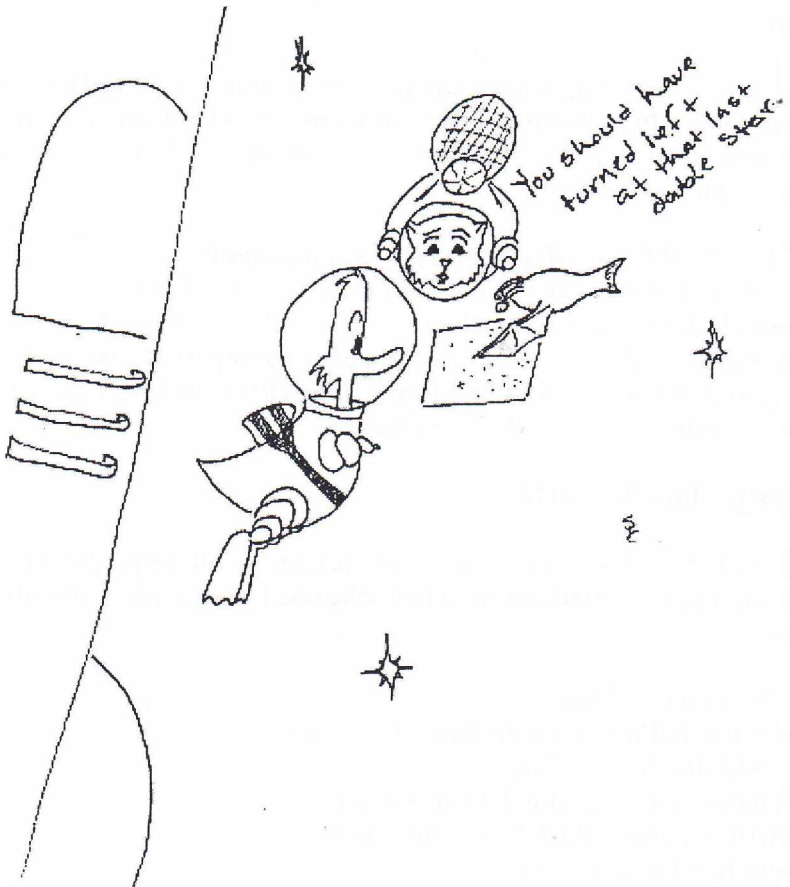


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Pulsar

The Newsletter for the Portland Science Fiction Society
Aren't you glad you subscribe?



June 2001

Issue 272

Hey, are you trying to make an issue of this?

TIMELINE

PorSFis holds a formal meeting on the second Saturday of each month—usually these have a program. After the meeting we adjourn to a social place for snacks, drinks and socialization—called Afters (that's the gathering's name, not the restaurant. We tend to go to 10th & Market McMinnamins).

There is often a social gathering in varying locations on the fourth Saturday, called **alt.porsfis**. If you want to be a host, please let us know...and HEY! we can do this more than once a month...honest! And as always, everyone is welcome to everything PorSFis does.

June 9th Meeting

Woo hoo! Echo's Children's new CD is out! And we're throwing a CD release party! ☺ Come and enjoy! There'll be music, and CDs, and music, and fun, and music...

Because we're expecting a few more people than usual (we hope!), we're going to be in Room 329 (rather than our usual room 323. Don't worry, there'll be signs) in Smith Hall, PSU. This is the same Saturday as the Grand Floral Parade, so plan ahead ☺

SPECIAL NOTE: alt.alt.porsfis returns this month!

After our meeting last month, John Bartley and Lea Rush invited everyone over to Liberty Hall for a special alt.alt.porsfis and BBQ...well, not having learned their lesson ☺ they're doing it again! So, after our regular meeting, instead of heading to McMinnamin's, go to Liberty Hall! (It's at 804 NE Prescott). Bring whatever! (Munchies, crunchies, quaffables....)

alt.porsfis June 21st, 2001

Thanks to Jim Pilcher, who organized our list, and to all the people who volunteered as hosts, we have an actual schedule for who, when and where for the *entire year!*

Roger Wells was in May

Jim and Linda Pilcher are in June (See below)

Marc and Patty Wells in July

Sue Renhard and Dave Moreland in August

John Bartley and Lea Rush have September

Matt and Kris Picio in October

Sue Renhard and Dave Moreland in November

Mike and Sharon Parker have the fifth Saturday in December

So, you are asking yourself, where is it, when, and what should I bring?

