



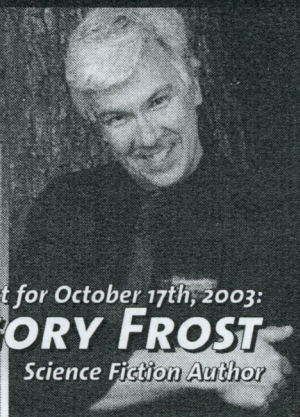
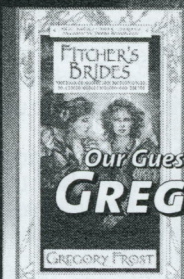
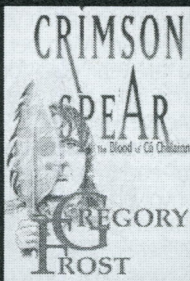
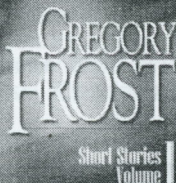
www.psfs.org

PSFS NEWS

The Newsletter of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society

SCIENCE FICTION ■ FANTASY ■ HORROR

fictionwise collection series



Our Guest for October 17th, 2003:
GREGORY FROST
Science Fiction Author

GREGORY FROST

Gregory Frost has been writing and publishing stories of fantasy, horror and science fiction for two decades (he started when he was six). This year, his novelette, "Madonna of the Maquiladora," has been a James Tiptree Award finalist, a Nebula Award finalist, a Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Award for Short Fiction finalist, and a Hugo Award finalist. Meanwhile, his latest novel, *Fitcher's Brides* – a sinister recasting of the fairy tale of Bluebeard and the latest volume in Terri Windling's Fairy Tale series from Tor Books – has been a finalist for the International Horror Guild Award and for the World Fantasy Award. He says, "The nomination is the award. Really. No, seriously, stop laughing."

He has twice taught in the Clarion Writers program (he's also a Clarion graduate) at Michigan State University and will be co-teaching the final two weeks there next summer with New Jersey writer Jeffrey Ford. He will be the 2004 Fiction Writing Workshop Director at Swarthmore College beginning in January. Any excuse to not actually have to write.

His shorter work has appeared in *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*, *Asimov's Magazine*, *Whispers*, *Realms of Fantasy*, and in such anthologies as *Mojo: Conjure Stories*, edited by Nalo Hopkinson (Warner Aspect); *Snow White, Blood Red and Black Swan, White Raven*, edited by Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling; *Intersections: The Sycamore Hill Anthology*, edited by John Kessel & Richard Butner; his stories have also been included in the Best New Horror collections edited by Stephen Jones, though he swears that he doesn't write horror, it just finds him. In the night. In the dark.

He served as the principal researcher and preliminary script writer for the award-winning "Wolfman: The Science & the Myth" episode of *Science Frontiers*, on the Discovery Global Network (USA: The Learning Channel); and as principal researcher for "Curse of the Pharaohs," also for *Science Frontiers*. And he's acted in two "B" movies (and giving them a passing grade at all really seems charitable).

His latest story, "The Harp That Sang," is featured in Windling and Datlow's YA anthology, *Swan Sister* (Simon and Schuster).

ABOUT PSFS NEWS

PSFS News is the newsletter and corporate minutes of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society, published monthly as a benefit of membership.

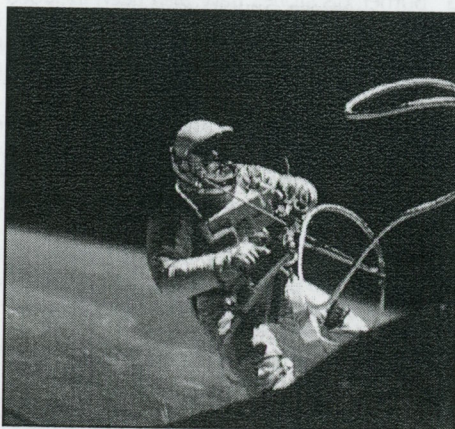
SUBMISSIONS to PSFS News are welcome, in our quest for world domination. Anyone wishing to contribute articles (book or movie reviews, discussion group or convention reports, announcements, etc.) is encouraged to do so. Articles can be e-mailed (secretary@psfs.org) but they may be mailed, if necessary, to the PSFS PO Box. Deadline is two weeks before the next general meeting. E-mailed articles may be sent in nearly any format, but text or HTML formats are preferred. Artwork, Sketches, Comics, or Photos are also welcome in any graphics format, or we can scan originals if mailed to us (originals will not be returned).

SCIFI-OGRAPIHIES SUBMISSIONS are open to any member who would like to send us approximately 300 words about themselves, and their relationship with science fiction. Submissions will be published based on available space.

SUBSCRIPTIONS - PSFS News is available free to active and general members of PSFS, and to any Science Fiction Club or organization wishing to trade newsletters. Non-members or inactive members may subscribe at an annual cost of \$15/year.

PSFS News is published by the PSFS Secretary (Nathan E. Lilly) of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society.

CONTRIBUTORS (in order of submission received): Henry Leon Lazarus, Nathan Lilly, Darrell Schweitzer, Saul Snitkin, Lee Weinstein.



ABOUT THE SOCIETY

THE PHILADELPHIA SCIENCE FICTION SOCIETY is a non-profit organization that meets to discuss and promote science fiction and fantasy in literature, the arts, and popular culture.

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 \$24 for a full year (\$40 for couples). Attendance of 4 meetings each year maintains the status of Active Member.

