

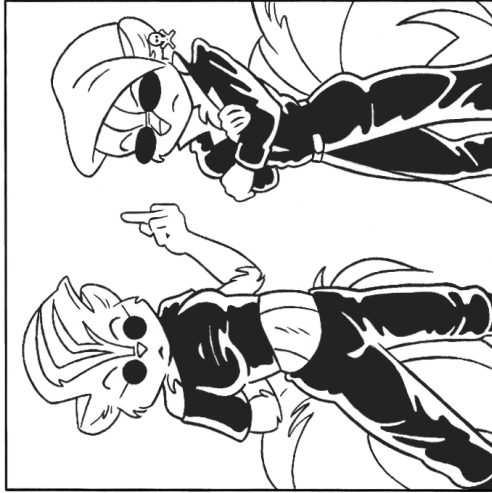
BCSFAzine 363

Vol. 31 no. 8

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August 2003

GOTH
ZONE



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IN THIS ISSUE:

- New plan for BCSFA mooted
- VCon's venue and Guests of Honour
- New SF and horror markets in Canada
- *The Matrix* reviewed
- VCon 28 committee meeting minutes
- BCSFA membership list – what's news to us? (what's outdated?)
Let us know!!

August Events

Aug. 4	B.C. civic holiday	
Aug. 9	Second Saturday Feeding Frenzy	7 p.m. at Fets Pasta Bar & Grill, 1230 Commercial Drive, Vancouver. An excellent choice for pub grub and a good place from which to observe life on "The Drive".
Aug. 14	Book discussion	7 p.m. at The Brickhouse, 730 Main Street, Vancouver. Book to be discussed: <i>Stranger in a Strange Land</i> by Robert A. Heinlein
Aug. 15	BCSFAzine deadline	
Aug. 15-17	Con-Version XX	the Westin Hotel, Calgary, AB
Aug. 23	BCSFA meeting	at the family residence of Kathleen Moore-Freeman, 7064 #1 Road in Richmond
Aug. 24	Comix & Stories	At the Heritage Hall on Main Street, Vancouver, BC
Aug. 27	Academic Conference On Canadian SF&F	at the Merrill Collection of Science Fiction, Speculation and Fantasy, Toronto, ON
Aug. 28 – Sept. 1	Torcon 3: Worldcon and CONVENTION 2003	World SF convention at Toronto, ON
Aug. 28 – Sept. 1	3-Day Novel Contest	September 7 deadline. Entry fee: \$50 CDN / \$40 US (outside Canada). Blue Lake Books, Suite 364, 3495 Cambie St., Vancouver, BC V5Z 4R3
Aug. 29	BCSFAzine production	
Aug. 30 – Sept. 1	H.P. Lovecraft's Birthday	A gaming con (moved from mid-August) at the Marpole Curling Club in Vancouver

Members' August birthdays:

- 3: Frank Skinner
- 4: Katie Kelly
- 9: Carol Polok
- 12: Shelly Gordy
- 16: Bernie Klassen
- 17: Vaughn Fraser
- 24: Jackie Barclay
- 30: Howard Cherniack
- 31: August Witherspoon-Li

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PLAIN SPEAKING

(This issue's editorial is from club president R. Graeme Cameron.)

It's time to reinvent BCSFA.

First, I think we need to invent a focus. Anime clubs concentrate on anime. Monster Attack Team Canada has a fanatical membership of model-makers and film enthusiasts.

What is BCSFA about? What *should* it be about?

(And *don't* tell me socializing. You don't have to belong to the club to do that. Not only are there ex-members attending FRED, there are former members who throw parties for each other, but not for BCSFAns.)

We need a focus. A purpose. Something to offer. And a place or places to do it.

There's no point in being a general interest club when most people with hobby interests prefer an organization devoted to their particular hobby.

So perhaps we should offer a limited choice. In a sense we'll still be a general interest club: no longer a vague, indefinable, wishy-washy ghost of a club, but one with several clearly defined specific activities, thereby giving prospective members something solid to think about as they consider whether or not they'd like to join and participate.

We already have discussions about books, plus food frenzies, & BCSFAzine covering the wider fannish scene. What else can we do? What else **MUST** we do?