According to Jim: To reach Chez Pilcher, take 26 to 217, 217 to Denney Road. Turn right at the top of the offramp. Go to King Blvd (pedestrian crossing light in front of Vose Elementary,) turn right and go one block to Imperial, turn right, park. We are in #10 on the right side of the street. (Linda adds, PS, At Chez Pilcher, make sure that you do not park in the little parking lot. The spaces are all reserved.)

PRESIDENTS QUOTES:

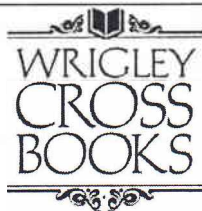
First Item: Movies, Movies, Movies!

Wow! It's Movie time again! In the last month I've seen The Mummy Returns (twice), A Knight's Tale, and Shrek. And you know? I have to recommend each and every one of them ☺

But I won't spoil them for you...Except to say—you know, all three address very similar issues...but in totally different ways. And all three rocked!

Second Item: Electronic Newsletters

No one has responded saying that they'd prefer electronic format...so, I guess I table this idea for now. If anyone changes their mind, though, let me know!



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Third Item: Hello? Anyone out there? <chirp, chirp>

You know, feedback is always appreciated. In fact, our resident Anime Columnist Carmen Spray is specifically asking for some. I know you all love what we do and write...but working in a vacuum is a little hard. If you want, you can even email me at porsfis@email.com and I'll print it in the next Pulsar.

Fourth Item: A Big Thank You

Thought I'd say thank you to all of you wonderful people who have been hosting alt.porsfis. ☺ It really does make a difference, and I know we all appreciate it, and you ☺

Fourth Item: Membership Drive

Here's the concept: We want more members.

How do we go about getting some? Well, one way is to have a membership drive.

So—We're going to have a drawing in August at the Annual Picnic. *Everyone who is currently a member in August*, will have at least one chance to win a prize!

At least one? Yup. If a new member lists your name as referring the to us when they join, you get an additional chance to win. Family memberships get two chances. So, if you are a family subscriber and you convince three more people to join, and one of them also becomes a family subscriber, then you have six chances to win ☺

What could you win? We're still cadging about for prizes, but so far, I've arranged for a donation of two Symphony Sunday tickets (next season, of course) from the Oregon Symphony, and Dancer has generously donated an Anime Action Figure (from Tenchi Muyo), and thanks to your President (that's me) winning big at the Science Fiction Museum's Trivia Game last month, we also have a SF Museum T-shirt to give away!

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

Ahem--**HELP! We need cover Art!**

Suggestions Wanted for PorSFis's Recommended Book List

We're almost ready to put this up on our Web Site! Please, send in your suggestions! PO Box 4602 Portland, OR 97208 or porsfis@email.com Your opinion is wanted!!



SHAMELESS BEGGING

So, you know a lot about collecting, or early SF movies, or pulp novels, or just enjoy sharing your thoughts with others--but you're too shy to come forward and volunteer to be a guest speaker at a PorSFis meeting. What's a body to do?

Become a columnist for the Pulsar!

Yes, that's right, see your name in print, know that your content-starved compatriots will devour your article in far, far less time than it took you to write it, and earn the eternal gratitude of the editor!

How do you sign up, you ask? Why it's simple. Call, write, or e-mail me, Debra Stansbury, editor of the Pulsar, and tell me what kind of a column you'd like to write (and tell me the frequency I can expect it, like once a month, bimonthly, quarterly, semi-annual, etc.). (Writing examples would be appreciated.)

Come on, it's FUN! (It's not like we're asking you to, say, edit the newsletter, or anything) ☺

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS:

The Deadline for the newsletter is the third Saturday of the month (the week after the meeting) Hopefully this will enable me to get the newsletter out in a timely manner ☺

Fifth Item: Group Events

We're looking for more things to do as a group. ☺ Any suggestions are, of course, highly appreciated.

