



PSFS News

The Newsletter of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society

March 1999

Our March Guest:

Laurell K. Hamilton

Borrowed from John Kahane's web site without permission, www.comnet.ca/~jkahane/sf/authors/lhamilton.html

"Laurell K. Hamilton has said that she never wanted to do anything but write, so she earned an English degree. A brief fling with wanting to be Jane Goodall earned her a biology degree, as well, something that she has put to good use in her books. She met her husband at college. He earned more books than she did, at first, and he was a confirmed reader of science fiction and fantasy. She says that what she likes most about her husband is that he has always known that the way to her heart was through her imagination. Laurell has said that she's sold more of the Anita Blake books, up through number nine. So we're lucky enough to be graced with more books in this terrific series.

"I think that what makes the Anita Blake series of books so interesting is the fact that Laurell Hamilton has created a very non-stereotypical character in Anita Blake. When one combines that with the elements of the world in which Anita lives (zombies seeking citizen rights, rigid enforcement of laws governing who can kill vampires and when they can do so, etc.), the novels take on a life of their own and provide us with a character who is so very real and vibrant, and so very unpredictable at times. Mind you, I'm still very fond of Nightseer, and would dearly love to see Laurell write some more mainstream fantasy works. She's very good at that, too." — John Kahane



photo taken from fan web site at <http://www.walden.mvp.net/~eridine/laurell.html>

Membership Status

Note: All Status Changes become effective after the meeting has adjourned.

First Timers: Bill Couture, Caroline Couture

Nominees: Perrienne Lurie

New Members: Joshua Megerman

Members at the February Meeting: 51
(42 active, 9 general, 0 inactive)

Non-members at the February Meeting: 4

Board of Directors

- President** Tina Blanco..... (215) 744-6045
- Vice President** Tim Binder..... (215) 634-8730
- Secretary** Carol Kabakjian.....(610) 623-4388
- Treasurer** Gary Feldbaum.....(215) 673-4044
- 2 Year Director** Tony Finan.....(215) 744-6045
- 2 Year Director** Shelley Handen..... (610) 642-6061
- 1 Year Director** Oz Fontecchio.....(215) 563-7538

Questions? Comments? Contact any Board Member at the above numbers.

To send e-mail to the board, write to bored@cyber.com

Announcements

Copies of any 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 the Kabakjian's home address, or given to the Secretary or Rich K. in writing at the meetings.

The Art Group was canceled by Bridget due to lack of attendance by Society members. It was not "erased".

The copies of the Bylaws handed out at the February general meeting was missing the first line on page two (*Article IV, section 1 (a)*). The section should read, "(a) Active, which entitles its holders to all rights, privileges and duties of membership in the Corporation, including full voting rights;". The Secretary apologizes for any inconvenience the missing line may have caused.

The Millennium Philcon® will be held Aug. 30 - Sept. 2, 2001, at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. You can register as an attending or supporting member now. Rates are guaranteed till the end of this year. If you voted and were a pre-supporter it's \$50; if you voted, but didn't pre-support it's \$60; if you didn't vote or pre-support it's \$125; there are other prices listed on the registration form. You can register at P.S.F.S. meetings or request one through the mail. The Millennium Philcon is run by the Philadelphia Corporation. "Philcon" is a registered trademark of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society and is used with permission.

The List Serve is up and running. Any P.S.F.S. or Philcon department heads have automatic access to the list serve. If you aren't on the list and want your name added to the mailing list please get your e-mail address to Tony Finan. Any Philcon department heads have to recommend others who they think deserve to be on the list.

Tim Binder, as President Elect, requests if you want to be on a P.S.F.S. committee please contact him. If you don't you will *not* be on a committee. You will not automatically keep your committee position after March 31, 1999.

Gigantic Book Sale - Limited time only. Save up to 80%. At The Book Market, Bala Cynwyd Shopping Center, 121 E. City Line Ave., Former Sneaker Stadium, Bala Cynwyd, 610-949-9220.

Agendas: See page 4 for this month's agendas for the next Philcon meeting and the March PSFS meeting.

Call the PSFS Hotline
(215) 957-4004

PSFS & Philcon Meeting Info
Leave Messages

Last Minute Meeting Cancellation Info

General Meeting Minutes

These are the minutes of the General meeting held on February 19th, 1999, at International House. The meeting was called to order at 8:20pm.

Proxies: none.

Corrections to the Minutes: in the Cookbook committee's report it should say copyrighted, not copy-written.