GENERAL MEETINGS are held on the 2nd Friday of each month and feature a guest speaker involved in some area of Science Fiction or Fantasy, such as writers, editors, artists, etc. See *Meeting Notices* for more information.

SPONSORED EVENTS, such as *The Philadelphia Science Fiction Conference* (AKA *Philcon*), are held throughout the year.

OTHER SPECIAL INTEREST EVENTS, are also sponsored by the society, 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.

COPIES OF THE BYLAWS AND STANDING RULES can be made available to all Society Members by asking the Secretary.

CONTACTING THE SOCIETY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Contact boardmembers by phone (or send e-mail to board@psfs.org).

PRESIDENT Suzanne Rosin	(610)667-5248
VICE PRESIDENT Hugh Casey	(215)674-8047*
SECRETARY Nathan Lilly	(215)439-8690
TREASURER Jeff Linder	(856)983-3074
2 YEAR DIRECTOR Will Flynn	TBA
2 YEAR DIRECTOR Tim Binder	(610)352-9131
1 YEAR DIRECTOR Saul Snitkin	(215)745-3765

*no calls after g.p.m.

CALL THE PSFS HOTLINE: (877) 656-3914 for PSFS Meeting Information, to leave messages, and to receive last minute meeting cancellations.

TO JOIN THE PSFS LISTSERVES and receive PSFS related news via e-mail, send an e-mail to 'announce-on@psfs.org'. To subscribe to PSFS-Talk (general PSFS discussions), the address is 'psfs-talk-on@psfs.org'.

MEETING NOTICES

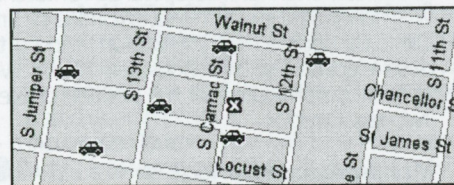
October 17th, 2003
Gregory Frost
Author of Fitcher's Brides, Crimson Spear, and The Pure Cold Light

October 18th, 2003
Philcon '03 Meeting
To discuss the convention. Contact chair@philcon.org for more information.

October 22nd, 2003
Board Meeting
To discuss society topics. Contact board@psfs.org for time & location

November 14th, 2003
Catherine Asaro
Hard SF/Romance Author & President of SFWA.

December 12th-14th, 2003
Philcon 2003
The Philadelphia Science Fiction Conference at the Marriott Hotel



Unless otherwise specified, General Meetings are held on the 2nd Friday of each month at The Franklin Inn Club, located at 205 South Camac Street - the northeast corner of the intersection of Camac and St. James Streets, which is just north and east of the intersection of Locust and 13th Streets, in Center City Philadelphia. Business meeting starts at 8:00 pm. Program starts at 9 pm. Meeting dates may be changed by the Society when necessary.

NEWS

For current information and announcements about PSFS visit www.psfs.org

COPIES OF ALL OFFICIAL PSFS CORRESPONDENCE should be sent to the Secretary for filing in the Society's official records.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS can be e-mailed to secretary@psfs.org, mailed to the Society's P.O. Box, or given to the Secretary in writing at the meetings. To have your announcements, events, articles, etc. published accurately you must give the secretary the information in writing (or e-mail).

THE EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA GAMING SOCIETY is sponsoring Game Club Saturday at the Oxford Valley Mall-Community Room (upper level behind Zales), for anyone interested in playing board games, strategy games, military simulations, railroad games, economic games, or family games. For additional information visit www.epgs.org

P.A.G.E. (PHILADELPHIA AREA GAMING ENTHUSIASTS) meet every Sunday night at the Ethical Society on Rittenhouse Square. Meetings start at 6 pm and run till 10-10:30. They do role-playing, board gaming, historical (a bit of everything). Everyone's welcome. For more information visit www.philagamers.org

PRYDONIANS OF PRINCETON meet once a month at the Mercer County Library, Lawrenceville, NJ. Contact: Prydonians@aol.com or visit www.prydonians.org.

BARNES & NOBLE IN BRYN MAWR has a Science Fiction Discussion group that meets the fourth Tuesday of every month, at 7:30pm.

THE FRANKLIN INN CLUB offers dinner to interested members before the regularly scheduled PSFS meetings at about 6:30, \$15 for appetizer to dessert \$8-\$10 if you just want dinner and dessert. Contact Jenna Lynn (dinner@psfs.org) for details.

PHILADELPHIA FANTASTIC will be having a reading of Holly Black's *Tithe* at the Center City Barnes and Nobles (18th & Walnut). If you'd like to be added to the Philadelphia Fantastic Announcement list contact Oz Fontecchio at ozf@netaxs.com

BOB AND WINNIE are celebrating their 11th Anniversary together.

PHILCON 2003

PHILADELPHIA'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY
December 12-14, 2003 Marriott Center City Hotel, Philadelphia

Principal Speaker: JACK McDEVITT
Artist Guests of Honor: GREG & TIM HILDEBRANDT
Special Guests: PETER DAVID & HARRY HARRISON

A Science Fiction Extravaganza!

Books & Literature - meet authors, editors & award readers

Dealers Room - 80+ vendors where you can get SF related holiday gifts.

Gaming & Role Playing - Games held through out the day and into the night.

Cosplay - show & learn new techniques, wear your favorites for prizes.

Art Show - see professional & amateur art work - and buy some, too!

Film, TV & Anime - view and discuss classics and new media.

Children's Programming - programs for SF fans 12 and under.



THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE OF SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY
HOSTED BY THE PHILADELPHIA SCIENCE FICTION SOCIETY
WWW.PHILCON.ORG

MEMBERSHIP STATUS

for September 12th, 2003

First Timers: 3 Nominees: 1

New Members: 1

Members: 32 (31 active, 1 general, 0 inactive)

**Status changes are effective after meeting adjourns.*

GENERAL MEETING

These are the minutes of the General Meeting held on September 12th, 2003 at The Franklin Inn Club. The meeting was called to order at 8:07PM-ish.

PROXIES: Lisa Blanco, Rich Ferree to Gary Feldbaum; Amy Neff to Joe Neff; Jared Dashoff to Todd Dashoff; Sara Paul to Gene Olmstead..

**Proxies may be delivered directly to the Secretary either in person, by mail (must arrive before the meeting), at the meeting by another member of the society.*

CORRECTIONS TO MINUTES: none.

OFFICERS' REPORTS

PRESIDENT (SUZANNE): I'm trying to find out what committees that PSFS has and what society materials those people have. We're trying to get an inventory of all our stuff.

VICE PRESIDENT (HUGH): Will Flynn was actually keeping this really quiet. He went into surgery this week, and had part of his large intestine removed. He's doing fine. We have a card circulating to wish him a speedy recovery. The good news was that when I was talking to Will he told me that not only would he be running ConSuite again this year, but he would make sure that it would be the best that we ever had.

SECRETARY (NATHAN): no report.

TREASURER (JEFF): We have money.

Vanguard:	\$?*
Savings:	\$1000.00
Blue Checking:	\$1000.00
Green Checking:	\$1103.45
PayPal:	\$225.08
TOTAL:	\$3428.57

**Vanguard will be sending information annually.*

2 YEAR DIRECTOR (TIM): none.

2 YEAR DIRECTOR (DEB): none.

1 YEAR DIRECTOR (SAUL): none.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

PHILCON 2003 (HUGH): Our next committee meeting (the Hotel Walk-through) will be the 21st of this month. We know that it was originally scheduled for the 14th, but the Hotel wasn't available for that day. The meeting after that will be held on October 18th, place TBD.

SPACE SCIENCES (HANK SMITH): Hank Smith has a list of events to be held in the near future. Please contact him for details.

PROGRAMMING (OZ): Oz introduced Sherianne Lewitt. See *Meeting Notices* for future guests and dates.

SPECIAL EVENTS (OZ): Contact Oz for future features, locations, and dates.

BOOK DISCUSSION (OZ): Contact Oz for future features, locations, and dates.

MOVIE GROUP (OZ): Contact Oz for future features, locations, and dates.

BUSINESS

OLD BUSINESS: none.

NEW BUSINESS:

SPECIAL ELECTIONS: Will Flynn accepted a written nomination from Gary Feldbaum. Hank Smith was nominated by Winnie, seconded by John Desmond. Hank accepted. Oz Fontecchio was nominated by Don Field, seconded by Eric Dietz. Oz declined. Gary Feldbaum moved to close elections, seconded by Jeff Linder. Will Flynn was nominated for the position of Even Two-Year Director.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 10:28-ish

BOARD MEETING

These are the minutes of the Board Meeting held on September 23rd, 2003 at Suite 1312. The meeting was called to order at 8:35PM-ish.

PROXIES: none.

CORRECTIONS TO MINUTES: none.

ATTENDING: Tim Binder, Hugh Casey, Nathan Lilly, Jeff Linder, Suzanne Rosin, Saul Snitkin. Others Present: Oz Fontecchio, Hank Smith.

BOARD REPORTS

PRESIDENT (SUZANNE): If anyone needs help with anything, please ask.

VICE PRESIDENT (HUGH): no report.

SECRETARY (NATHAN): I'm going to be moving in October to Limerick, Pennsylvania. My house will no longer be an option for meetings. I'll still be a part of the society, I'll still be attending meetings (if other people can make it out from Harrisburg...).

TREASURER (JEFF): no report.

2 YEAR DIRECTOR (TIM): no report.

1 YEAR DIRECTOR (SAUL): no report.

BUSINESS

OLD BUSINESS:

PSFS DOOMSDAY: Suzanne is interested in assembling a list of the positions people hold in the society. She is also interested in assembling a list of society property. If you have any society property in your possession, please let her know what it is. She has received list from most every committee, with a few that she is aware of and currently talking to. If you know of a committee that she may be unaware of please contact her.

...you think that "no fund" is a non-existent committee...

NEW BUSINESS:

MAY PROGRAM MOTION: Jeff Linder motioned, seconded by Tim Binder, for the board to allow Oz Fontecchio to program for the May General PSFS meeting (given the fact that he could get Jim Morrow for that meeting). The motion passed unanimously.

HALLOWEEN PARTY: There will be a Halloween Party (costume-optional) held for PSFS members and friends at Jerry Crosson's house scheduled for the 25th of October. The event will be co-hosted by Jerry Crosson and Oz Fontecchio and there will be no society expense incurred because of this event.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 11:02-ish

PHILCON 2003 MEETING

These are the minutes of the Philcon 2003 Meeting held on August 23rd, 2003 at the Marriott Center City. The meeting was called to order at 1:17PM.

PROXIES: none.

CORRECTIONS TO MINUTES: none.

ATTENDING: Jeff Linder, Hugh Casey, Oz Fontecchio, Tony Finan, Joe Neff, Rebecca Marcus, Brian Price, Lorenzo Harmon, Lisa Blanco, and others.