One suggestion is to go as a group to the Oregon Symphony's performance of The Planets and Star Wars (with NASA Film Footage)--conducted by Murry Sidlin, on October 16th, 2001. We already have a few interested people, and if we get enough, we can get a group rate ☺

Please direct all inquiries to me, Debra Stansbury, either at porsfis@email.com, via my phone (number's on the back cover) or send me a letter c/o PorSFis at the PO Box. Thank you!

And now for THE WANT ADS

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 503-424-8136, or email johnbartley@email.com

Time to RENEW!!

Okay, that doesn't apply to everyone, of course. If you can't remember what month you signed up in, check your mailing label ☺ With a few exceptions, the date there should be when your membership expires. Don't forget to renew, you don't want to miss any scintillating issues! Plus, there's going to be a drawing soon! For something real fun, supplied by me! (Probably symphony tix ☺)

Memberships are still just \$20 a year, \$30 for the whole family! What a deal! And remember, Gift Memberships are also available ☺

Other News on the Good Front—

CD Releases! ☺ Both from Heather Alexander, and from Echo's Children. Gee, good things come in threes...I wonder what other wonderful thing is around the corner?

ANIMUSINGS

Universal Century: Mobile Suit Gundam's Lasting Influence on Anime by Carmen Spray

In 1979, a legend of Japanese animation was born. Mobile Suit Gundam was destined to change the anime landscape and become one of its most enduring and tenured institutions- but was barely tolerated at the time of its release.

Gundam, much like another long-running institution of science fiction, Star Trek, was cut off early during its initial run. The creators pleaded for and won a one-month extension to finish the story. Curiously, Gundam did very well with high school girls in its first run; the subsequent reruns drew larger (male) audiences and more critical attention. Ultimately the story of Mobile Suit Gundam was revised and made into a trilogy of movies- and from there the many successful series and videos the show has spawned over the last 20+ years.

To understand why Gundam initially failed in Japan, it's necessary to look at the shows surrounding it. In the world of 1970's animation in Japan, most of the shows using giant robots featured robots that were eerily human. These mecha didn't necessarily speak, but their sheer size and presence overshadowed all other characters. Sometimes these robots would move on their own to help a wounded human pilot, or would weep tears and grimace during battles. If you look at the Five Lions series of Voltron (Go Lion), for example, you can see some shots where the robot reacts to blows with winces and silent shouts! In such series, human beings were secondary players and the mysterious, god-like giant robot was the star.

Mobile Suit Gundam rejected that notion. Firmly based in real-world scientific speculation and with the stars in its eyes, Gundam dared to put the human beings firmly in the driver's seat. Rather than being mysterious and possibly of alien origin, Mobile Suits were mass produced heavy equipment, machines made by man to be used by man. They were predictable- anyone with appropriate skills capable of reading the manual could operate one. And a Mobile Suit never grimaced or cried out silently when it was struck.

Yoshiyuki Tomino's vision was one of humanity and human destiny, driven by tragedy and sacrifice. It's significant that, when asked recently which of the Mobile Suit designs was his favorite, his answer was, "Not a single one." Although the intricate designs of the Gundams mean big bucks to Bandai, the show's sponsor and global toy manufacturing mogul, to Tomino they're beside the point.

Tomino's characters are full of foibles and flaws and Gundam is legendary for its depiction of a world where everything is subject to debate. The characters are compelling because their motivations are so understandable, their actions so ultimately human. Those who believe their path is righteous conflict with others who believe their way is also righteous- and they fight and die for those beliefs.

Due to overcrowding and excessive population growth, humanity has moved 9 of its 11 billion inhabitants to space colonies 20 miles long. (About four times the size of Babylon 5, for comparison. Perhaps unwittingly, B5 has some strong similarities to the original Gundam saga...hence why some fans think JMS should take on a live-action Gundam series!)

These colony dwellers become known as "spacenoids", while the remaining 2 billion planet-dwellers are the "earthnoids". The colonies and Earth are governed by the Earth Federation which initiated humanity's move to space. As corrupt as any bloated dictatorship, the Federation is disinterested in the needs and interests of the spacenoids, acting much like land barons over the colonies despite the fact that the colony inhabitants now form the majority of human civilization. Many

of the spacenoids, as the mass migration comes to an end, have come to resent the rule of the Federation over their colony life- feeling that they have been exiled to save the Earth. As a result, the colonies begin to unify themselves, and to call for independence.

