

# Pulsar

*The Newsletter of the Portland Science Fiction Society*

*The February Issue, 1999 Issue 244*

*Love—Science Fiction*

40¢



# TIMELINE

Compiled by Sam Butler

PorSFis holds a formal meeting on the second Saturday of each month -- usually these are structured and have a program. After the meeting we adjourn to a social place for snacks, drinks and socialization. Some folks gather after the meeting for dinner at the place listed in the timeline.

There are often a social gathering in varying locations on the fourth Saturday. Lately this has been a video party at the home of two of our members. Everyone is welcome to both.

**Saturday February 13, 1999**      **PorSFis Meeting**      **2 P.M.**  
**Portland State University**      **Room 229**  
**Smith Memorial Center**

**GUEST SPEAKER:**      Danelle Perry & Steve Perry

The very creative Danelle Perry is joined by the guest of honor of the canceled CON 8 convention last summer. Find out what you might have missed.

**AFTERS:**      Market Street Pub      SW 10th & Market Street

Dinner is open for suggestions. It has been suggested we try Taco Del Mar on SE Martin Luther King Boulevard. Jim Pilcher has checked the hours, and it is open until 7 PM so that is where the adventurous will meet to eat Saturday evening after the AFTER'S.

**Saturday February 20**      PorSFis Social Event      PorSFis: The Sequel

There again will be movies at Jim & Linda Pilcher's apartment. Call for details: 236-0349. Bring your own munchies, etc. They usually start at 7 PM

**Saturday March 13, 1999**      PorSFis Meeting      2 P.M.  
**Portland State University**      Room 229  
**Smith Memorial Center**

**GUEST SPEAKER:**      Adrienne Martine-Barnes

How to create a culture from scratch. She said something about taking a petri dish, but it is believed that she meant a culture in the sense of writing about one.

**Saturday April 10, 1999**      PorSFis Annual Meeting

As was the case in 1998, there seems to be a convention being held this weekend in Seattle, and some of our potential officers will be there, so there will not be the regularly scheduled Annual meeting, instead it will be held on May 8 at the usual time and place of

the regular PorSFis meeting. Among business to be discussed at this meeting including the following: the picnic, Orycon 21, new business and perhaps a few other items.

## **THE NEW YEARS EVENT WAS HELD**

Again, as in the past we have been treated to an open house party on New Years Day. It was as usual a wonder opportunity for all to join together in food and conversation as well as gaming in a friendly and comfortable setting with no hotel staff running around.

Thank you Patty, Marc, Sean, Lizzie and Zoe.

## **SO YOU'VE NEVER ATTENDED A PORSFIS MEETING?**

If you're a member of PorSFis and you've never attending a meeting perhaps it's time to make a start. If it's been a while since you've attended, maybe you should put us back on your schedule and see if you'd still have fun hanging around with people who read and like science fiction and can talk to you about more things than the latest episode of some silly sitcom on television.

As an added incentive, if you've never been to a PorSFis meeting before, if it's been over a year since you've been there will be a free beverage of your choice at the AFTER's after [naturally] the meeting, but you do have to come to the meeting, coming to the after's doesn't merit the free drink.

## **PRESIDENTS QUOTES:**

### **FIRST SUBJECT:        RICHARD WRIGHT**

It is always a sad thing to report when one of our fellow fan flock leaves us. The untimely death of Richard Wright causes those of us who remain to stop for a second and remember all the things that have come to pass since we first met.

I can't remember if I first met Richard at Norwescon I [or Norwescon as it was called since they didn't know if they were doing 2] or not. I might have, but by the time I had been at Norwescon 2 or 3, I had come across Richard. He was a constant force always alert to items that need to be done, questions that need to be answered, people that needed to be befriended and guided.

Although it is quite possible that the fans in the Portland area did not know Richard, those who attended conventions outside of Portland would have come across him and known who he was. A strong force in the Seattle fandom Richard could always be counted on, he will be missed.