REPORTS

CHAIR (HUGH): no report.

VICE CHAIR (JEFF): I've spoken with the Head of the Dealers committee it looks like we won't have a problem with dealer's room this year. Even though last year wasn't as good as last year, the dealers were more than willing to give

us another chance. We have a whole list of new dealers. We even have a waiting list.

SECRETARY (NATHAN): no report.

TREASURER (SUZANNE): no report.

...I'm gonna hit you so hard...

COMMITTEE REPORTS

REGISTRATION: We're looking into online registration. There are 42 pre-registrations. Pre-registrations have been down from 40-75% for similar cons in the area.

BUSINESS

OLD BUSINESS: none.

NEW BUSINESS:

FILE MAKER PRO (HUGH): There are too many positions that are using this program. I'd like to revise the budget to include a separate version. We currently use File Maker for registration, programming, and scheduling, among others. There was much discussion.

...as long as it's covered by their insurance...

THE FILE MAKER MOTION: Will Flynn motioned, Jeff Linder seconded, to add a line item to the Philcon budget in the amount of up to \$500.00 to purchase software as needed for administration purposes. The motion passed 8 to 2.

THE "8 PAGE" FLYER (JEFF): There was much discussion. It was decided to let whomever is to design the flyer figure out how long it has to be, after we decided what is to go in it. The content of the flyer was then decided on, it will be written and forwarded to the designer.

THE PHILCON 2003 COMMERCIAL (HUGH): We'd like to expand the area that the commercial is shown in. This will cost approximately \$1700. It will run at least twice during BattleStar Gallactica. Last Year Aardvark Productions took some footage. They are willing to use that footage in a commercial this year. To redo the ad will be an expenditure of about \$650 (we budgeted \$500 for it).

COLLEGE OUTREACH (HUGH): Lynn Koehler will

be reporting to Lisa Blanco to get more exposure on college campuses. We will find out about running ads in the college papers, posting flyers, among other things.

THE NEW FAN INITIATIVE (JEFF): The Goal is not only to get them in the door, but to keep them in the door, by making their Philcon as pleasant as possible. To this end we will be giving first timers "New Fan" ribbons. Even if that means added another person to registration. When we see these people with "New Fan" ribbons - could this be a bad thing?

MULTI-GROUP SOCIALS (JEFF): There will be a Multi-group fan-based organization social at Philcon. Contact me for more details.

GAME-MASTERS POLICY (FOR CLARIFICATION): The head of Gaming appoints game masters as staff, with all the benefits thereof.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 3:48PM

PHILCON 2003 MEETING

These are the minutes of the Philcon 2003 Meeting held on September 21st, 2003 at the Radison Hotel. The meeting was called to order at 1:44PM.

...nobody leaves until the cake is finished...

PROXIES: none.

CORRECTIONS TO MINUTES: none.

ATTENDING: Hugh Casey, Jeff Linder, Nathan Lilly, Gary Feldbaum, Oz Fontecchio, Hank Smith, Bob Schweir, Winona Whyte-Schweir, Will Flynn, Tony Finan, Suzanne Rosin, Rosemarie Freeman, Rebecca Marcus, and others.

REPORTS

CHAIR (HUGH): no report.

VICE CHAIR (JEFF): no report.

SECRETARY (NATHAN): no report.

TREASURER (SUZANNE): no report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

WEBMASTER: If you are a program committee head, send a brief description of your committee area (about a paragraph) that answers what it is. Send your potential panels, when you have them. Send your confirmed guest information, when you get it. Send it to webmaster@psfs.org

BUSINESS

OLD BUSINESS: none.

NEW BUSINESS:

HOTEL SPACE: We have pretty much the same space that we had last year with the main exception that we will only have the 5th floor during the day, until 5PM. The Hotel is saying that we will get an equivalent number of rooms on the 3rd and 4th floors. The size of the rooms is the only issue. We're going from two rooms that held 650 to six rooms that hold about 50. Last year on Friday night there wouldn't have been a problem with this arrangement, so we're not predicting a problem this year.

Film and Anime, which will be split into two separate rooms. Gaming will be in the same space.

...they're called "otaku"...

There was much discussion about the placement of the Information booth and signs. It was decided to put the info-desk on the third floor to help direct people, and put registration right in front of (across from) the dealer's room (in the pre-function space).

It was discussed whether or not to move the ConSuite.

It was discussed whether or not to have a Masquerade "half-time" show. The feasibility of such a show is being researched by Tony Finan.

...do you want me to put it up on the Philcon list?...

FAN RIBBONS: It was discussed whether to have horizontal or vertical ribbons this year. Due to having leftovers from previous conventions it was decided that we would continue using the vertical style of ribbon, until we used them up.

GROUP RATES: It was decided to actually publicize the group rates. The Policy is: 10 or more people submitted in a single package (single checks are fine, just submitted all at once) pre-registrations only - each individual will receive \$5 off the prevailing rate.

SANTA VADER: The local Star Wars club, Philly

Outer Rim, will be doing a charity event at Philcon, featuring "Santa Vader"... people can get a photo taken with Darth Vader in a Santa hat! They will donate all proceeds to PSFS to go to the SFWA Medical fund!

FUTURE PHILCON MEETINGS: The next meeting will be held on October 18th, at a place TBD. The meeting after that is to be held on November,

at a place TBD.

