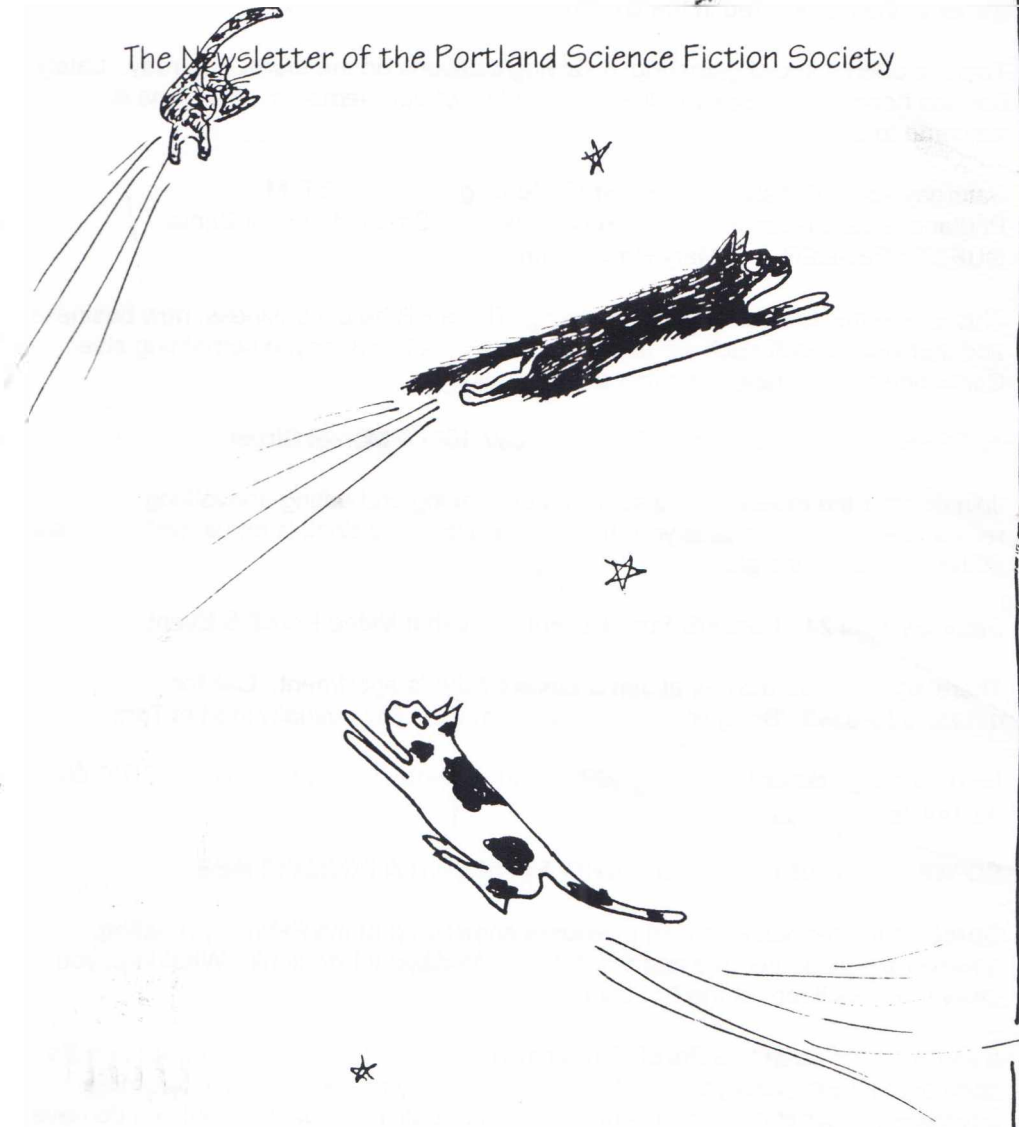


Pulsar

The Newsletter of the Portland Science Fiction Society



May 1999 SPACE CATS

Issue No. 246
UKL '99

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 is 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 April 10, 1999 PorSFis Meeting 2 P.M.
Portland State University Room 229 Smith Memorial Center
GUEST SPEAKER: Mary Rosenblum

This is also the Annual business meeting. There will be old business, new business and that kind of stuff such as: the picnic, Orycon 21 and maybe something else. Come and find out how to do that thing that you do.