### **SECOND SUBJECT:    ELECTIONS    AND THE NEW OFFICERS ARE**

We have a new slate of officers, and the results will be announced at the meeting in February, or on the information line once the results are announced.

A reminder for those who need to know who was in the running:

For President: Debra Stansbury or Sam Butler  
For Secretary: Chuck Leon  
For Treasurer: John Andrews

**THIRD SUBJECT: FILM GET-TOGETHERS**

A small party went to see Star Trek - Insurrection. If you wish to be as a group for Star Wars I it might not be too early to discuss details. Remember we can all go as one group and have a small excuse for a party, or we can go by ourselves and just be a small part of the vast horde that will be viewing the movie.

**FOURTH SUBJECT: WHAT'S IT COST TO BE PORSFIS?**

We will be discussing this at the February Meeting.

Each month that PorSFis holds a meeting at Portland State University it costs:  
\$39.95

Each month that PorSFis prints a newsletter, the printing costs:  
\$22.50 [3 sheets - 6 pages - times 0.05 cents per page times 75 copies]

Each month that PorSFis mails a newsletter, the postage costs:  
\$19.20 [\$0.32 times 60 copies] - postage rates will rise next year.

Therefore it costs 4 full PorSFis memberships each month, and this does not count the picnic, post office box rental, the telephone answering service or any other costs. Twelve full months costs approximately 48 full PorSFis memberships just for the newsletter.

At this moment in time we do not have 48 full memberships, and we need to talk about this income draining hole. We do save money by not having a meeting or two each year, such as November when the convention happened, and also during the month that we have the picnic the same weekend, but this really doesn't save us a whole lot of money. The bottom line is that we need more than 50 members.

**A MOVIE REVIEW SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE**

What a wonderful, thoughtful, funny movie. Oh, but what does it have to do with science fiction or fantasy? Nothing .... and everything.

## BOOK REVIEWS

by Anthony Ward

The First Casualty, by Mike Moscoe, Ace, \$5.99 is a very good military SF novel. In most military SF, you know who the bad guys are and who the good guys are. And you know the good guys are going to win in the end. But what if there are no "good guys" and "bad guys", just people trying to survive the madness of war? And the government of one side is just as bad as the opposing side?

At the start of this novel, a mixed group of drafted asteroid miners and street punks are ordered to defend a nowhere moon from the Enemy. They are trying to figure out how to surrender and get out of the war when the Enemy lands. But the battle starts before they can figure out how to do it safely and they are forced to defend themselves. And, surprise!, they win the battle. But their government is an oligarchy of the rich and powerful back on Earth, and their reward for surviving is to continue to hold the moon until they die.

Meanwhile, a civilian merchant captain and his ship have been drafted, also. Captain Abeeb must quickly learn to lead his combined Navy and merchant crew and to fight his rebuilt starship, which has been rebuilt into a "cruiser". But it is a cruiser with much better than Navy standard sensors and computers. It cost Captain Abeeb a lot of money to buy the best, but the only defense a merchanter had was to see the bad guys first, and run away.

On the opposing side, the Rebels, the honorable Major Longknife is nearly killed, and his unit nearly destroyed by the Earth unit made up of defending miners and street punks. But he is rewarded as a crippled Hero by the dictator who has gained total control over the Rebel forces. But the Major is also in love with Senior Pilot Officer Rita Nuu, who is the daughter of one of the most powerful men leading the rebellion against Earth. They get married, and then she gets killed. And the Major's faith in the Cause, never strong, dies with her.

This is only the start of this very enjoyable novel. In this book there is ground fighting on a low-g, vacuum moon, and space battles around a gas giant and in free orbit. There is treachery, heroism, and the stupidity of the High Command. There is the discovery of new technology which could give Humanity so many star systems, there would be no need to fight over the few previously discovered and settled ones. Most importantly, there are real people trying to survive the madness of their governments and who just want to figure out and then do the honorable thing. This book is better than most of the Thud and Blunder space operas being published today. There are real people fighting and dying here. And strangely enough, you should enjoy their experiences.