One of the colonies, known as Side 3, is the core of the spacenoid independence movement. 8 years after the end of the migration, a man called Zeon Zum Deikun rises to prominence with a visionary theory. Zeon fuels the independence movement with his concepts- that humanity's exile to space is not only a punishment for polluting the Earth, but also a necessary step of evolution. Zeon believes the move to space may cause mankind to reach a new level- to become 'newtypes'. Newtypes are telepathic and slightly stronger than normal humans.

At the same time, Side 3 is making giant leaps of technology, stabilizing nuclear fusion and discovering a new elementary particle in the process. This Minovsky particle allows Side 3 to begin developing staggeringly powerful new weapons. Three years after the development of the Minovsky particle, Zeon Deikun dies- some say assassinated- by his aide Degwan Zabi. Roughly five years later, the scientists of Side 3 create the first Mobile Suit using Minovsky physics. The Mobile Suit is believed to be the ultimate weapon that will bring independence to the colonies and defeat the resources of the Federation.

After the extended and brutal war that follows, there is a pause as both sides regroup and it's during this pause that the Federation develops its own Mobile Suit. The mobile suit carrier White Base, a Federation ship, comes to pick up the prototype from a research base on Side 7. The White Base was trailed by Zeon forces, however, and two Zeon mobile suits slip into Side 7 to lay waste to the Federation forces.

In the confusion, a teenage civilian named Amuro Rey, son of a Federation research scientist that had been stationed on Side 7, manages to commandeer one of the surviving Federation mobile suit prototypes. Amuro combats the Zeon forces- while frantically flipping through the manual of the mobile suit in his lap! Thus begins Amuro's journey, leading him to his ultimate destiny as a newtype...

Giant Robo, the Big-O, Neon Genesis Evangelion, Armored Trooper Votoms, and almost every other mecha series since are forever indebted to Gundam's influence. Though the newer series have begun to return to the 'godlike machine' concept at least in part, restoring the ominous magnificence of the giant robots, all still maintain the focus of the pilot as the reason and motivation for the actions of the machine- and of the story. No longer do humans serve machines, but the machines are always subject to the human's desires and will. Such is

Tomino's legacy and the lasting influence of Mobile Suit Gundam on the anime world.

The three-movie set of videos can be picked up online or at Suncoast. The television series is also coming to the US this year (either June or July, as I've heard) on Cartoon Network's Toonami block- as ever, watch those listings!

By the way... you can e-mail me at **fnu@teleport.com** if you wish to correct, debate or discuss anything I've written about in my columns! I love to hear back from readers, so don't be shy!

See you next month!

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CONVENTION REPORT

by John Andrews

Norwescon 24

Norwescon 24 was held April 12th to 15th, 2001 at the Sea-Tac Doubletree Hotel in Sea-Tac Washington. The Guests of Honor were: Connie Willis, writer; Bob Eggleton, artist; Charles N. Brown, Bantam Dell Publishers; and James P. Hogan and Dragon Dronet, special guests.

Norwescon, though not the oldest northwest convention, has, for years, been the biggest. Membership numbers were not announced in the daily 'zine this year, but were probably about 1700+. Though this is not as big as the numbers they had had a number of years ago (over 3000 at Norwescon 9), it is still bigger than most of the other large cons in the northwest. They did not sell out as they did two years ago. The hotel was full, at least they did not put out any sign saying rooms were still available as they have on occasion in the past.

As far as the hotel goes, it is still the best hotel, in all ways, that I have ever been to for a large regional. However, the committee needs to be a little more careful on which items they use for certain program items. Some were too large for the rooms assigned. On the whole, though, the con never seemed too crowded. The only time I had to wait in line was at pre-reg, when they had only one station open Thursday afternoon.