Officers' Reports:

President: Tina said, "Hi. I'm surviving the pre-do stuff of my wedding." She said we have an opening on the Oversight committee. Janis Fontecchio is no longer an Active member and therefore is no longer on the Oversight Committee. (*Per Bylaws Article X, Section 4, as reprinted after the minutes for this meeting in this Newsletter. CK*) Janis objected and asked the Society to vote on the matter. Gary, as Parliamentarian, said each side will state their position. Tina said she'd already stated our position. Janis said, "I think most of you know me and know I've been an Active member every single year except for the past year." (*She's been Active every year since she became a member in August 1982. CK*) "I was unable to get to the meetings because I did not have a working car. I can't take public transportation. I'm happy to say I do have a car, but I got it so late in the year that that was when they were saying there was going to be a snow storm on Friday or I would've come to those meetings. I think that all of you know that I do keep up with what's going on in the Society. I have a lot of friends; I talk to all of them. I'm in the middle of something in Oversight where I'm the primary person with the information and I would ask you to have the confidence in me considering [how long I've been an Active member of] the Society to vote me in to stay on Oversight even though I'm not Active, but I will be continuing to come now that I have a car and will be an Active member as soon as I make the requisite meetings." Tina called for discussion. Gary said, "I don't like to do this but, the question is not anything about the fitness of any one particular person to serve; their abilities, or even their knowledge. The only question for the Society is whether, under the Bylaws (*Article X, Section 4 (b)*), ceasing to be an Active member causes one to cease to be on the Oversight." Janis said she was asking to waive [the need to be Active]. Basically, Gary said she was automatically dropped from the Oversight committee as of November 1st when she became a General member. The Society could vote to change her status, but it would not keep her on the Oversight committee. During the lively discussion which followed several points were raised. (Q) Why didn't she ask one of her friends to drive her to the meetings? (A) None of her friends live conveniently nearby and she didn't want to make anyone drive from center city and

back just to pick her up. (Q) Why didn't she take a taxi? (A) Do you know how much that would cost? [Janis is] on a fixed income. (Q) Does she have a working car? (A) Yes. Bridget asked why this was being brought up at a General meeting. She thought it should be handled at a Board meeting. It was brought up at the last Board meeting, the majority of the Board believed it should be brought before the Society for a final decision. Lynn said she believed it might have been polite/should be required to let Oversight committee members know if their membership status was in jeopardy in enough time that something could be done about it. She thought we might want to make a rule to this effect. Someone asked when Janis was advised of the problem. Tina met with Janis just before the General meeting started. Mattie, after being recognized by the President, moved, Joni second, that P.S.F.S. consider Janis has been under severe distress and duress both physically and emotionally and that we accord her the right to be voted back into Active membership. Gary said, "the motion that is on the floor is Janis's appeal from the decision of the President moving that she lost her status on the Oversight committee by virtue of no longer being an Active member." Carol asked who seconded her motion. Gary said Janis's appeal doesn't need a second and could not be amended by moving to waive her membership status. Terry Graybill seconded Janis anyway. Mattie's motion could not be recognized. Bridget asked if there were any matters currently before Oversight that Janis was involved in. Yes. John Prenis, as the chair of the Oversight committee, said Janis would be allowed to continue to be involved in any matters she was currently involved in, but not vote on them. Bridget asked if it was critical that she continue on the current matter. John said he believed so, yes. The question was raised about the meaning of the phrase "may serve on the Oversight committee". Gary, as parliamentarian, said the phrase in question meant the same as "to be a member of the Oversight committee". After another bout of debate Gary said we have several issues before us. 1) Interpreting the rule as to whether ceasing to be an Active member causes one to cease being a member of the Oversight committee. This would take a majority plus one to pass. If it doesn't then we would have to vote on 2) Whether the Membership can waive that rule. And 3) whether or not to waive the membership requirements for Janis and make her Active. We will be voting only on the first issue. Gary restated the motion, "Shall the decision of the Chair be sustained as to the ruling that by ceasing to be an Active member that a member leaves Oversight. He said if you vote yes you will be voting that it does not cause you to leave Oversight by ceasing to be active. Carol said, "Yes, she stays on the committee. No, she doesn't." There was no official vote of the Board. Shelley moved, Hal second, to vote by secret ballot. The roll was called of Active and General members. The makeshift ballots were handed out and the vote was taken. The Society decided by a vote of 16 for, 32 against, 1 ab-

stention. There were no proxies.