Another very good space opera is Echoes of Honor, by David Weber, Baen books, \$24.00. This is the eighth book in the Honor Harrington series. And I was very happy to see it published. The last book, In Enemy Hands, left our hero the Commodore Lady Honor Harrington and the remnants of her captured crew stuck on a prison planet. Her people back home all think she is dead so there will be no rescue from her home world. How was she going to save herself

and her crew? So in this book, what does Honor do? She saves the day, once again.

As in the earlier books in the series, there are space battles and the clash of armies. But primarily, and more importantly, there is a very resourceful and intelligent woman who will not be defeated by anything other than death. I'll admit, this book is sort of *The Great Escape* + 2000 years, but it is still a lot of fun. Honor starts out with nearly nothing but her crew and a few landing craft. But she has to get her people off the planet before the bad guys discover they are on the planet and still alive.

In this book, there are Bad Guys. The people running this POW world, code named Hell, are the People's Republic of Haven secret police. So there is very little of the "gray" that Weber has injected in previous books. No noble enemies and very few nice guys on either side. But there is lots of action and suspense and the constant knowledge that not every one of the good guys is going to be able to get off the planet alive. This book should not be the first book of the series the reader should pick up. The casual reader will be totally lost. But if you've read previous books, this is one of the best of the series.

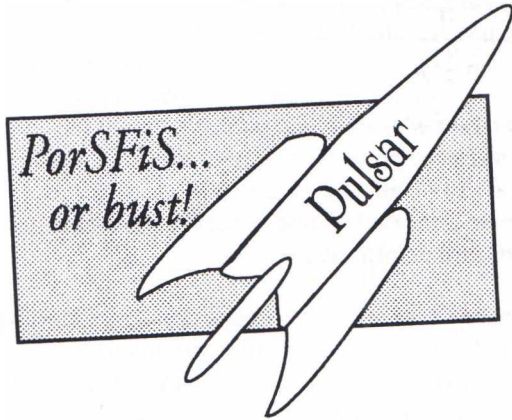
Another very good series, even if it is fantasy, with a very tough and intelligent female hero is the Anita Blake, Vampire Hunter series. The latest is [Blue Moon](#), by Laurell K. Hamilton, Ace, \$6.99. While this is a fantasy series, it is also an alternate history series. It is set on a modern day Earth where "monsters", like vampires and werewolves, really exist. But the Supreme Court has ruled that vampires are citizens and have all the rights of "living" Americans. But who will police the monsters? Anita Blake is a preternatural expert and authorized vampire executioner. And when there is trouble with monsters, Anita is usually called in.

She makes her living as a necromancer. She raises zombies so legal matters, such as what is the real will of the deceased, and where lost papers and things can be found and such can be taken care of. But she also is a "consultant" to the St. Louis Police Department on supernatural crimes. And if her life weren't complicated enough, in previous books she became romantically involved with both the head vampire of St. Louis and with an alpha werewolf. And she became the defacto leader of a pack of wereleopards. Her life is very strange, as everyone keeps telling her.

In the present book, she gets a phone call telling her that the alpha werewolf boy friend has been arrested for rape in some hick town. Richard, other than him being a "furry", is the closest thing to a perfect Boy Scout Anita knows. So she goes to rural Tennessee to get him out of jail before the next full moon (Richard is a school teacher and still in the furry closet). But as soon as she arrives, she becomes involved in vampire and were politics and local corruption. And soon the full moon will rise and all Hell is scheduled to break out.