The SF/F and "Isn't It Cool?" Calendar of Events for June/July

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
3 This space was available	4	5	6	7 E t S t T
10 Westercon Meeting	11	12 This space is available	13	14 L s I S L P "
17	18	19	20	21 T
24 Fred Hoyle's birthday	25 Heather Alexander at McMenamin's Rock Creek Tavern (Hillsboro) 8-11pm	26 36th Anniversary Shell Show at OMSI (to July 1)	27	28
1	2	3	4 Independence Day!! Release Date for movie "Scary Movie II"	5 h

Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>7</p> <p>→</p> <p>Evolution begins tomorrow Swordfish begins tomorrow Theatres everywhere</p>	<p>8 Kate Wilhelm's birthday</p> <p>→</p> <p>IKU Raptor Meeting June 9th Evergreen Pkwy Theatre 3pm www.ikvraptor.org</p>	<p>9 PorSFis meeting!! 2pm Room 323 Smith Hall PSU Echo's Children CD Release!!!</p>
<p>14 Launch of space shuttle Atlantis to International Space Station - 1:15 PM PDT</p> <p>Last day for Omnimax presentation of "Whales" at OMSI</p>	<p>15 Release Date for movie "Tomb Raider"</p> <p>Release Date for movie "Atlantis, The Lost Empire" (animated)</p> <p>New OMSI Omnimax presentation "Adventures in Wild California"</p>	<p>16 Heather Alexander Café Pacific NEW NIGHT!! 8:30pm</p> <p>NOVA meeting 5pm www.novaanime.org</p>
<p>21</p> <p>This space is available</p>	<p>22 Octavia Butler's birthday</p> <p>Release Date for movie "Doctor Dolittle II"</p>	<p>23 alt.porsfis!! At Jim and Linda Pilcher's!</p> <p>Heather Alexander at Tacoma Highland Games www.tacomagames.org</p>
<p>28</p>	<p>29 AnTir/West War (Eugene, OR) June 29-July 2 http://www.antir.sca.org/evenpages/aww01/ for details</p> <p>Release Date for movie "A.I."</p>	<p>30 OMSI Star Party - 9:30 PM</p>
<p>5 Westercon 54 begins...</p>	<p>6 It continues</p>	<p>7 Yet more Westercon Through to June 8th</p>

Unlike most regionals, Norwescon runs four days rather than the usual three. Opening is on Thursday night. But, there is little programming on Thursday other than the opening and the first of their four dances. (Norwescon has always been big on dances, even having one on Sunday evening after most people have left.) Opening on Thursday, however, does allow a full slate of programming on Friday. So, there is more programming for the convention. But quite a few of the attendees cannot take both Thursday and Friday off so the attendance is low on Thursday and a lot of fans have to miss a major portion of the con. Also, Norwescon is no longer big enough to really sustain four days of programming. Sunday's program items are seldom very heavy and not too interesting. Despite more programming than most regionals, I found very little of interest this year. There just were few items that I wanted to see.

Norwescon always has a theme for their con. This year's was: "A Sense of Wonder" (A pretty broad theme, everything could fit under that.) However, this theme seldom seems to have any effect on the programming, which, as far as I am concerned, is usually a good thing. An uninteresting theme can make a con much less enjoyable.

The Masquerade was of pretty high quality this year, but with few of the pointless fancy dress costumes of old. Generally of pretty good quality, but nothing really outstanding or memorable. There were only twelve entries, after about six kids costumes. They actually had to combine the journeyman and master's categories to have enough entries for competition. Because of the few entries they didn't give out as many awards as usual which is an improvement, though one entry won several awards for a costume that had nothing to do with either SF or Fantasy in any way.

Filking was rather weak this year. It was more like the filks of a decade ago in terms of attendance. It was put in a room that was much smaller (except for the concerts) but big enough. The weakness came from a lack of very many musicians or song leaders. Because of low numbers it was not run as a circle. They had concerts before the open filking on Friday evening.

The art show was pretty good, though it seemed a little smaller than usual. (This may be my misperception since I no longer have to go through it on foot.) On the other hand, I found the dealers room rather poor. (A trend I have been noticing in Seattle area cons of late.) While they had plenty of dealers, there were very few dealing in books or magazines, and none in music. A lot of miscellaneous "stuff."