One thing we can't do is cling to the past with club precedents and regulations in all their nostalgic glory. That stuff doesn't work, hasn't worked in a long time. It's dead.

No need to cling to a corpse. Forget the constitution. Forget past practices.

Let's pretend we're a bunch of fans getting together to found a NEW club! That being the case, goshwowboyoboy, what do you want your brand-new, innovative, progressive, futuristic, exciting club to be and do? If you were founding a club (and you are) what will it be?

I want answers, damn it.

And since I posed the question, what do I have to suggest?

Well, an ideal club for *me* would be a film society devoted to watching and discussing films in a relatively serious manner, i.e. watching a film from beginning to end and then spending at least an hour dissecting the film, criticizing it, discussing its merits, etc.

To that end I would be willing to host, at my place, once a month, on a Saturday or Sunday early evening, a showing of a horror or SF film, be it *Robot Monster* or *Solaris* (or ?), followed by a coffee-fueled discussion (or BYOB). I would perhaps give a brief background talk on the film before the showing, just to set a context. After the discussion, participants could vote on what selection they'd like to see next month, based on the 200+plus collection of videos I have, or videos they have.

While this film meet would be open to all BCSFAns, I don't want people who hate or could care less about film, who are there only to 'party' and would actively disrupt and abort the meeting's focus on the film in question. The whole point and purpose of this monthly film showing is the FILM, to watch it attentively, to discuss it, to judge it. A clearly-defined purpose, a clearly-defined function. Which might bore some BCSFAns, but hopefully excite others.

The idea being that when someone asks, "what do I get if I join BCSFA?", part of the answer would be: "We have, among other activities, a monthly film society meeting where one SF or Horror film is shown and discussed in depth." Many people would reply, "That sounds stupid to me, count me out, but a science fiction

film buff (and there are millions out there) might think "Hey, sounds cool. How do I join up?"

Let's say we get back to a monthly schedule for executive meetings open to all BCSFAns. Just a short meeting, an hour or two. Say in the New West library or some other free venue (if we can get it).

This would give BCSFAns two optional activities per month. Plus the Feeding Frenzy; that makes three activities. And the book discussion for a fourth. Club is beginning to sound healthy all ready.

Every weekend has two days. No reason why there can't be more than four activities per month.

I'm already willing to host a monthly film society showing. Another passionate interest of mine is Fanzines and Fanzine fandom. I'd be willing to devote a couple of hours per month to a small gathering devoted to that interest: perhaps in my den, where I keep part of the BCSFA fanzine archive; perhaps in a coffee shop somewhere. Part of this could involve a collective effort to contribute to BCSFAzine. Any BCSFAns keen on fannish writing would be most welcome. Of course, this is a very narrow interest, and maybe no one is interested. But again, if it did get going, it would be yet another activity for newcomers to consider.

Apart from actual VCON Society meetings, perhaps BCSFA could have a small SMOFCON-like discussion group devoted to the history and study of SF conventions, VCON in particular. Ghod knows the archive contains plenty of material, including many Worldcon program books for instance. Of course this would only attract a few people, if any: but again, another activity to offer.

So I've suggested three activities I'm willing to host or be involved with: a film 'society', a fanzine 'society', and a pseudo-SMOF (secret masters of fandom for them as doesn't know) 'society'.

What are *your* passionate interests? Someone could host a monthly filk get-together. Maybe an anime showing. Space buffs could have a monthly history of space exploration meeting (I might be interested in that one too!). What else? What else?

In other words, let us bury the old club. Instead of a *single* monthly all-encompassing party enshrining the same old same old, let *varying* groups of individuals in the NEW BCSFA gather monthly to pursue specific interests. If you're interested in film, attend *that* meeting. If you're not interested in filking, don't show up. If space exploration or astronomy bores you, skip that one too. Maybe there's something else you'll like.

This means individual members can restrict their activity strictly to what interests them, so no one has to put up with the chore of going to a meeting simply to shore up the club despite being bored to tears.

And it means prospective members will have a number of activities available, at least one of which might seem reason enough to join BCSFA.