Anita is a very macha woman. Her sense of honor is everything to her. It is how she separates the monsters from the people. But to save her werewolf and his family and their pack, she just might have to lose her soul and become a monster. But all is not totally dark in this book. Like the rest of the series, this

book is a strange blend of alternate history, horror, romance, and satire. Ms Hamilton mixes a lot of humor with her horror, and a lot of action with her romance. In each of the books Anita learns more about just what she is and who she loves. And the reader gets to enjoy her journey without the little problem of possibly becoming one of the "monsters".



## An Article

SO, WHAT IS AN APA AND WHY SHOULD I JOIN ONE?

By Jean Lamb

First of all, APA stands for Amateur Press Association. Unlike online critique groups, it works in slow motion compared to most, but it is well worth the effort. Members send in their contributions to the Central Mailer by a certain due date, and each member ends up getting one copy of everything sent in. This can be done by members making enough copies for everyone and sending them in, or by sending one copy in along with enough extra money so the Central Mailer can make the copies. So if one APA has fifteen members, Susie Heartthrob sends in seventeen copies of her contribution (because the Central Mailer is sending out occasional extra sample copies to prospective members), or she sends in one copy and some extra bucks (depending on the size of what she sends in). In a week, maybe two, the Central Mailer sends out a collated copy of the APA to all the members.

Some of the advantages of this dead-tree method is a permanent (and sometimes handsomely bound) copy of the work that you and others have done. Written deadlines sometimes make a lot more impact than electronic ones. Members of the APA often form a bond with each other. And, when you know your comments will have to wait, it's easier to consider them. Yes, you can have flaming in an APA; but it's rarer than many places online.

What are the important parts of an APA? The cover is often very attractive. Artwork's easy to find these days, though color is still fairly rare because of the expense of color copying. The Central Mailer often has comments at the beginning, as well as a roster of members. Each member can (and usually does!) submit pretty much anything they like.

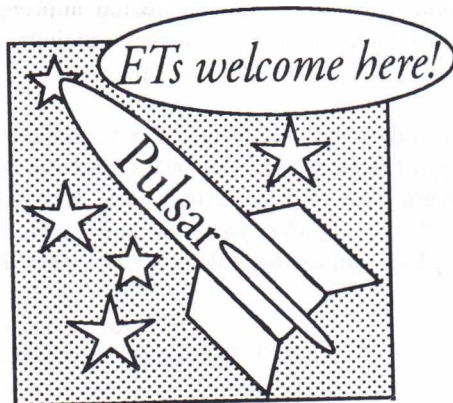
Most members in the APA I'm member of usually send in some fiction, though, as well as gossip, support, and mailing comments on the efforts of others.

Let me describe the one I'm in as an example. AppArent Reality is an APA devoted to science fiction, fantasy, and romance. Members submit parts of works in progress, comment and critique on stuff in the last issue, and also offer convention reports. Our Central Mailer, Emily Alward, has been featured in a couple of editions of HEROTICA, while other members include Jennifer Dunne (second place in the Sapphire Award Contest for RAVEN'S HEART), Rosemary Laurey (SOUTHERN SONG), Alicia Rasley (numerous Regencies and other romances), and occasional appearances by Dara Joy. We also have several members who aren't yet published, featuring all writing levels (but always with an interest in science fiction or fantasy romance!). Each issue is comb-bound, which makes it easier to read, and we have a wonderful time. Any of you who might be interested in joining, please feel free to contact me (Jean Lamb [tlambs@wizzards.net](mailto:tlambs@wizzards.net)) for further information.

Yes, it's a lot slower in many ways than some online critique groups, but the bonds are no less strong for all that. It's fun to hold a permanent copy of your work and that of others (although for those of you who are understandably concerned, it's specified that copyright is held by each individual author).

Is this a roundabout commercial for AppArent Reality? You bet it is! But there are tons and tons of other APAs, some of which are also devoted to fiction (a list of many of them are available for a Very Reasonable Price from a gentleman named Eric L. Watts in Atlanta, GA, the publisher of MOON DIRECTORY, e-mail me for more information about that, too, if you're interested).