AFTERS: Market Street Pub SW 10th & Market Street

Join us after the meeting for a social bit of drinking and eating and talking at a reasonable venue. If this is your first meeting then the drink is on us, well the price of the drink is on the clubs tab.

Saturday April 24 PorSFis Social Event The Other Video PorSFis Event

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 7pm.

Next meeting: Saturday May 8, 1999. Same place, same time. Guest: TBA (oh, no, not him again!)

SO WE HAD A NEW PERSON WHO ATTENDED A PORSFIS MEETING

Despite the offer below, no old members showed up at the February meeting, however a new person did and received the traditional free drink. What kept you away? So, we'll repeat the invitation:

If you've never been to a PorSFis meeting before, or if you are a member and it's been over a year since you've attended a meeting you will be eligible for a free beverage of your choice at the After's after [naturally] the meeting, but you do have to come to the meeting, just coming to the After's doesn't merit the free drink.

PRESIDENTS QUOTES:

FIRST SUBJECT: DUES ARE DUE

With the exception of several people in the club who have multiyear, or 'lifetime memberships' all memberships will expire on the last day of March 1999. Remember to bring your money to the next meeting, or mail it to the Post Office address. Newsletters received this month will be the last ones sent to you unless you renew your membership.

SECOND SUBJECT: Let's TALK MEMBERS

Okay we've got new officers (well, one's new) and we'd like to see a few of you show up, if you don't we just might move and you'll never find us, honest.

MOVIE REVIEW THE BRAVE LITTLE TOASTER GOES TO MARS

Okay, first thing, it's not a real movie, it's a straight to video thing from DISNEY hoping to capture the lure of "The Brave Little Toaster". If you are not familiar with TBLT, then you should be. First appearing as a short novella [I think] by Thomas Disch in Fantasy & Science Fiction in 1986. TBLT was turned into an animated film a number of years ago. I don't know if it ever showed in movie houses, but it did show up in some places and eventually became a video. It is a delightful film, catchy tunes and a story of brave electrical appliances who have an adventure and try to find their master, a little boy who's grown up and lives in the city miles away from the summer cabin.

"The Brave Little Toaster Goes To Mars" is a derivative watered down crass commercial attempt to make money off the original. The animation is passable, the songs really are poor and patched into the plot only by the necessity to have songs. And as for plot, well I hope that they didn't take it from Thomas M. Disch's 1988 story. Since I haven't read it I can't say for certain if they did or not, but in any case he is probably not to blame for this version, at least not in my opinion.

However, if you've wondered what someone like DeForrest Kelly does now that he's not on the big screen as Bones, well he's one of the voices here in this video. Nice to hear from you DeForrest, but I hope I find you next in something a little more entertaining. Oh by the way, I bought this for my son because he loved the TBLT and I suspect that he might like this one too, after all it has the same characters, and that's part of the familiarity that breeds such movies as "The Mod Squad" which just opened this weekend.

So, what do I get for being a member?

Why should you become a member of PorSFis? Let's see:

- ❖ You get to vote in the annual elections (you can even run for office, if you like!)
- ❖ You get this lovely newsletter every month (and sometimes on time) filled with fascinating articles and lovely artwork (if you don't see any-send me some!)
- ❖ A 10% discount at:
 - ♥ Future Dreams on Burnside 1800 E Burnside
 - ♥ Excalibur Books & Comics 2444 SE Hawthorne Blvd
 - ♥ The Looking Glass Book Store 318 SW Taylor
 - ♥ Wrigley-Cross Books 1809 NE 39th
 - ♥ Great Northwest Bookstore 1234 SW Stark
- ❖ A monthly meeting in an enclosed space (yes, the meetings themselves are free and open to all who come, but the space itself costs money, unfortunately) with delightful, insightful, and witty guests!
- ❖ A handsome blue membership card!
- ❖ An annual picnic (oo, food! and fun! oo!)
- ❖ The company of your peers (though if you ask nice, we won't peer at you, just with you).
- ❖ And remember-; if you haven't been to a meeting in over a year, or if this is your first meeting-stick around for After's and get a free beverage of your choice!