So, instead of everybody having to go to one party or nothing at all, I envision numerous BCSFAns hosting the activities they're most passionately interested in, with everybody attending only what they want to attend, and everybody living happily ever after.

In short, the NEW BCSFA functioning as an umbrella for multiple activities any one of which is comfortably small and intimate, say 6 people for the film activity, 7 for filking, 5 for space, etc.

LOCS

(To BCSFAzine 361)

Sean Alonzo, June 2003

I would like to submit my site for submission into your links section:
SeanAlonzo.com is the official site of occult fiction author Sean-Alonzo,
exploring symbolism, alternative history, philosophy, secret societies and other
areas of the esoteric tradition.

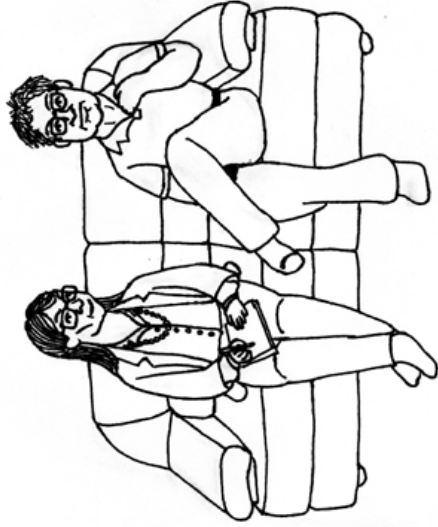
<http://www.seanalonzo.com>

Yvonne Penney, June 30, 2003

There is a petition going around that I would like to encourage each and
everyone of you to sign. It is online and the website where it is found will be listed
shortly. Basically this petition's goal is to encourage the Canadian Government to
increase the budget for the Canadian Space Agency so that it may continue its
participation in the Mars Exploration missions. I cannot emphasize enough the
importance of this petition. Please go to the website listed below and I encourage
you to sign. The deadline is August 31, 2003.

The CBC did a report on Canadian involvement in the Mars Missions.
Canadian Technology is wanted for these missions and needed and the only way
that Canada can continue its participation is by the Federal Government giving
the Canadian Space Agency more money.

Thank you for your time and attention. It is appreciated.
<http://astro.senecac.on.ca/peter.robinson/phppetition/>



from Barb Dwyer and Duncan MacGregor, June 14, 2003

Please note that Duncan's address and telephone number have changed. He
moved to Richmond on March 15th. He gave you this new address and telephone
number some four or five weeks ago [before June 13th] at FRED. Barb Dwyer's and

Ray Seredin's telephone numbers are listed in the current BCSFA directory. In
addition, Barb's telephone number changed in Nov. 2001, and the one you quoted
is out of date. Her current telephone number is 604-267-7973, and Ray's is 604-
521-0254. [As quoted to you on the 13th, Duncan's new number is 604-241-
9059.]

Duncan has four e-mail accounts, and checks most of them daily, but only
sometimes at web cafes. Barb accesses e-mail mostly through Howard Cherniack,
not at web cafes. As for Ray, you'll have to ask him how often he accesses e-mail.
None of the three has Internet access at home currently.

Barb was talking about doing a phone tree early last year. The idea was not to
do a full, massive, telephone-only tree. It was to reach people who don't e-mail
accounts and/or who don't have computers at home or who are not club
members. The idea was to use a combination of contact info [phone numbers, cell
(phone) numbers, e-mail, and voice-mail] to contact people about events. The
intent of the phone tree was to rely mostly on e-mail and voice-mail distribution
lists.

Neither Duncan nor Barb had time last year to implement new projects. The
situation has changed, and they/we have more time now. [This may change if
Duncan finds a job that causes him to move out of town.] Barb still wants to build
a "phone tree" (although, as stated above, phoning is not necessarily involved).
Another idea might be to send out an updated Monthly Fannish Event Calendar
via one of more of the aforementioned contact methods every week or so instead of
just printing a list of events in *BCSFAzine* once a month only. The problem has
been that not all the information on monthly fannish events can be obtained in
time for the *BCSFAzine*'s (mid-month) deadline, so some other idea for getting the
essential information out to people is needed. In this regard, please consider the
table (chart) style for the Monthly Fannish Event Calendar that Barb and Duncan
created and presented to you on June 13. This table style gives the information in
an easy-to-read, at-a-glance format. In this case, Microsoft Word was used to
generate this, but a similar style may also be created using HTML. It is an easier
style to work with than the "wall-calendar" style format that Barb had originally
suggested to you.