PRE-REGISTRATION: Is about 70 people right now. Pre-reg is down at most every convention on the East coast.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 5:12PM

PHILCON 2003 Registration

Detach This Form And Mail It To:

Philcon Registration
PO Box 3,
Oreland PA 19075

Email: registration@philcon.org

(email is for inquiries only, no email registrations will be accepted)

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
EMAIL _____
New Address? _____ Is this your first Philcon? _____
Email address on badge instead of city/state? _____

Roommate Matching

Date of Arrival _____ Date of Departure _____
Room Type: (circle one each) Quiet / Party Smoking / Nonsmoking
Sex: M F willing to share with opposite sex? Yes No
Phone # so we can put you in contact with prospect _____
(Email contacts are preferred: supply your email above if you have one)

Would you like to help with Philcon?

If so, please indicate which department(s):

<input type="checkbox"/> Art Show	<input type="checkbox"/> Art Auction	<input type="checkbox"/> Masquerade	<input type="checkbox"/> Babysitting
<input type="checkbox"/> Registration	<input type="checkbox"/> OPS	<input type="checkbox"/> Con Suite	<input type="checkbox"/> Information
<input type="checkbox"/> Programming	<input type="checkbox"/> Logistics	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

...And also when you will be available (and for how long, in # of hours):

	Friday (# of hours)	Saturday (# of hours)	Sunday (# of hours)
Morning			
Early Afternoon			
Late Afternoon			
Evening			
After Midnight			

Your Phone #: _____

NOTE: No children under the age of 16 will be admitted except in the company of a parent or adult guardian. A waiver of the conference's responsibility will be required of the parent or legal adult guardian.
Proper ID will be required to register at PHILCON!

Please list all additional names, along with addresses (if different than the main address). If a "Badge Name" is desired, please list that next to the name. Please, include the names of all children under the age of 16 as of Dec. 12, 2003.

Please check off each child for whom babysitting is requested.

Babysitting?	Name (Badge Name, if different)	Child's age
<input type="checkbox"/>		?
<input type="checkbox"/>		?
<input type="checkbox"/>		?
<input type="checkbox"/>		?
<input type="checkbox"/>		?

Memberships at the following rates must be **postmarked** by the dates shown to be accepted. Prices are for all three days unless noted. Please note, all memberships that are **received** on or after Dec. 1, 2003, will be held and processed as "At The Door".

Membership prices, valid at least through 08-31-2003:

ADULT @ \$40.00 = \$ _____

CHILDREN (ages 7 to 12) @ \$15.00 = \$ _____

Membership prices valid from 09-01-2003 until 11-30-2003:

ADULT @ \$45.00 = \$ _____

CHILDREN (ages 7 to 12) @ \$20.00 = \$ _____

BABY & TODDLER (age 6 and under) (free w/ paying adult)

BABYSITTING (age 6 and under) @ \$50.00 = \$ _____

TOTAL MEMBERSHIPS: **TOTAL = \$** _____

"Single Day" memberships will be available at the door.

Group Memberships are available! Ask us for details!

Please make checks payable to "Philadelphia Science Fiction Society"

Credit Card: ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard

(I hereby authorize this charge to be made on my account)

SIGNATURE: _____ EXPIRES: _____

For Philcon Registration Use ONLY!

Membership number(s) _____ through _____

Date Received: _____ CK MO CC TC CASH

DETACH HERE

Contact the Marriott Center City Hotel at (215) 625-2900

to reserve your room (mention "Philcon").

(Online registration will be available through our website)

HOTEL RATES: \$81.00/night single/double, \$101.00/night triple/quad!

If you would like a confirmation of your registration, please provide your email address or a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your registration form.

Correspondence to Registration *only* should be addressed to PO Box 3, Oreland PA 19075.

Dealer and Art Show information requests, Programming, Advertising, Press, and any other non-Registration related correspondence should go to P.O. Box 8303, Philadelphia, PA 19101-8303

Email addresses for individual departments, as well as the above link to the Marriott Hotel, may be found at our website:

www.philcon.org

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEWS FOR

OCTOBER 2003

by Henry Leon Lazarus

I've had a feeling for a while that this fall will bring huge changes. I'm not sure what exactly will happen, but things have been too calm this summer, almost like the quiet before the storm. It wouldn't surprise me if the stock market crashed, Iraq turned crazy, and Israel is condemned for actions not its fault. If these things happen, and I hope they don't, then strong leaders will be required. Science fiction is at its best describing strong leaders and many Hugo awards have gone to books about them.

Strong leaders don't have to be human. Aille is of the Jao, a species who escaped from the mad Ekhat and now work to defend their worlds against the destruction the mad beings create. The Jao conquered Earth two decades before and now rule harshly under a governor who believes only in force—but *The Course of Empire* (hard from Baen) brings the young Jao (they look like walking seals) to Earth and his leadership abilities and willingness to listen to humans make all the difference. Eric Flint and K.D. Wentworth have a great deal of fun creating a truly alien species with different ways of thought, but they also create solid human characters to balance them. The battle against the invading Ekhat, on the surface of the sun, is also fun, using converted submarines with missile-firing tanks attached. I really enjoyed this tale and wouldn't be surprised if others enjoyed it enough to send it to the nominations lists.

Sara Douglass borrows a bit from ancient Egypt for a tale about a pyramid, two centuries in the making, that creates a *Threshold* (hard from Tor) between our Earth and a part of heaven filled with evil. Tirzah, a new slave because of her father's debts, is bought to work on the glass on the Pyramid about a year before the completion of the horrible device and manages to survive it's completion. The hidden talents of her friends and her lover are the only hope of the country that mistakenly built the Pyramid. This is a great love story and manages get inside Tirzah's emotions for a solid, satisfying tale.