Dear SciFi/Fantasy People,

Most of you have known me over the last ten years as one of the many Artists whose paintings have been a regular part of SciFi/Fantasy art shows. Many of you also know that in addition, I have been giving fencing demonstrations at those conventions which I've been able to attend as a guest. Most of you probably don't know that I am also assistant director of the Fencing Masters Training Program at San Jose State University, which is the only place in the U.S. that offers a formal course of study for training people to become fencing masters. (If you're interested in learning about the program see:

<http://home.pacbell.net/parsece/Pages/fmp.html>).

May 2nd marks the program's 20th anniversary, and to celebrate the event we will be hosting an exhibition of classical Italian and French swordplay. The participants include two fencing masters from Italy, one from France, and one from the U.S. who was trained and received his master's diploma in Italy. Complete information on this exhibition can be obtained at:

<http://home.pacbell.net/parsece/Pages/gala.html>

I realize, of course, that folks cannot just hop a plane every time there's a fencing exhibition, but this one is very special and we may not see its like in this country again for a very, very long time. In fact, in more than 60 years there has been only one other exhibition like this in the U.S. Not everyone is interested enough in fencing to care about this sort of thing, but for those who are I wanted to get the word out in case there was any chance that they could attend.

That brings me to you folks. All of you are involved in the SciFi/Fantasy community and know far better than I how to get the word out to the community at large. If there is any way you could help me to spread the word to the fans, publishers, and writers via e-mail, the web, or any other means, I would be most grateful. I'm sure fans lucky enough to be able attend would be as well. Most people know very little about fencing, and what they do know is often terribly misunderstood. Perhaps through our combined efforts we can do something to shed light on this art and make it a little more accessible for everyone to enjoy.

If after you have seen the web page you have any further questions, please do e-mail me at stoccata@pacbell.net.

Thank you very much in advance for your help,
Frank Lurz
Maestro di Scherma

A Letter to the Sci-Fi News Weekly Editor

It may be of interest to some of us....

Don't Ignore The Value Of Media Fiction

I must object to the author who has stated that SF is in a crisis. Yes SF is struggling to maintain its identity before a huge wave of genre fiction, but that does not mean that there is any real danger of it being swallowed up. In many ways I think media fiction serves the same purpose as the pulps of the '30s and '40s. They are a training ground that will allow an author to master the story teller's art, a source of income while the author gets established and a chance to get their name into print. While I much preferred the pulp route, we cannot deny the authors what is available to them.

In addition, we cannot ignore the value that media fiction has in bringing new fans into the genre. How many fans first exposure to SF was through Star Wars and Star Trek? How many made their first steps into the literature by picking up the latest media paperback? Granted maybe only one in 10 or even one in 100 will ever pick up something else, but perhaps we can help change that. Next time we see someone reading a Star Trek or Star Wars novel we should try handing them one of David Weber's or Lois McMaster Bujold's novels.

It is true that there are no Heinleins, Asimovs or Herberts out there and I for one am glad. While I enjoyed and still enjoy their novels very much, I would hate to see only their works. If Brin and Robinson are more concerned about environmental issues, it should be remembered that we are more concerned about them than the readers of the golden and silver ages. I am sure that in 30 years someone somewhere will be complaining that there are no writers anymore like Brin, Bear, Benford, Robinson, Hamilton, Weber, Bujold and others.

Bill McHale wmchall@umbc.edu

Mr Know-It-All

A Ms LW of Portland asks: OK, the British drive on the left. But why do the Japanese drive on the left?

There are two schools of thought on this. One school holds that the Japanese were looking to the British for guidance. The other holds that they were looking to the Americans as a example of how not to do things.

A Mr DN of Overland Park asks: I fly a lot and have become familiar with the airline codes for the main airports I use. For example, London Heathrow is LHR and Los Angeles practically everybody knows as LAX. The last time I was in England, I encountered a fellow traveler who insisted on putting a 'K' in front of all the US airline codes, using KLAX for Los Angeles, and came up with really bizarre codes like EGLL for Heathrow. KLAX sounds like a radio station, not an airport. Where on earth did he come up with all this?