(Have I not followed the format you suggested, last issue and in this issue?)

Barb got out her paper copies of two BCSFA lists that you had given her early
last year. They were labelled: 1) Garth's Present BCSFA Members' Phone List, and
2) Garth's Past and Present BCSFA Members' Address List. [Duncan found a
similar electronic version of these lists on one of the floppies that you gave him for
the V-Con address list.] Copies were given to Duncan of these lists. [Neither list
has a date of compilation, which would be useful. The second ["Past and Present"]
list has info on BCSFA memberships as far back as 1997. If you were using the
first ["Present"] list to try to reach Duncan, Barb, and Ray, it is out of date and
therefore has incorrect information. [A copy of the latest (2002) BCSFA directory
would be helpful, since it has correct contact information for Ray and Barb.
Duncan may be able to supply a copy of his copy of said directory.] You therefore
need to update your "Present" list with more accurate information.

Garth, do you have any other BCSFA membership history prior to 1997 on
disc or on paper somewhere? It would be interesting to compile a separate list of
long-expired members who were once members of the club, but going back further
than 1997. E-mail Duncan and Barb with any comments about the table (chart)
style for the Monthly Fannish Event Calendar and its possible use in *BCSFAzine*
and/or the BCSFA Yahoo group. Maybe such a chart could be posted on the
BCSFA Yahoo group to provide current, up-to-date event info. Also, an updated
Monthly Fannish Event Calendar easily may be sent out through an e-mail
distribution list. [Duncan notes: if so, it should be in HTML, not in MS Word
format. Not everyone has the MS Word program.]

A new version of the BCSFA directory is needed. As demonstrated by Duncan's recent move, the current version [2002, with the white cover] is getting out of date. Steve Forty told Barb that he had given you new BCSFA directory forms last November (2002) and they were meant for enclosure in the December or January (2003) *BCSFAzine*. These forms were never mailed out with the *BCSFAzine* then or since. Even if we don't mail out (or e-mail) the forms this time, the directory still needs to be revised. The format and layout of the directory could be changed if so desired; BCSFA could borrow other SF clubs' ways of doing membership directories. Also, BCSFA members could be given the option of receiving the directory by regular mail or by e-mail. Currently no version of the directory is available by e-mail.

(I'm working on it, I'm working on it. See the list of BCSFA members - and my out-of-date membership information on them - later this issue.)

Lloyd Penney, 1706-24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, ON, M9C 2B2, June 17, 2003

Here is issue 361 of *BCSFAzine*, and here's my letter of comment...not necessarily in that order...

Every club has the problem of apathy when it comes to club activities, and this club is no different. This is where the idea of exchanging clubzines with other clubs can come in handy. Check with other clubzines, and see what they do. Don't let culture shock get in the way...the Melbourne club does things that may not completely translate into Canadian culture, but it would be interesting to try it just once. Club rummage sales at a meeting...swap meet, midnight trip to an observatory, club picnic in the foothills, etc. There must be other things to do. Maybe the one thing clubs do for their members naturally is give them an organization to belong to. For some, that may be enough.

(Of course clubs go through low-rez high-entropy phases. It's cyclical. We know that. I was trying to ask the next question.

(Is Robert Runté reading this?)

The Aurora ballot is now available on Dennis Mullin's Aurora website, www.sentex.net/~dmullin/aurora. I thought Torcon might distribute the ballots with the last PR they sent out, but...nevertheless, the ballot is a .pdf file on this site, and Torcon members can vote for free. Non-members are charged \$10 for the vote. Go now, and vote.

More Toronto Trek guest problems...Linda Park has had to cancel out, and has been replaced with *Deep Space 9's* Nana Visitor.

Greetings to archivist Graeme...we don't see you often enough in print or online. ...