The business portion of the meeting was then closed, per our Standing Rule, it being after 9 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 10:37pm.

Article X, Section 4., Oversight Committee

- (a) There shall be established a standing committee to be known as the Oversight Committee.
- (b) Only active members may serve on the Oversight Committee. No Officer or Director may serve on the Oversight Committee.
- (c) The oversight Committee shall consist of a minimum of three members, including a chairman. The appointment or removal of the chairman or any member of the committee requires the approval of the membership, voting by secret ballot. The term of the Oversight Committee shall be until their successors are qualified.

Proposed Bylaws Amendment

After the Meeting was adjourned a Bylaws amendment was received. It will be discussed at the next Board meeting. It was signed by Carol Kabakjian, Todd Dashoff, Tony Finan, Tina Blanco, and Shelley Handen. It reads:

"We, the undersigned, believe that our Society has too many people taking advantage of our Society, so we've come up with the following amendment (shown in *italics*) to be added to Article IV, Section 5, as sub-paragraph (c). This is not to mean that if a member has approached the Board because of financial hardship and have had their dues waived that they will be taken off the membership.

ARTICLE IV MEMBERSHIP

Section 5. Dues

- (a) A schedule of dues shall be determined by vote of the membership.
- (b) Any member whose dues have been in arrears for at least three months shall be in suspended status. A member in suspended status shall not be permitted to vote or exercise any of the privileges of membership. Suspended status shall terminate immediately upon payment of all delinquent dues. All other members shall be considered to be members in good standing. The Treasurer shall promptly notify any member whose membership is suspended.
- (c) *The membership of any member who has been in suspension for at least two continuous years may be terminated by a majority vote of the members of the Corporation."*

Board Meeting

There were no Board Meetings since the last Newsletter.

See Meeting Notices for details on the next Board meeting.

Philcon '99 Meeting

The Philcon '99 committee meeting scheduled for February 20th, 1999, at the Kabakjian's home in East Lansdowne was canceled at the Chair's request.

The next meeting has not been scheduled at this time.

The following items, not necessarily in this order, will be discussed on the list serve and at the next Philcon '99 meeting:

1. Committee membership rate (Should committee members pay and how much?)
2. Program Participant membership policy (Should we offer free membership to participants only if they're on multiple panels? Or maybe a discount per panel, ex. 1 panel = 1/3 off)
3. Free membership policy (What are they and who gets them?)
4. Gofer enticement policy (Should we raise the number of hours needed to get the rollover?)
5. Publicity (What kind and how much? Is it really doing any good?)
6. Expenses (What budget items are bloated and can be cut back?)
7. White space (How can I fill the rest of this column? Maybe I'll just leave it blank. Feel free to doodle below. We don't really have to discuss it if you don't want to. I'll leave it up to a vote. Hey, this is working, the white space is shrinking rapidly! Maybe if I just keep rambling, it will go away completely... nah, that would be silly. There's no way I could waste that much verbiage. What's the big deal with white space anyway? Nothing wrong with a little bit once in a while. It tends to break up the monotony. So, it's settled, then. I'll just leave the white space the way it is, and we don't have to discuss it. One less thing on the agenda. Oops, out of space... What was I talking about? I forget. Never mind.)

March Meeting Agenda

Preliminary Agenda for the March 1999 PSFS meeting:

Call to Order (8 PM!)

Corrections to Minutes

Officers' Reports (as necessary)

Standing Committees (as necessary)

Special Committees (as necessary)

Old Business:

- The questions on Janis's status

New Business:

- The new nomination to Oversight by Tina:

Becky Jollensten (*note that this is an addition to the Oversight Committee, not a replacement*)

- Budget (as printed in the February 1999 newsletter)

- Adoption of email proxy policy (recommended by the board unanimously 2/8/99):

"Email proxies will be accepted with voice confirmation on the PSFS hotline. If the Secretary is unable to retrieve the voice confirmation, (s)he is to contact the proxy maker."

- Dues Raise (recommended by the board 4-3 2/8/99):

"Effective April 1, 1999, the dues be raised to \$18 per person or \$30 per couple."

- Report of Board on Bylaws Amendment (submitted to Secretary 2/19/99)

Program

- Laurell K. Hamilton

Adjournment

If anyone has additional business they wish to conduct at the March meeting, they should contact Tim immediately (the sooner, the better).

PSFS News

PSFS News is the Newsletter and Corporate Minutes of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society, published monthly as a benefit of membership. It is available free to Active and General Members of the Society, and to any SF club or organization wishing to trade newsletters. Non-members or Inactive Members may subscribe at an annual cost of \$10/year.