Kage Baker leaves her time travel series for a fun fantasy about *The Anvil of the World* (hard from Tor). The main character is an ex-assassin who is trying to quit but his encounters with the sons and daughters of a Saint/Demon match provide multiple, fun complications to his attempt at a settled life. This is the type of tale that grows on you—becoming more and more fun as the tale goes on. I had a grin on my face the whole time and this is a firm addition to my reread list.

Robin McKinley enters the Buffy the Vampire Slayer / Anita Blake genre with a tale about a baker, Rae Seddon (also known as *Sunshine* (hard from Berkley)) in an alternate present a decade after the barely-won war against the others (vampires, etc.). It's a dark world with vampires (who own a lot of it), demons, half-demons who can look very human, and wizards. Rae, in fact, is the daughter of a Wizard, though her mother left him and remarried the owner of the diner where Rae bakes her fabulous deserts. When she goes out to an old lake house, she is captured by vampires and left in chains as food for the only good vampire in that world. The stress causes her to awake her inherited powers and free herself and her new friend. Yes there are echoes of Buffy and Angel in this fascinating tale, but the mythology is quite different and Rae's powers, once she discovers them, are very different from Buffy's. Then there's the problem of the military SOF (special other force) who wouldn't understand her relationship with a vampire (and has never heard of a good one) if she told them, and would want to conscript her in the continuing war against

vampires that humanity is slowly losing. This tale easily matches Laurel K. Hamilton's work and has a unique voice that makes me eagerly wait for Sunshine's next adventure.

Constructs might be made from human DNA, but they are considered second class citizens in the future that Chris Moriarty constructed in *Spin State* (trade from Bantam Spectra). Major Catherine Li faked her way into the Peacekeepers, but, when she gets men under her killed in an operation, she is sent to investigate the death of a genius scientist/construct, who looked exactly like her, on the mining world where Major Li had been born and raised. Buried in the coal deposits of that world is a special crystal that allows faster-than-light communication and travel. Add in artificial-intelligences working for full rights, plots and counter-plots from the various political bodies, and a religious belief that inside the crystal is an intelligence, and you get a fun, complicated future that is as dirty and sooty as the mines that dominate the tale.

Kylara is a member of the rich Vatta trading family, so when she is booted from the military academy, her father makes captain of a ship on its final voyage to the scrap heap. As Elizabeth Moon tells it, if Kylara had stayed on schedule nothing would have happened, but there was this colony that had been gyped of farming machinery and the profits would allow the side trip. Alas the ship was old and Kylara soon finds herself *Trading in Danger* (hard from Del Rey) with a broke down ship near a war zone. This is a fun, fast-reading tale that is impossible to put down.

Terry Pratchett tells of the last volunteers in a lost war, a woman hiding as a man who discovers others like her, and a company that becomes known as the *Monstrous Regiment* (hard from Harper Collins) in the latest Disc World tale about gender differences in war. This is more plot driven than many earlier of the Disc World tales and has a brief cameo by Commander Vimes of the Night Watch. But most of the tale belongs to Polly—a woman trying to be a man so she can rescue her brother. I really liked this tale of silly heroics and women masquerading as men and men as women. It's a good giggle. Harper Prism has republished *The Bromeliad Trilogy* (hard) about miniature, fast-living people called Nomes living in a store in London that Terry Pratchett wrote a decade ago.

I usually enjoy private eye novels in fantasy worlds and Baen books has brought together two (out of seven) of Martin Scott's *Thraxas* (paper from Baen) tales. Thraxas is forty-three, fat, a low grade sorcerer, and a man who never turns down a beer. He is helped by Makri, a bar maid and ex-gladiator, who keeps trying to enter the male-only University by taking courses, and who gets extra tips at the bar by wearing a chain-mail bra. The first tale involves a hijacked magical red elvish cloth and drug dealing among the nobility. Before it's over there's a fight in the fairy glade, a slain dragon in the zoo, and madness running amuck in the city. The second...well if you get through the first, you won't be able to stop reading. Hopefully Baen will continue to deliver the other tales previously printed only in England.

Robina Williams has a contemplative tale about a friary in which brother Jerome is newly dead and trying to learn how to live with it. Brother Ignatius is a great cook who never seems to eat his own food, brother Valentine an artist, and Father Fidelis is bothered by a new arrival to the Parish, a woman from his past. There's also the other dead friars who usually stay in their part of heaven and a strange cat that moves easily from heavenly friary and the earthly one, helping Brother Jerome escape from a tree, a painting, and a crystal ball. Jerome and the *Seraph* (trade from Twilight Times Books) is a quiet book that

matches the contemplative life of the Friars. Very calming.