Norwescon has connections with persons in Hollywood so they usually do a good job in getting things about upcoming movies. This year was no different. They had about an hour of trailers, used for the masquerade half-time (plus two

other showings.) Plus Dragon Dronet was very involved with the remake of *Planet of the Apes*. This summer seems to be a series of remakes. In addition to *Planet of the Apes* there is *Rollerball*. Neither of those movies need to be remade, the first versions were fine. There's also *A.I.* from Spielberg, however, if it is about what the rumors say, it is something we've seen too often before. (However, this fall we can look at *Fellowship of the Ring*.)

Overall, this was a somewhat disappointing Norwescon. Nothing particularly outstanding, and too much free time.

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A DIFFERENT CONVENTION REPORT

by Sam Butler

So here is a review of The National Genealogical Society which just finished being held here in Portland for 4 days at the Oregon Convention Center.

Why is it here, in the PULSAR, well, let's look at the similarities:

1. 1700 registered attendees who paid at least \$70 per day, or \$210 for all 4 days. [Estimated 3000 people total who were let into the Exhibit [[Dealers]] Hall at no charge.
2. Not sure if there are paid members of the staff, but most of the work was done by volunteers, with Portland probably bidding and hosting.
3. All [not I wouldn't be exaggerating] attendees are lovers of printed material [just like science fiction folk]
4. A great sense, of spouse and/or family, putting up with this obsession, way of life, or calling [your choice] just like science fiction, GENEALOGY IS A WAY OF LIFE [GIAWOL instead of FIAWOL].
5. An older crowd people, after all many people when they retire take of the genealogy hobby. And yet, I didn't hear a lot of complaints about having to walk blocks [some things happened at the DoubleTree at the Lloyd Center] from the convention center to their hotels [something I think that SF fans should learn to live with and stop being such babies about].

6. Panels [well you knew I had to get there], yet with the exception of a few of them, most were solo performances in the manner of a lecture from a knowledgeable source with Q&A either at the end, or intersperse [Guess we don't have that many knowledgeable folk among SF writers/artists who want to go this route]

7. Book lovers would love this: 75% or more of the Exhibit Hall [200 tables, 115 Exhibitors] I would guess carried printed matter [or CD versions], and there were only a few people selling genealogy thingies, pencils, buttons, bumperstickers, as well as those into scrapbooking.

8. All in all everyone was friendly and you knew instinctively that you had something in common with everyone in attendance, and could stop a stranger and find that connection in a few minutes. [ie my gggparents were from oh so were mine, when?] This is not a feeling that I feel at SF conventions [or is it just me?

9. Had a good time, and usually do so at SF conventions. And that's my review of the differences and similarities between the two events.

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Awards Awarded

Stoker Awards Presented

The Horror Writer's Association presented its Bram Stoker Awards for superior achievement on May 26. The awards, named for the author of Dracula, honor superior writing in the genre of horror and dark fantasy. A full list of winners follows.

Novel

- The Traveling Vampire Show by Richard Laymon

First Novel

- The Licking Valley Coon Hunters Club by Brian A. Hopkins

Long Fiction

- The Man on the Ceiling by Melanie and Steve Rasnic Tem

Short Fiction

- "Gone" by Jack Ketchum

Fiction Collection

- Magic Terror by Peter Straub

Anthology

- The Year's Best Fantasy and Horror, 13th Annual Collection, ed. by Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling

Nonfiction

- On Writing by Stephen King

Illustrated Narrative

- The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen by Alan Moore

Screenplay

- Shadow of the Vampire by Steven Katz

Work for Young Readers

- The Power of Un by Nancy Etchemendy

Poetry Collection

- A Student of Hell by Tom Piccirilli

Other Media

- Chiaroscuro Web site by Patricia Lee Macomber, Steve Eller and Sandra Kasturi

Lifetime Achievement Award

- Nigel Kneale

Specialty Press Award

- Subterranean Press, William K. Schafer

A Book Review—CURSE OF CHALION by Lois McMaster Bujold review by Lesley Knieriem

Award-winning science-fiction author Lois McMaster Bujold turns her pen to the fantasy genre, with breathtaking results.

Lord Cazaril has been in turn courier, courtier, castle-warder, and captain; now he is but a crippled ex-galley slave making his way across a countryside reminiscent of Renaissance Spain, hoping to beg a warm hearth and a scullion's position from the noble patroness of his youth. But Fortune's wheel continues to turn for Cazaril, and he finds himself in short order promoted to the exalted - and dangerous - position of secretary-tutor to the Iselle, the beautiful, fiery sister of the heir to Chalion's throne.