PSFS News welcomes submissions, and is seeking to expand. Anyone wishing to contribute articles (book or movie reviews, discussion group or convention reports, announcements, etc.) is encouraged to do so. We prefer that articles be e-mailed (send to secretary@psfs.org), but they may be mailed if necessary to the P.O. Box. Deadline is two weeks before the next general meeting.

PSFS News is produced on a Macintosh using ClarisWorks 5.0, and is printed on a Desk-Writer 320. Emailed articles may be either submitted as plain text, or as attached Claris-Works files (use macbinary or binhex if available). Other file formats may be possible. Artwork or photos are also welcome in any graphics format, or we can scan originals if mailed to us.

PSFS News Editor & Publisher: Rich Kabakjian. Secretary: Carol Kabakjian. Regular contributors: Henry Lazarus, Lee Weinstein. All contents © 1999 by The Philadelphia Science Fiction Society and the individual contributors.

The March meeting will start promptly at 8:00PM!!

so there.

Books for March

by Henry Leon Lazarus

There are supposedly only seven basic plots in fiction. The most common in fantasy is the quest where the heroes have to find some magical object to stop horrible things from happening. When fantasy novels use other plots, however, the result can be very refreshing and original.

L. E. Modesitt, Jr. likes to use the tale of a young man who overcomes the problems that confront him and slowly grows into a responsible adult. *Colors of Chaos* (hard from TOR) tells the tale of Ceryll, an ethical chaos mage, who rises in power in both his guild and in the world. While it takes place at the same time as *The Magic Engineer* (paper), Ceryll's problems have more to do with the internal greed for power and money found commonly in the White Order, than a rogue black mage. My only complaint is that Mr. Modesitt made me stay up late, unable to stop reading, and may have been responsible for my present cold.



Most good science fiction takes its form from mystery, with an additional how to be answered along with the who, what, and where. There doesn't even have to be a dead body, but there are plenty in James Alan Gardner's *Vigilant* (Paper from Avon Eos) which more complications to its mystery than cats have kittens. Try leftover technology from a previous colony, living hyperspace wormholes, and robot killers. Its tough and gutsy heroine is a member of the Vigil Naderites who are hard wired to the planetary web as they work to control government. A murder attempt starts the plot rolling, but adds in artificial plagues, crazy aliens, and a living computer web to keep you confused. I hope this is the first of a series.

So much is happening in *A Song of Ice and Fire* that I'm not sure what plot form George R. R. Martin is using. It is set on a planet where summer has lasted ten years and now a red comet fills with skies with announcement that the long autumn and then winter is coming. Mr. Martin borrows heavily from *Ivanhoe* and the English War of the Roses for his background. The last king was murdered in *A Game of Thrones* (paper) and *A Clash of Kings* (hard from Bantam Spectra), a civil war with three kings destroying the countryside, has begun. However, across the small ocean in the south, dragons have hatched, bringing return of magic to this world. In the North, above the black wall, the dead walk. If Mr. Martin can finish this tale in the next book, it will easily be the most significant fantasy work in several decades.



Guy Gavriel Kay is one of the better writers in the fantasy, so it is no surprise that his entry into a magical Byzantium, *Sailing to Sarantium* (hard from Harper Prism) is one of the better of what has now become standard fantasy fare. A young, gifted mosaic layer is sent to Sarantium to decorate a huge shrine. It is the first of a series.

I don't always get access to the books I want to include here. I read Shirley Rousseau Murphy's *Cat in the Dark* (hard from Harper Prism), the latest adventure of the talking cats Joe Gray and Dulcie, in several local huge bookstores. This time there's a new talking cat,

who helps his owner steal, and who thinks little of normal cats. In the end he helps Joe Gray and Dulcie solve the murders. Look for this in the mystery section instead of the fantasy one. I missed the hard cover of Catherine Asaro's *The Last Hawk* (paper from TOR)

which is a shame because it is showing up on award pre-nominations. Ms. Asaro has one of her bio-enhanced Skolians crash land on a world ruled by a gender role mixed matriarchy (with the standard feminist mistakes). What was most interesting was the way game playing ran that world and thus the book reminded me a lot of Herman Hesse's *The Glass Bead Game*.