So many of the online awards I didn't know about, including the Draco Award in Markham...I suspect the local pros would find out about this, but not the local fans. Also, I would need to check my high school yearbooks, but I think I went to school with Steve and Wendy Stanton in Orillia, editors of the Christian fiction magazine. Orillia is where I grew up.

I'm going to finish up, and get this going...the job hunt online will continue this evening. Wish me luck, and see you next issue.

Michael Morse, June 28, 2003

Cover: Ruby shoots Binks! Nice!

July 2003 Events: *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines* - Right from day one I had reservations about this movie, especially about [spoilers:] the female Terminator, but also the redesigned Hunter-Seeker sky-ships, the young John Connor, and the over-used "ring explosion" for the mushroom cloud on Judgment Day. The commercials I've seen lately haven't helped. Still, the first two movies

were interesting enough that I think I'll go see this one, although I'll probably wait until it's cheap.

Eye of Neut Play Live to Tron - I love *Tron*. I'm a little unclear as to how this works. How will we be able to hear the movie if there's a band playing?

Aphelion Party - Yes!

Toy and Collectibles Show - Damn it! I missed the last comic show. And I needed my cheap 1980s comics fix.

The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen - Judging again from the commercials, it doesn't look as "runchable" as it should.

Feeding Frenzy - If you like White Spot, there's a good White Spot at Richmond Centre. The manager, Prakesh Ganatra, is a nice guy.

Furry Club Dinner - There was one last night at the Sammy J. Pepper's across the street from Metrotown. (There's a Sammy J. Pepper's across the street from Lansdowne in Richmond, too.) It was a little expensive - the bacon burger was \$10, and was not very big, and did not come with very many fries. The price of a glass of pop (bottomless with meal) was a sadly non-competitive \$2.50.

Art Credits - Just the one drawing this month. Have we run out? Did I mention my Deviant Art page, <http://morbius-88.deviantart.com/>?

Rantings and Ravings: *"I wonder why anyone else is conceded a right to express criticisms, even rather offensive ones—but when I do, I am encouraged to look for group therapy; but let's let that go for now."* I'm allowed to express offensive criticisms?

"I could point out a more abstract problem, the problem of allocating not just money, not just time, but your personal energy and sustained attention among work, family and leisure commitments...a problem which I suspect we have never resolved successfully...but again, maybe let's let that go for now." You're right; that is the problem. I don't know how to solve it.

"Any ideas for us there?" "Panel dialogues," "film showings," "summer barbecues," and "Christmas dinners and parties" sound fun. RPGs might be nice if they don't involve too much paperwork; for example, a VTM LARP.

(Say what??)

LOCs: *"I wonder if I could get away with another article about SF-type creativity... 'Creative Religion'?"* As long as there's no congratulating L. Ron Hubbard on having thought up \$cientology, sure.

(Why would anyone congratulate the man??)

Real News: *The MIC Newsletter 2003 Prix Aurora Award Supplement* - It's always sad when the English and French names for something are combined into one name with the French half first.

(Why??)

August 15 Deadline for the Free State Project: Sounds great compared to evil Republicans and sell-out Democrats, but given that Libertarians are for the elimination of social programs and the minimum wage...

3-Day Novel Contest 2003 - \$50!?

(So it goes..)

Hugo Nominee Reviews: I get bored by lack of character development, too; I found McMahon's latest column misandrist.

(Well, duh. It's a union requirement or something like that.)

Colophon: Oh, there's one more bit of art.

(And another thing I missed when compiling my contents/art credits.)

Creative Sociology: Good article once again.

(Thank yew.)

What's your formula about the KKK/Nazis/Broderbond? (I remember you mentioning it in an e-mail a long time ago, but I don't remember if you said what it was.)

(Short thumbnail sketch: Say you have a nation, or at least a region, that suffers a military defeat, and the people - most especially its middle class, but at

least the ones who consider themselves the majority, and the true nation in the area – lose practically everything, not least a lot of power in their own country. Think post-Bellum American South. Think South Africa after the Boer War, or post-Great War Germany. Conceivably the defeat doesn't have to be a military defeat, just a series of reverses like the continuing "recessions" we've had for thirty-odd years. Think Newfoundland outposts after the cod fishery collapse, or B.C. lumber towns after the multinational closes the pulp mill. If identifiable foreigners seem to hold the balance of power, and get most of the wealth of the country – and if, in addition, an identifiable minority is suspected of profiting from your impoverishment – then the conditions are met for a fascist, racist movement to arise.