It's interesting to compare and contrast to standard fantasies (both the first parts of trilogies) with similar plots. Terry Brooks' tale of the stolen High Druid of Shanara and her exile to the other world of *Jarka Ruus* (hard from Del Rey) has a young man, Pen Olmsford, sent on a quest to save his aunt. Simon Brown's first novel tells of a young Prince, youngest of four, whose *Inheritance* (paper from DAW) of one of the four Keys of Power causes plotters to blame him for the death of the new king, his half-brother. Both adventures have companions with one a woman with magical powers. Pen (*Jarka Ruus*) finds puppy love with a young blind woman who can see in the dark. Lyan (*Inheritance*) happened to have been chasing the young woman when events drove him out of the castle and on the run. Terry Brooks has heavy magic on both sides with gestures and intoning bring forth huge effects and with flying boats on both sides. Evil Druids are after our heroes and their use of magic constantly betrays them. Simon Brown's heroes find more natural problems, cliffs that destroy their boat and mercenaries constantly on their trail. Though they do face a vampire, most the problems the two craggy war veterans and their prince face are natural and normal. Magic is subtle and difficult to use. It has great cost to the user and only can be used rarely. Of the two I prefer the newer writer and hope that Simon Brown finds as many fans as Terry Brooks has now.

Nothing much happens in Karin Lowachee's second tale in her *Warchild* (paper) universe but this tale of the starship's captain's spoiled son, who likes to *Burnside* (paper from Aspect) (fly into computer systems) does make for interesting reading and shows that Karin Lowachee Ryan has been raised by his mother, a major figure in the space colony on which he lives and he lives in the glare of publicity. A failure at college and undecided what to do with his life, an attempted assassination causes his father to take him to his ship at the same time peace talks with the alien Strits. It is a place and time for Ryan to finally grow up.

Corrupt Judges rule Dabion and woe to any that disobey their orders. One of them is more evil than any of the others and plotting to control the country. When a common book maker and a printer find themselves caught up in his games, it takes an ex-spy, using her *Confidence Game* (paper from Bantam by Michelle M. West) skills and her minor magic talents to rescue them. This is a dark fantasy, and with a story incomplete it left a bad taste in my mouth. However it has a fascinating pull so that I probably will try the sequel.

The late David Eddings and his wife Leigh have a tale about *The Elder Gods* (hard from Warner) dealing with a monstrous creature and the evil minions it breeds by creating The Dreamers and getting warriors from countries surrounding the island they rule. The cultures of these human lands are described simplistically and the action, while fun, is also kept to the basics. It's interesting enough to keep going and should keep Eddings fans happy. I think it would have been a lot more complex had David Eddings survived to help in the writing.

When I was a teenager I discovered the Three Musketeer series by Alexander Dumas. Which consisted of the classic *The Three Musketeers*, *Twenty Years After*, and *Vicomte de Bragelonne*. The third book is usually broken up into three (or four) parts, the most famous being *The Man in the Iron Mask*. For those able to read e-books they are all available for free at blackmask.com. I mention this because Steven Brust has copied Dumas's style and pattern for his series prequel to his Talos series. Thus we have had *The Phoenix Guards* (paper), *Five Hundred Years After* (paper), and the parts of *The Viscount of Adriankha*, including *The Paths of the*

Dead and now *The Lord of Castle Black* (hard from Tor) which details the return of the Orb and beginnings of the new Empire. I love this stuff, but truly I think it is an acquired taste. While I giggled through the whole adventure, others might find it tedious and boring. If you have the others you will rush out and get this one immediately. Otherwise try the beginning and I hope you find it as much fun as I do.

There was one library book this month. Every so often there comes along a tale about traveling to the past without a machine. Charles Dickinson tells such a tale about Euclid Heights Illinois and an artist who grew up there and never left. Somehow, the paths along the parks in the town become *A Shortcut in Time* (hard from Tor) which allow occasional time travel. At the tale's heart is the consequence of a murder that took place thirty years before. First Josh goes fifteen minutes forward in time, then a girl appears from 1908. Eventually Josh finds himself back in 1918 trying to save his daughter, who had used the paths to travel to the past, from dying from the deadly flu. This fun but disquieting tale would make a great movie and I hope to see more from this author.

DVDs this month include the first season of *Alias* and the second season of *Angel*. *Alias* is a neat spy riff that only works because Jennifer Garner manages the neat trick of showing all her emotions on her very plastic J.J. Abrams has been known for *Felicity*, a V.B. female soap, and pitched *Alias* as *Felicity* the spy. The first season did have a lot of stuff about Sydney's friends, but it was mostly about Sydney's relationship with her father and the questions she had about her mother. The second season is pre-orderable and the third will start about the time you see this. I can only hope that J.J. Abrams has a ending in mind, because he tends to blow my mind every new episode.

The media book this month is *Star Wars: The New Essential Guide to Vehicles and Vessels* (trade from Del Rey) which has pretty pictures (and plans) of all various flying stuff in the various movies. Grouped together like this makes the similarities obvious.

Older reprints this month include: Marion Zimmer Bradley's tale of *The Fall of Atlantis* (hard from Baen) which I never could read; Jack Chalkers' fun *Quest for the Well of Souls* (paper from Baen); Elizabeth Moon's tale of an old woman dealing with problems on the planet she had lived alone on, *Remnant Moon* (trade from Del Rey); and the complete *Heritage of Shannara* (hard from Del Rey) by Terry Brooks.

Paperback reprints include the neat tale of *Sorcerers of the Nightwing* (regen Books) by Geoffrey Huntington which includes demons from hell with a haunted house, *The Shadow of the Lion* (Baen) by Mercedes Lackey, Eric Flint, and David Freer which is a fun historical fantasy set in sixteenth century Venice; Ellen Kushner's and Delia Sherman's tale of historical research in a fantasy world, *Fall of the Kings* (Bantam Spectra).

