztec talisman with the powers of mother nature. Helped by some gods, like mother nature and the god of vacation, and opposed by others, the story is a trip in more than one sense.

F.M. Busby has fun with the concept of gates that are instantaneous to their users but take two years of actual time. Connected to starships they allow resupply and more. *Arrow from Earth* tells the story of one of those starships moving close enough to light speed to stretch time by a factor of twenty-five. With teenage stowaways, lawyers visiting from Earth, and aliens in the gate universe it's a pleasurable view

of a complicated world.

Diane Duane makes a spectacular attempt to bring Spider-Man's universe to life in *The Venom Factor* (hard from Putnam), but even she can't make this committee-designed world real. At least it's readable and a must for comic fans.

Finally the quality of the authors are the reason for the recommendation of *Ambush at Corellia* (paper from Bantam Spectra), a Star Wars novel by Roger MacBride Allen, and *Proud Helios* (paper from Pocket), a DS9 novel by Melissa Scott. I can no longer read any novel in those two universes.

#### Book Discussion Report — September

### A Case of Conscience

reported by Lee Weinstein

Many of the books voted by members to be discussed have been Hugo Award winners. September's topic was a case in point (no pun intended), having won for best novel in 1959.

We started, as is traditional, with a discussion of the author's background.

James Blish, who died in 1975, was a biologist turned writer who often dealt with metaphysical and philosophical themes, but sadly, his name is now inextricably linked with the Star Trek books he wrote at the end of his career.

The book centers around Father Ramon Ruiz-Sanchez, a Jesuit priest and a biologist, who is a member of an exploratory team studying the planet Lithia. He comes to the conclusion that the apparently Utopian culture of intelligent reptiles found there is a creation of Satan, and should be quarantined, although this line of reasoning is considered heretical by the Church.

To complicate matters, one of the Lithian scientists sends his offspring back with the team to Earth. The Lithian child's development is affected adversely by being raised in a culture alien to his own, and upon reaching maturity on Earth, he begins to foment a political rebellion.

The book provoked an interesting discussion about religion and ethics and the separation of Church and state. This led into a discussion of experiences of members with Jehovah's Witnesses and Scientologists.

The group was divided 50-50 in their reaction to the book. Most had mixed feelings, but about half admitted to having liked it.

On the positive side, many felt that it was thought-provoking, and admired the symbolism, literary allusions and multiple layers of meaning.

On the other hand much of this was lost on members who had not read James Joyce or C.S. Lewis. Many members felt that the premise was hard to swallow, given the realistic background; or that the plot was too obviously contrived to make the points the author wanted to make. Other negative comments from different members were that the book as a whole was emotionally shallow, and that the ending seemed contrived.

All agreed however, that it was a good discussion topic.

## Don't Panic!

(The following article was written by Lee Whiteside, as posted on Usenet this week. I found it worth repeating, particularly considering the timing of this Newsletter and channel 17's *Babylon 5* scheduling. — RAK)

### Babylon 5 Upcoming Scheduling notes

This week's *Babylon 5* episode is the last new episode in the current batch and does not include a preview of next week's episode, but a preview for PTEN's 10 hour *History of Rock and Roll* special. Some people have already asked if the show has been cancelled due to this. It is not cancelled, just pre-empted in most markets for a week. And *Babylon 5* going into repeats is a normal occurrence for most shows after the February sweeps (Trek has done it for years) so that there are enough new episodes available for the May sweeps.

Here are the schedule options in regards to *Babylon 5* for the next few weeks. You will have to check your local listings for what your station is doing.

If your station is airing *The History of Rock & Roll* the week of March 6, *Babylon 5* is pre-empted and will not air. If the station is not airing the *History of R&R* at all, they will air a repeat of episode 208, "Soul Mates". If they are airing *HoR&R* the week of March 13, they will air a repeat of episode 201, "Points of Departure", the week of March 6th.