Amidst the decaying splendor and poisonous intrigue of Chalion's ancient fortress capital, Cazaril encounters both old enemies and surprising allies, as he seeks to lift the curse of misfortune that clings to the royal family of Chalion, and to all who come too close to them.

While the novel can – and should – be appreciated as a rousing tale of romance and adventure, Bujold weaves sophisticated speculation on the nature of free will and destiny in the guise of an intriguing mythology, underpinned by a constant subtle evocation of potent symbolic archetypes. Chalion is a beautifully constructed world, both warmly familiar and achingly distant; it breathes hints of shores yet unseen, stories yet to be told, without burdening the reader with a weary litany of exotic names and historical background.

Supernatural power and events are carefully derived from the intrinsic nature of the world, displaying the simple inevitability of a chemical reaction – with consequences just as devastating. Bujold, justly celebrated for her complex characterization, excels in her portrayal of the observant, sardonic, devoted Cazaril, and provides him with a rich and appealing cast of supporting characters. She deftly avoids the twin temptations of making her heroes too nobly pure or her villains too blackly malevolent, allowing even the smallest character to emerge as recognizably human. For, with all the her grand canvas of nations and gods and fates, it is humanity – in all its shame and glory – that Bujold celebrates, and readers will be swept along to rejoice in their own.

Very possibly a masterpiece.

Bits from SCIFI.COM

Northwest Fan Wins B5 Contest

Babylon 5 fan Bart Gregg of Moses Lake, Wash., won SCIFI.COM's B5: Be in the Movie Contest to have a character named after him in The SCI FI Channel's upcoming original television movie Babylon 5: The Legend of the Rangers. A starship captain will carry Gregg's name.

Gregg was one of more than 15,500 fans who entered the contest for a chance to be immortalized in the upcoming movie, which began production in Vancouver, B.C., on May 14.

B5: The Legend of the Rangers comes from the original creative team behind B5. Douglas Netter and creator J. Michael Straczynski will executive produce the movie, which Straczynski wrote and Michael Vejar will direct. Rangers picks up the story of the Ranger fleet as it attempts to restore order to hundreds of civilizations devastated by the Shadow War. Rangers will serve as the pilot for a potential SCI FI Channel series.



From SFWA.ORG

Dr. Morton Klass (192?-2001)

Dr. Morton Klass, noted Anthropologist, died of a sudden heart attack on Saturday, April 28. Dr. Klass, age 73, retired from Barnard College in 1997.

Short fiction by Dr. Klass was published in *Astounding Science Fiction*, *Worlds of If* and *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* in the 1950s and 60s. A popular and interesting speaker, he appeared occasionally at conventions, particularly at Confluence, the home convention of his older brother Philip Klass (William Tenn).

Dr. Klass is survived by his wife, novelist Sheila Solomon Klass; daughters, well-known medical writer Dr. Perri E. Klass and fiction writer Judy A. Klass; and son screenwriter David Klass.

Douglas Adams (1952-2001)

Douglas Adams, British author of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, died of a heart attack at his home in Santa Barbara, CA on Friday May 11.

Adams, age 49, started writing professionally with the BBC television series *Doctor Who*. He went on to write the *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* radio series and book. The book was one of the most successful in last third of the 20th Century.

Tributes to Adams are available at <http://www.douglasadams.com/cgi-bin/mboard/info/list.cgi>

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And Now For Something Completely Different

Handy Engineering Conversions

- ✧ Ratio of an igloo's circumference to its diameter: Eskimo Pi
- ✧ 2000 pounds of Chinese soup: Won ton
- ✧ 1 millionth of a mouthwash: 1 microscope
- ✧ Time between slipping on a peel and smacking the pavement: 1 bananosecond
- ✧ Weight an evangelist carries with God: 1 billigram
- ✧ Time it takes to sail 220 yards at 1 nautical mile per hour: Knot-furlong