Sure, it's life in the slow lane. But sometimes it's the only way to fly.





# Ask Mr Know-it-all

A Ms LB of Leesburg asks: I understand the convention for US highways is that even-numbered highways are north-bound/south-bound and odd-numbered highways are east-bound/west-bound. Yet, while visiting the Olympic Peninsula a few weeks ago, I was between Sequim and Port Angeles and noticed a highway sign indicating west-bound US 101. How did this happen?

Mostly unnoticed but related to the Year 2000 problems, this occurred because US 101 has three digits. This caused it originally to show up in the highway department computers as US 1. Of course US 1 is on the east coast and Port Angeles is definitely west of anything on the east coast. Furthermore, you were in an area close to Neah Bay, which is the westernmost point in the contiguous states; this has been known to cause magnetic abnormalities, again confusing the compasses of the highway department.

A Ms DS of Tigard asks: Where did the whole business of SMOFs and Smoffing come from anyway?

In the early days, science was the byword of fandom; practically every fan had a laboratory at home. Some of these early fans, experimenting in their laboratories, first developed the Sodium Magneto-Optical Filter (SMOF). They liked to meet and talk about these inventions, yet the world at large considered them nerds for this kind of activity. As a consequence, they quietly organised conventions where they got drunk and chased women as a front for their scientific interests. Fortunately, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration learned about this SMOF as it was vitally important in analysing the fragment H impact with Jupiter on 18 July 1994.

A Ms AP of Pasco asks: Why do carved letters in buildings, especially older buildings, so often use the letter 'V' in place of the letter 'U'?

In the days when modesty forbid that a woman expose an ankle in public, when skirts were draped over table 'limbs', when it was considered improper to shelve books by male and female authors next to each other unless the authors were married to each other, the curves of the letter 'U' were considered inappropriately suggestive and the less sensuous 'V' substituted.

A Mr GN of Sacramento asks: I have heard that the singing group *The Fleetwoods* ('Come Softly to Me', 'I'm Mr Blue', etc.) took their name from their local telephone exchange. Can this possibly be true?

It was perhaps fortunate that they formed some time ago for yes, they got their name from the local FLleetwood exchange. One can imagine if they formed today they would be calling themselves the *Three-Fives*. Come to think of it, that does sound much like the name a modern singing group might use . . .

You may contact Mr Know-it-all in care of the *Pulsar*  
or e-mail on [rwell@illuminetSS7.com](mailto:rwell@illuminetSS7.com)

## **Richard Austin Wright** 26 May 1943 – 26 December 1998

Richard was born in El Paso, Texas, and grew up on a lettuce farm. As an adult, he moved to Seattle where he worked first at the University of Washington and then at Boeing. He became active in science fiction convention fandom. He was fundamental in establishing the Northwest Science Fiction Society and the first of Seattle's Norwescon conventions, as well as the 1981 bid for the WorldCon. He remained active for over two decades. In the mid-1980's, he was transferred to the Southwest. After a couple of years he decided to return to Seattle, his home, the city he loved, as he described it.

His life was celebrated by his many friends on Saturday, 23 January 1999 in Seattle with a wake followed by a party; as he would have wished. Several friends had touching stories of his life. One I remember particularly. Judy Suryan told one time in the mid-1970's many of the Seattle fans decided to hold a "high school" prom to make up for the one they never attended. She described how he arranged to pick her up for the prom with a corsage and all that carefully matched the gown she was wearing.

Making up for missed high school proms seems to be a common thread among us. You tried to bring us all together, Richard.

--Roger Wells

### **MAIL CALL**

Publications received: if you wish to see any of these publications you need to contact the president, thank you.

\*BCSFazine December 1998 Issue #307 Vol. 26 #12, PDF #7

\*FILE 770 - # 127 - included in this issue is a multipaged article relative to the death of science fiction fan clubs and perhaps the chicken little nature of this death notice. Our very own Pat Gulley is quoted several times for an editorial that she wrote for the Pulsar in 1996.