Three other nice reads include the latest about a rising officer in a mercenary army of the future. Lon gets his promotion to *Captain* (by Rick Shelly, paper from Ace) on the battlefield where one colony decides that the brokered peace they were given wasn't good enough and attacks their former employees. Ann Marston has a new tale of her beleaguered island with its magic swords and the death magic wizards who conquered it in the last book. In *Cloudbearer's Shadow* (paper from Harper Prism) Gareth has to retrieve the sword Bane and in the process discovers his own magic and finds his true love. Talk about horrible in-laws, try on an evil god for size. That's what the young couple, heirs to a barony, have to face in Alanna Morland's *Leopard Lord* (paper from Ace). This is one of those books where you care so much about the characters you have to look at the last page to be sure they get through their adventure safely.



Anne McCaffrey tells of a very nice heiress, owner of a shipyard, who has designed the best, most automatic ship for falling through wormholes and having adventures with. When *Nimisha's Ship* (hard from Del Rey) does so on its breakdown voyage with her on board, she immediately finds an interesting planet with nice aliens and nice humans survivors. Eventually nice rescuers, including her daughter come along and everybody is happy. I wish Joel Rosenberg was a little happier, because *Not Exactly the Three Musketeers* (hard from TOR) should have been a lot more fun. It works in part, as three rough army veterans are sent to find out why young noble woman is writing letters to the Dowager Empress about evil plots. The plots are there, and so is the adventure just not enough of either.

Fans of Honor Harrington will probably want *Worlds of Honor* (edited by David Webber and hard from Baen) with two of the five tales by David Webber. Then there's *A Dangerous Magic* (edited by Denise Little, paper from DAW) which has tales of star-crossed lovers.

One of my well thumbed books in my collection can now be replaced by a new edition of Patricia S. McKillip's *Riddle Master* (Trade from Ace). This is a must have for any collection missing it and I hope the first of a trend. If Ace wants suggestions for future volumes of books that need to be reprinted, I have suggestions. TOR doesn't have the rights to the better parts of Fred Saberhagen's series, so they've decided to reprint his sword books. *The First Swords* (trade) has three tales of the swords that can kill gods, each with its own special power.

Paperback reprints include: Robin Hobb's beginning of her liveship series, *Ship of Magic* (Bantam Spectra), Diane Duane's tale of cats saving the universe *The Book of Night with Moon* (Aspect); Charles Pellegrino's well told tale about the improbable death of all insects, *Dust* (Avon); Roger MacBride's final tale of a robot without three laws, *Utopia*, which is also a nice homage to Isaac Asimov's robots; Marion Zimmer Bradley and Holly Lisle's sequel to *Glenraven*, *In the Rift* (Baen) which brings magical complications to the real world; Allen Steele's *A King of Infinite Space* (Harper Prism) about a boy from our time revived in the future and the plots he discovers; and Bernard Werber's odd *Empire of the Ants* (Bantam) about an odd house that swallows people, and an ant observatory. This was translated from French and has an odd french way of looking at the world.



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Meeting Notices

General Meetings

Unless otherwise specified, General Meetings are held on the 2nd Friday of each month in the South America Room at International House, 37th and Chestnut Streets, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Business meeting starts at 8 pm. Program starts at 9 pm.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Guest/Agenda</u>
March 12, 1999	Laurell K. Hamilton
April 9, 1999	Jack McDevitt
May 14, 1999	George R. R. Martin
June 11, 1999	(unknown)
July 9, 1999	(unknown)
August 13, 1999	(unknown)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Host/Location</u>
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Board of Directors

Mon., March 8, 1999, 8:00pm Oz Fontecchio, Sterling Building, 1815 JFK Blvd. #1708, Philadelphia; (215) 563-7538

Philcon '99 Meeting

The next meeting had not been set at press time.

About the Society

The Philadelphia Science Fiction Society (PSFS) is a non-profit organization that meets monthly to discuss and promote science fiction and fantasy in literature, the arts, and popular culture. Meetings are held the second Friday of each month at International House, 37th and Chestnut Streets, Philadelphia. Meetings consist of business proceedings from 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., followed by a guest speaker involved in some area of Science Fiction or Fantasy, such as writers, editors, artists, publishers, etc.

In addition, PSFS sponsors an annual science fiction conference, Philcon, and has many special interest subgroups; such as the Book Discussion Group, which meets monthly to discuss a work of science fiction or fantasy; and the Special Events Group, which attends science fiction and fantasy movies and other events.

Membership in the society is open to everyone. Becoming a member is easy. Attend 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 \$15 for a full year (\$24 for couples), and attendance at 4 meetings each year maintains the status of Active Member.