The string of repeats will begin the Week of March 13th in most markets with the repeat of the Season Two opener (201), "Points of Departure" and follow in through a repeat of 206, "Spider in the Web", the week of April 24th (with "Soul Mates" airing in all markets the week of April 17th, with Closed Captioning which was not included in its original airing.)

The initial season two episodes are being repeated now due to the need to air 52 weeks of shows in a year with only 22 episodes produced. Here are the scheduling details:

Week Of	Prod #	Title
2/27/95	213	Hunter, Prey
3/06/95	208R	Soul Mates
		For stations NOT airing the HoR&R
or	201R	Points of Departure
		For stations airing HoR&R w/o March 13
3/13/95	201R	Points of Departure
3/20/95	202R	Revelations
3/27/95	203R	The Geometry of Shadows
4/03/95	204R	A Distant Star
4/10/95	205R	The Long Dark
4/17/95	208R	Soul Mates [now with Closed Captioning]
4/24/95	206R	Spider in the Web
		[tentative schedule]
5/01/95	214	And Now For A Word [JMS]
5/08/95	215	There All the Honor Lies [Peter David]
5/15/95	216	Knives [Larry DiTillio]
5/22/95	217	The Shadow of Z'ha'dum [JMS]
5/29/95	218	Confessions and Lamentations [JMS]

Many PTEN stations air *Babylon 5* on Wednesdays at 8 p.m. (E/P), 7 p.m. (C/M) with other stations airing the show wherever they decide.

Lee Whiteside leew@indirect.com, P14942@email.mot.com  
76044,502 CIS, L.WHITESIDE GENie

# Announcements

If you have **any** announcements or reports, the best way to make sure they are reported accurately is to submit them in writing. The Secretary (and his assistant) would greatly appreciate it.

Remember your Dues are due as of April 1. If you haven't paid your dues for 1994 you now owe double dues. The number of meetings you've attended DOES NOT COUNT. Your dues are still due as of April 1 each year.

**Origins '95:** the national gaming convention, is being held in the new Pennsylvania convention center on 13 through 16 of July this year. John Desmond had registration information.

**Directory 1994:** is being transformed into the 1995 Directory and will be ready "real Soon now".

**Avi Freedman** is making available to the Society several Internet accounts on Net Access at no charge. Philcon, the Society, the 2001 bid committee, etc. will be able to use the accounts.

**The Millennium Philcon:** The next open meeting of the Philadelphia Worldcon in 2001 bid committee will be held at 2pm, day, March, at the Dashoff's.

**1989 Philcon Program Books** in hard cover are available through Todd Dashoff.

**Philcon T-Shirts** and P.S.F.S. Carry Bags are for sale. See Ed Rutkowski.

**Philcon '93 Masquerade Video** copies are still available.

**Robin's Bookstore** has agreed to give all members of the Society a 15% discount on all regularly-priced merchandise. Bring in a copy of this newsletter, and show them this announcement, to receive your discount. Robin's Bookstore is located at 108 South 13th Street, Philadelphia.

**Membership Attendance:** Please sign the sign-in book yourself. We want *your* signature, not someone else's in your space. This will help us to verify that you are who you say you are.

**Copies of the By-laws and Standing Rules** will be available at the P.S.F.S. meeting.

## Book Discussion Report — December

### Virtual Light

*reported by Lee Weinstein*

December's discussion topic was one of this year's Hugo nominees. In a nutshell, a bicycle courier, Chevette Washington, steals, on a whim, a pair of sunglasses. These glasses contain secret information regarding the reconfiguration and rebuilding of San Francisco by nefarious powers. Attempts are made on her life by thugs who want to retrieve the glasses. Protagonist Berry Rydell, a neophyte who works for a security agency, rescues her from various factions after her, including the people he's been working for, and finds himself in deep trouble.

What makes this science fiction? Well, the stolen sunglasses are virtual light glasses that feed information directly into the wearer's optic nerves. And the story takes place maybe about twenty years from now.