\*What's New at Wayside Books & Video - January 1999 - Celtic Harp concert featuring Jennifer Pratt-Walter & Valerie Blessley of Celtic Muse on January 16 at 6 PM.

\*Coming to Powell's [Powell's World of Books] Bruce Sterling January 7 7:30 PM, Neil Gaiman, January 19th. 7:30 PM

\*LITERARY ARTS - listed The Oregon Book Awards, 1997 Literary Arts Fellowship Recipients, Poetry in Motion TM, and something about Portland Arts & Lectures

\*THE WILLAMETTE WRITER Vol. 34, Issue 1 January 1999 articles relative to writing, listing of Willamette Writers Critique Groups for writing, information regarding the Kay Snow Writing Award contest, 2500 words, deadline May 14, 1999, article by Steven Barnes on LIFEWRITING

\*Letter from CLARION WEST WRITERS WORKSHOP telling about instructions, and how to apply for the June 20 - July 30, 1999 workshop which is held in Seattle, Washington.

# Is Y2K Really a Problem?

From the Internet, author unknown:

January 1, 2000

To: Valued Employee

Re: Vacation Pay

Our records indicate that you have not used any vacation time over the past 100 year(s). As I'm sure you are aware, employees are granted four (4) weeks of paid leave per year or pay in lieu of time off. One additional week is granted for every five (5) years of service. Please either take 9,400 days off work or notify our office and your next pay check will reflect payment of \$8,277,432.22 which will include all pay and interest for the past 1,200 months. Please notify us of your decision promptly.

Yours sincerely,

Automated Payroll Processing

## Last Minute Announcement

Portland State University is doing a writing workshop, entitled "The First Chapter of Your Novel." It will be held Saturdays from 9 am to noon April 10-June 5. The application due date is **February 15, 1999**. It is being conducted by Ursula K. LeGuin. To apply, submit the first chapter of your novel and a brief letter of introduction describing your goals as a writer, your name, address & telephone number. Bring both to Portland State's Department of English, Neuberg Hall room 405 at 724 SW Harrison, or mail them to: Center for Excellence in Writing, Department of English, Portland State University, PO Box 751, Portland, OR 97207-0751.

Space is limited to 14 students. The Workshop fee is \$500. You will be contacted within two weeks after applying regarding your application. For more information call (503) 725-3579.

## Letter

Hi—

If I would plan ahead, I'd have thought of holiday topics and sent appropriate bits—sigh (sorry). I just heard that the local Disclave has been cancelled for '99. I'm sure you've all heard of the deaths of Ian Gunn and Vince Clarke. Argh—can't remember which is the c probably Vince...?! (the editor apologizes for any errors in that sentence) Been very busy looking for a house plan—then someone to tell me if I can (or rather the farm-sale) afford to have it built—if not, well, it's whatever I can afford—so fanne (sp?) has sorta taken a back seat—unfortunately this will all probably take about a year more! Sigh. Happy Holidays to one and all!

PO Box 4602

Portland, OR 97208

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 Excalibur Books, Future Dreams/Burnside and Looking Glass Books, all in Portland, OR.

Your editor has been Debra Stansbury. Next month's editor is the same. Deadline is generally the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. Contributions are always welcome, and may be sent to the PO Box above, or to the editor direct at [shade\\_obeyon@hotmail.com](mailto:shade_obeyon@hotmail.com)

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

Current PorSFIS Officers:

President Sam Butler (503) 289-2670

Vice Pres. Chuck Leon

Treasurer John Andrews (503) 771-2894

Secretary Roger Wells

PORSFIS INFORMATION TELEPHONE: 727-3570

PORSFIS WEBPAGE: <http://www.europa.com/~jpilcher/>



Richard & Nicki Lynch Trade  
PO Box 3120  
Gaithersburg, MD 20885