((Does any of this sound familiar to you, gentle readers? Are any of you, in fact, actually reading this?))

I don't find the premise of futuristic social science that can "manipulate" societies and minds unbelievable; I just find it depressing.

((I find it redundant. People have been manipulating each other, or trying to, since at least as soon as we invented speech; far earlier, in fact, if you accept the conclusions arising from studies of bonobo chimpanzees.

((As often happens, science fiction simply holds up a funhouse mirror to Life As It Is.))

If the Competent Man "still sells books," then in what sense do you mean that he's "an outdated hero"?

((Outdated in the sense that Competent Man fiction depended on a simplistic, one-cause → one-effect worldview. It's still sort of comforting to read, so it sells books. But in the nonfictional world, we have come to recognize more and more complex systems, where more than one factor combines and results in more than one effect; systems which were rarely if ever recognized as such, in the heyday of Competent Man fiction.))

SOME WORDS FROM OUR ADVERTISERS

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Meetings are held twice a month at the Metrotown library,
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For information call Ken, 604-876-5751, email ktran@vcn.bc.ca

ARE YOU A BCSFA MEMBER? ARE YOU NOT ON THIS LIST? ARE YOU ON THIS LIST AND NOT A MEMBER?

If you are a member but not listed, *we need your input* towards the next BCSFA Directory. If you are a CURRENT member but you are listed as expired, please contact me at hrothgar@vcn.bc.ca and Doug at DarthBuddy2000@yahoo.com. And possibly you are listed as CURRENT when you are expired.

There are a few members who moved, to our knowledge, within the past six to twelve months; and some members moved without giving us their new address – Alan Barclay, Jon Foster, and David Hale – and, just possibly, you moved recently but we haven't realized it. Please drop us a line!

Alan Barclay (no current address!), membership expired

Steve & Jackie Barclay, membership expired
 Brenda Corbett & Randy Barnhart, membership expired
 Lea Rush & John Bartley, CURRENT to Sept. 2003
 Don Bassie, fanzine trade
 BCSPA Archives, membership expired
 Chris Bell, membership expired June 2002
 W. Harris & H. Berger, membership expired June 2002
 Alan R. Betz, lifetime member
 Andrew Brechin, expired
 Donna McMahon & Clint Budd, lifetime members
 Alyx Shaw & R. Graeme Cameron (*Space Cadet Gazette*), lifetime membership
 J. McGalliard & Paul Carpentier, membership expired December 2002
 Julian Castle, membership expired June 2002
 Laurie Kahn & Howard Cherniack, expired
 Mary Choo, membership expired
 David Cutbirth, membership expired June 2002
 DASFAX (DASFA), fanzine trade
 De Profundis (LAFS), fanzine trade
 Don H. DeBrandt, lifetime member
 Barbara Delaplace, membership expired
 Michael & Dani Dezotell, expired
 Dragonfly Music, advertiser
 Barbara Dryer, membership expired March 2003
 Dan Dyda, membership expired
 Linda Earl, membership expired
 Ethel the *Aardvark*, fanzine trade
 Donna Farley, membership expired
 Alan Ferguson, membership expired June 2002
 Kat Ferguson, lifetime member
 File 770, fanzine trade
 Doug Finnerty, membership expired June 2002
 Stanley Foo, membership expired
 Steve Forty, lifetime member
 FOSFAX, fanzine trade
 Jon Foster (no current address), membership expired February 2002
 Lynn Giraud, membership expired
 Yolanda Goodwin, membership expired January 2003
 Barbara Gordon, membership expired
 Shelly & Tam Gordy, membership expired
 Jens Haeusser, membership expired
 Peter Halasz, membership expired
 David & Dianne Hale, CURRENT to October 2003
 Clayton Hamacher, membership expired
 Carol Hamill, membership expired
 Tim Hammell, lifetime member
 E. Richard Hanson, membership expired
 Wendy Harris, membership expired
 Jason Harris, membership expired June 2002
 Penelope Harris, membership expired June 2002
 Jeff Hartt, membership expired
 John Herbert, membership expired
 Frances Higginson, membership expired February 2003
 Darrin Hildebrandt, membership expired
 Palle Steve Hoffstein, expired
 Deb Holberton, membership expired
 Darryl Huber, membership expired
 Dianna Hull, membership expired