Actually, the book did make a good discussion topic because the participants found the background details of Gibson's near-future to be a good deal more interesting than the plot. One of the most intriguing set pieces was the abandoned Bay Bridge in San Francisco, which had become a community for the homeless and disenfranchised. Someone commented that the bridge was possibly the most interesting character in the book. Other things people found interesting were the religions depicted. In one, members imagined they could contact God by watching TV. The other worshipped Shapely, a martyred AIDS victim who had been the source of an attenuated virus used to fight the disease.

Generally speaking, the members of the group had mixed reactions toward the book. Many felt it was a heavily padded novella, and that the ending was a Deus ex Machina. On the other hand, most liked at least some of its characters, and felt the depiction of the world and its details worked nicely.

## Book Discussion Report — January

### 1984

*reported by Lee Weinstein*

The year's first discussion attracted a lot of people who had a lot to say about George Orwell's classic, *1984*.

Briefly, the story concerns Winston Smith, an outer party member of a brutal totalitarian state, who rebels against the party by having an affair with a woman, and is brainwashed, tortured, and virtually destroyed in body and mind by the party.

We began with the author's background. Orwell was in real life a British political writer and socialist named Eric Blair, who would not have thought of himself as a science fiction writer. He died of tuberculosis in 1950 at the age of 46, about two years after the book was published.

The attendees discussed the world created by Orwell, and noted that it incorporated elements of both Stalinism and Naziism. Despite the different underlying philosophies, the end results of both regimes were quite similar. Examples were cited of propaganda films, children spying on their parents, and so on. Smith's job of rewriting news articles was compared to Nazi book burnings.

Orwell's concept of "doublethink", of believing two contradictory things at the same time, provoked a good deal of comment about both religion and contemporary politics, particularly Republican attitudes toward abortion and support of unwed mothers. Newt Gingrich's proposal of taking kids from their homes and sending them to Boystown while promoting "family values", was cited as a prime example. The group also talked about the concept of newspeak, and the ubiquitous telescreens.

Parallels were drawn between the Proles, the underclass in Orwell's future, who are pacified with gambling, alcohol and sex, and the American public. Someone pointed out the extent to which a resource like the Internet is used for such things as the downloading of pornographic pictures. It was also mentioned that in actual communist countries, the proles had a good deal more power than in Orwell's scenario.

The group felt that the book was extremely well-written, starting with the first line, and that the book was emotionally powerful on a gut level. Everyone agreed the characters were well-drawn and believable.

## Meeting Notices

*Unless otherwise specified, General Meetings of the Society will be held on the second Friday of each month in the South America room at International House, 37th & Chestnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA. Business meeting starts at 8:00 p.m. Program starts at 9:00 p.m.*

**March General Meeting** will be held Friday, March 10, 1995. The program speaker will be author, Julian May.

**April General Meeting** will be held Friday, April 21, 1995. The program speaker will be author, Jack Chalker. *Note date change!*

**Board of Directors:** next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 15, 8:00 pm, at Ozzie Fontecchio's, 652 Van Kirk St., Philadelphia, (215) 342-1672.

**Philcon '95:** the first meeting will be held on Sunday, March 5, 1995, 2:00 pm, at Todd & Joni Dashoffs', 830 Barlow St., Philadelphia, (215) 676-4194.

## About the Society

The Philadelphia Science Fiction Society 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 the International House, 37th & Chestnut Sts., 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, P.S.F.S. sponsors an annual science fiction conference, Philcon, and has many special 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 1 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 \$15.00 for a full year's membership, and attendance at 5 meetings each year maintains the status of Active Member.



The Philadelphia Science Fiction Society  
P.O. Box 8303  
Philadelphia, PA 19101



South Florida SF Society    TRADE  
P.O. Box 70143  
Fort Lauderdale FL 33307-0143