Collections include: Charles De lint's tales of *Dreams Underfoot* (trade from Orb); Larry Niven's collection of Scatterbrain (hard from Tor) tales and articles; a reprint of *The Fiction of J. R. R. Tolkien* (trade from Del Rey and edited by Paul H. K cher); a collection of classic *Tales before Tolkien* (trade from Del Rey and edited by Douglas A. Anderson); *Shadows over Baker Street* (hard from Del Rey and edited by Michael Reaves and John Pelam) in which various authors (included some noted ones) deal with Sherlock Holmes and the terrors from H. P. Lovecraft; and *The Repentant* (paper from DAW), new tales about monsters edited by Brian M. Thomsen and Martin H. Greenberg.

CONVENTION CALENDAR

CONCLAVE 28

Lansing, Michigan
October 17, 2003 - October 19, 2003
Science Fiction

UBERCON II

Secaucus, New Jersey
October 17, 2003 - October 19, 2003
Role-playing games

DAGORHIR TAURENDOR'S 2ND ANNUAL FALL WAR

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
October 18, 2003
Live Action Role Playing

CAPITAL ASSOCIATES

McLean, Virginia
October 22, 2003
Comics, Toys, CCG

1948: SIGNALS

Frederick, Maryland
October 23, 2003 - October 27, 2003
Live Action Role Playing

CARNAGE BY THE LAKE 6

Fairlee, Vermont
October 24, 2003 - October 26, 2003
Role-playing games

MILEHiCON 35

Lakewood, Colorado
October 24, 2003 - October 26, 2003
Science Fiction & Fantasy

NECRONOMICON 2003

Tampa, Florida
October 24, 2003 - October 26, 2003
Science Fiction & Fantasy

WORLD FANTASY 2003

Washington, DC
October 30, 2003 - November 2, 2003
Science Fiction

MAGFEST 20

Williamsburg, Virginia
October 31, 2003 - November 2, 2003
Computer Gaming

AURA FANTASY

Hamburg, Pennsylvania
November 7, 2003 - November 9, 2003
Live Action Role Playing

ECLECTICON

Newark, New Jersey
November 7, 2003 - November 9, 2003
TV/Media

EURO QUEST

Timonium, Maryland
November 7, 2003 - November 9, 2003
Role-playing games

LOLLAGAZEBO

Edison, New Jersey
November 7, 2003 - November 9, 2003
Role-playing games

NEKOCON 6

Virginia Beach, Virginia
November 7, 2003 - November 9, 2003
Anime

RISEING STAR 12

Salem, Virginia
November 7, 2003 - November 9, 2003
Science Fiction

1948: SIGNALS

Frederick, Maryland
November 8, 2003 - November 9, 2003
Live Action Role Playing Event

ASTRONOMICON

Rochester, New York
November 14, 2003 - November 16, 2003
Science Fiction

FALL IN!

Timonium, Maryland
November 14, 2003 - November 16, 2003
Historical Miniatures

UNY-CON

Rochester, New York
November 14, 2003 - November 16, 2003
Role-playing games

PHILCON 2003

December 12-14, 2003
Philadelphia, PA
Science Fiction

BOOK DISCUSSION

by Lee Weinstein

The book discussion group is the part of PSFS that participates in the once widespread, but now esoteric activity of reading and discussing science fiction. Every month we meet to discuss books we have chosen from nominations of group members through an elaborate voting procedure. Using this system, we look at widely scattered works, from science fiction to fantasy to horror and from turn-of-the-century classics to recent Hugo winners. Sometimes we have combined book and movie events.

Several months ago, we discussed our first graphic novel, *The Watchmen* (1987), by Alan Moore. The group as a whole enjoyed it, but many found it a little too depressing.

The work gave perhaps too realistic a rendering of the types of people who don costumes to fight crime. Much of the plot concerns an impending nuclear war, which also came across to the group as disconcerting. We were impressed with the quality of writing and the characterization. The artwork was felt to be good but not superlative.

The following month, we jumped a hundred years back in time to Oscar Wilde's tribute to horror and French decadence, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) by Oscar Wilde. This book has so infiltrated popular consciousness, that even today, people who look younger than their years are often jokingly accused of having "a picture hidden in the attic." This was Wilde's only novel, and is full of his typical aphorisms, many of which are still quoted today. We still speak of people who "know the price of everything and the value of nothing."

The book was somewhat well received, but it was felt that it felt padded with too many talky passages. The witty dialogue was amusing, but didn't advance the story. It was revealed by someone that the book had indeed been padded out by Wilde. The original magazine appearance of the story had been considerably shorter.

The discussion was following by a screening of the 1945 film adaptation, featuring Hurd Hatfield, George Sanders, and the painting of Ivan Allbright.

This past month we discussed the World Fantasy award winning novel, *Mythago Wood* (1984) by British author Robert Holdstock. The story concerns a 3 mile square virgin wooded area in England that is the entrance to an ever-

expanding secondary reality peopled by "mythagos", apparent humans created from the collective unconscious of the protagonists. It is a place where myths take on solid form. The plot relates how two brothers compete for a young woman created by their father years earlier, during his exploration of the wood.

The book received mixed reviews. Many members liked the underlying ideas drawn from Jung, Joseph Campbell, and Frazier's *Golden Bough*. However, a number of members found the characters too distanced and difficult to relate to. A few also found the ending unsatisfying, as it was setting readers up for a sequel.

Our next book will be *A Voyage to Arcturus* (1920) by David Lindsay.

Is there something you'd like to read? Join the group and give us your input.

SCIENCE FICTION COMIC

by Darrell Schweitzer



What do you Mean? it's the latest Fashion! Before you know it everyone will have one!



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