- ✧ 365.25 days of drinking low-calorie beer because it's less filling: 1 lite year
- ✧ 16.5 feet in the Twilight Zone: 1 Rod Serling
- ✧ Half of a large intestine: 1 semicolon
- ✧ 1000 aches: 1 kilohurtz
- ✧ Basic unit of laryngitis: 1 hoarsepower
- ✧ Shortest distance between two jokes: A straight line. (think about it for a moment)
- ✧ 453.6 graham crackers: 1 pound cake
- ✧ 1 million microphones: 1 megaphone
- ✧ 1 million bicycles: 2 megacycles
- ✧ 2000 mockingbirds: two kilomockingbirds (work on it....)
- ✧ 10 cards: 1 decacards
- ✧ 1 kilogram of falling figs: 1 Fig Newton
- ✧ 1000 cubic centimeters of wet socks: 1 literhosen
- ✧ 1 millionth of a fish: 1 microfiche
- ✧ 1 trillion pins: 1 terrapin
- ✧ 10 rations: 1 decoration
- ✧ 100 rations: 1 C-ration
- ✧ 2 monograms: 1 diagram
- ✧ 8 nickels: 2 paradigms
- ✧ 3 statute miles of intravenous surgical tubing at Yale University Hospital: 1 I.V. League

And from BBC News, sent in by Carl Mork

Tuesday, 15 May, 2001, 15:46 GMT 16:46 UK © BBC News

Mystery force tugs distant probes

The Pioneer craft are heading towards the stars

by BBC News Online science editor Dr David Whitehouse

An unexplained force is pulling on distant spacecraft. Researchers have come to this conclusion after a thorough analysis of the deep-space probes' trajectories.

It could be just a tiny unnoticed effect in the spacecraft themselves, but scientists warn it could also be the first hint that modifications need to be made to our understanding of the force of gravity.

"It is almost as if the probes are not behaving according to the known law of gravity," said Dr John Anderson, of the American space agency's (NASA) Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and lead scientist on the study.

He said: "We've been working on this problem for several years, and we have accounted for everything we could think of."

Great detail

The unexplained force appears to be acting on four deep-space probes scattered around the Solar System.

Pioneer 10 was launched towards the outer planets in 1972. It is now well beyond Jupiter but still in radio contact with Earth.

By studying the Doppler shift (the "stretching") of the radio signals from the probe, scientists have been able to calculate how fast the craft is travelling. Since 1980, its trajectory has been mapped in very great detail.

The puzzle is that Pioneer 10 is slowing more quickly than it should.

It was initially suggested that this might be due to the force from a tiny gas leak or that it was being pulled off course by the gravity of an unseen Solar System object.

Unseen body

The mystery deepened further when an analysis of the trajectory being followed by its sister spacecraft, Pioneer 11, launched in 1973, showed that it too was being subjected to the same mysterious effect.

But Pioneer 11 is on the opposite side of the Solar System from Pioneer 10, about 22 billion km (about 14 billion miles) away. This means the effect cannot be the gravitational effect of some unseen body.

Add to all this hints that the same unexplained effect might have been acting on the Galileo spacecraft on its journey to Jupiter, and the Ulysses spaceprobe that is circling the Sun, and you have a Solar System-wide puzzle.

In a report soon to be published in a major astronomical journal, Dr Anderson and colleagues have carried out an impressive study of the state of the Pioneer spacecraft and all the tiny forces to which they could be subjected.

Planets unaffected

"Our analysis strongly suggests that it is difficult to understand how any of these mechanisms can explain the magnitude of the observed behaviour of the Pioneer anomaly," the team says.

It has been suggested that the spacecraft tracking data have shown a deviation in the force of gravity that is apparent only across vast distances. It has also been pointed out that the strength of the effect seems to be related to two of the Universe's physical constants: the speed of light and the speed of the expansion of the Universe.

But others have dismissed this as being too fanciful, arguing that if the Pioneer anomaly was really indicative of a change in our understanding of gravity, then it would be apparent in the orbits of the planets around the Sun - which it is not.

The effect is as yet unexplained and with all four affected probes never to return to Earth for analysis, it may well remain that way.

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

Your editor has been Debra Stansbury. Next month's editor is the same. **Deadline is the 3rd Saturday of every month.** Contributions are always welcome, and may be sent to the PO Box above, or to the editor direct at porsfis@email.com or debstans@canada.com

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

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