Ed Hutchings, membership expired
 Stan Hyde, membership expired
 Imperial Hobbies, advertiser
 Made in *Canada* newsletter (Don Bassie) – semi-trade
 Nico Iormetti, membership expired March 2003
 Andrew "Ivan" Irvine, membership expired
 Chris Iwane, membership expired
 Cath Jackel, membership expired
 Mike Jackson, membership expired
 Eugene B. James, membership expired December 2002
 Robert Jared, membership expired
 Karl Johanson, membership expired
 Stephanie Ann Johanson, membership expired
 Vera Johnson, membership expired
 Don Johnson, membership expired
 Jim Johnston, membership expired
 Andrew Kacerik, membership expired
 Laurie Kahn, membership expired
 Stephen Kawamoto, membership expired
 Bill Kelly, membership expired
 Delphine Kelly, membership expired
 Allan Kelly, membership expired July 2002
 Eileen Kernaghan, lifetime member
 Crawford Kilian, membership expired
 James Kling, membership expired
 Gail Koombes, CURRENT to March 2004
 Michael Koombes, CURRENT to March 2004
 E Kovac (?)
 Gayle J. Koyanagi, membership expired
 Merril Collection, lifetime member
 David Langtry, membership expired
 Teemu Leisti, membership expired
 Mike Lesiak, membership expired
 Andrew Lucas, membership expired
 Sue Luoma, membership expired August 2002
 Duncan MacGregor, membership expired
 Alexis J. MacPherson, membership expired
 Terrie Mailhot, membership expired
 Mark Manning, membership expired
 David Manning, membership expired
 John Mansfield, former fanzine trade
 Donna Markbride, membership expired
 Michael Martin, membership expired
 Merina Matthew, membership expired
 Cathy Mayo, membership expired
 Jo McBride, membership expired
 Dale McGladdery, membership expired
 Don McGovern, membership expired
 Lisa McGovern, expired
 Billie McLeod, membership expired March 2002
 Darrell Mercier, membership expired
 Michael's Books, advertiser
 Tammy Midttun, membership expired
 Nadine Miller, membership expired
 Debbie Miyashita, membership expired
 WARP & *Impulse* (MonSFFA), fanzine trades
 Murray Moore, membership expired March 2002

Kathleen Moore-Freeman, CURRENT to July 2004
 Michael Morse, contributor
 Art & Dixie Mueller, membership expired
 Wilko Mueller, lifetime member
 John Mullock, membership expired
 Lance Munro, membership expired
 Andrew & Suzanne Murdoch (*Covert Communications ...*), membership expired
 June 2002
 National Library of Canada - perpetual (2 cc)
 Debbie Neher, membership expired
 Charlotte Nickerson, membership expired
 Vicki Oates, membership expired
Ottawa SF Statement (OSFS), fanzine trade
 Michael R. Otter, membership expired
 Gary Owens, membership expired
 Cecilia M. Parrott, membership expired
 Tila Pelletier, CURRENT to July 2004
 Lloyd & Yvonne Penney, lifetime member
 Richard Pitt, membership expired
 Camille Poirier, membership expired
 Diana Powell, membership expired
 Ted Powell, membership expired
 Grant Prittie, membership expired
 Jill L. Pruett, membership expired October 2002
Pulsar (PorSFis), fanzine trade
 Patrick Quail, membership expired
 Dawna Read, expired
 Spider & Jeanne Robinson, lifetime members
 Rhea Rose, membership expired
 Robert Runte, membership expired
 Stephen Samuel, membership expired
 Leland Sapiro, membership expired
 Patrick Sauriol, membership expired
 Robert J. Sawyer, lifetime member
 Richard Scheib, membership expired
 Ray Seredin, membership expired August 2002
 T.G. Shephard, membership expired
 Fran Skene, lifetime member
 Frank Skinner, CURRENT to March 2003
 Lisa Smedman, membership expired (SHOULD be a lifetime member!)
 Gordon Smith, CURRENT to December 2002
 James Stewart Smyth, membership expired
 Garth Spencer (*Royal Swiss Navy Gazette*), expired but still editing
 Dawn Stewart, membership expired
 Chris Sturges, membership expired
 Sean Szwaba, membership expired
 Tom Terashima, membership expired
Thyme, fanzine trade
 Lorna Toolis, membership expired
 Sydney Trim, membership expired
 Dietmar Trommshauer, membership expired
 Peter Tupper, expired
 Cindy Turner, membership expired October 2002
 UBC SFS, lifetime member (no longer publishing?)
 Vancouver Public Library - promotional
 Alexander V. Vasilevsky, membership expired
 Robert Vaughn (1), expired