You are accustomed to the International Air Transport Association's (IATA) and (sometimes in the US) the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) three-letter codes. Your companion was referring to the four-letter codes used by the International Civil Aeronautics Organisation. In this age where cooperation is so important, standardisation is so vital that every organization has its very own standards.

A Ms DAO'S of Tigard asks: It is said that St. Patrick purged Ireland of snakes. Is it true that there are no snakes in Ireland?

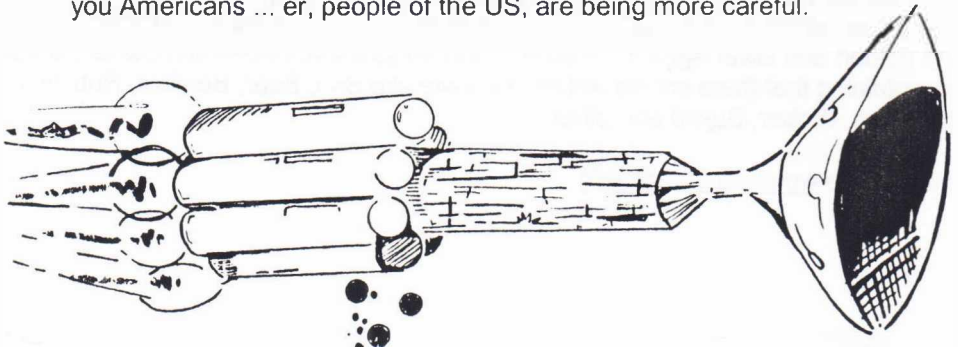
It may be true for Ireland; it appears that he chased them all to Northern Ireland. Bleech; snakes all over the place.

A Ms DAO'S evil twin sister asks: How did the tradition get started that a four-leaf clover brings good luck?

The British needed something for luck and they very well could not use the Irish shamrock so they found something that looked somewhat similar. The idea caught on, so much so that the Americans based their freeway interchanges on the design. And there is no place on this world that one needs luck more than on an American freeway interchange.

A Mr SB of New York asks: I understand that people in the US are being more careful about not referring to the US as "America"; does this seem to be the case?

You appear to be right. Mind you, the rest of the world, including every Canadian I know, goes right on happily referring to the US as 'America', but you Americans ... er, people of the US, are being more careful.



Calendar of Events

April 8th 7pm Beaverton Powell's J. Gregory Keyes

April 17th 13th Annual Poetry & Fiction Writer's Workshop

\$30 if postmarked by **April 9th**

\$35 after April 9th

\$10 if Clark Student

Mail to: Clark College

c/o Larry Weirather/MS-14

Clark College Writer's Workshop

1800 E McLoughlin Blvd

Vancouver, WA 98663

April 23rd 7:30pm Downtown Powell's Orson Scott Card

April 25th 7:30pm Downtown Powell's The Meme Machine

Important Notice!

PorSFIS is looking for a location for the annual picnic!

Another Important Notice!

PorSFIS is updating the membership directory. We know where you live ☺ but what we need is to know if you:

Don't want your name in the directory at all....

Want just your name printed....

Want your phone number or e-mail address included...

Or any combination of the above (just name and phone, just name and e-mail, or the whole shebang)

Please write, phone, or e-mail PorSFIS (or myself) and let me know by May 20th.

debstans@canada.com or (503) 727-3570 or (503) 620-3068 or

PO Box 4602 Portland, OR 97208

Advertisements are welcome, subject to space.

Yet Another Important Notice!

Issue 250 is only 4 months away—send in your review/art/article/art/opinion or your art in now! Advertisements/Personal Ads/Bragging accepted, subject to space (and good taste {LGM seeks BEM for.....(hem, maybe not)})

Deadline is July 20th (Please specify that it's for Issue 250)

Submit Early—Submit Often!



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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 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 20th of each month. Contributions are always welcome, and may be sent to the PO Box above, or to the editor direct at 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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Treasurer John Andrews (503) 771-2894
Secretary Chuck Leon

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