Robert Vaughn (2), membership expired
Voyageur (downloaded bimonthly and sent *BCSFAzine* monthly)
 M. Beulah Wadsworth, membership expired
 Leslie Walker, membership expired
 Pauline Walsh, membership expired
 Taral Wayne, contributor and lifetime member
 Roger Wells, membership expired
Westwind (NWSFS), fanzine trade
 Ted White, contributor
 White Dwarf Books, advertiser/distributor
 Judy Williams, membership expired
 Dave & Rose Wilson, membership expired
 John Wong, membership expired
 Ken Wong, membership expired July 2002
 Liana Worsfold, membership expired
 Raven Carleton Wright, membership expired
 Wrigley Cross Books, advertiser
 Tim Yip, membership expired

OASFS Event Horizon - no longer publishing?
SNAFFU - no longer publishing?
 Time Meddlers, membership expired (no longer publishing?)
Ursa Major - no longer publishing?

MINUTES

of the quarterly V-Con Society meeting combined with a VCon 28 committee meeting, July 13, 2003 at the Days Hotel Surrey.

PRESENT in the 4th floor meeting room were Clint Budd, Palle Hoffstein, Doug Finnerty, Tim Hoffert, Ray Seredin, Duncan MacGregor, Barb Dwyer, R. Graeme Cameron, Garth Spencer, Lorna Appleby, Kathleen Moore-Freeman, Tim Yip, Marilyn Blew, Paul Carpentier, Julie McGalliard, Gregg Cairns, Chilam, Fran Skene. Regrets from Andrew Brechin and Marie-Louise Beesley.

Clint called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING were read by Garth Spencer (WCSFA Secretary). Duncan mentioned a minor addition. Garth moved, and Duncan seconded, to accept the minutes as amended. The motion was carried.

Some of the members of the meeting made it known that Canada Post workers would be in a legal strike position on Friday, July 18, if their management did not conclude a contract agreement. This would certainly impact the mailing-out of PR#1

OLD BUSINESS/BUSINESS ARISING
 David Hale has to bow out of his Webmaster duties, for entirely personal reasons. Clint suggests that we create a Director of Communications position, heading up the de facto committee in which Palle is already

updating the VCon website that Lorna hosts, and Garth handles VCon print publications and BCSFA notices; Barb Dryer would join the committee for e.g. flyer distribution, and Duncan nominated Kathleen Moore-Freeman to be another member.

Clint moved that we create the "Director of Communications" position to head up the committee named above. Garth seconded, and the motion was carried.

Clint moved that the "ground rules" for handling the V-Con Society membership list responsibly be:
firstly, that the members' contact information be held private, and access be limited to the Society executives, VCon's chair, and the convention's Membership/Registration head;
secondly, that the list never be given out to anyone beyond those persons previously listed;
thirdly, that registration information shall require the correct name and current address and (optionally) the email, phone number, age and gender.

Discussion followed regarding requiring that VCon membership information include the members' real name, legal address, phone number and/or email; Palle pointed out that such requirements are already made by B.C. laws, and Clint added that they are nevertheless ignored (as when members buy "Guest of ..." memberships for others). We also discussed including a gender and an age-range field in membership records.

Palle, Paul, Clint and Fran discussed the wording of the motion, and including the phrase "anyone given responsibility for handling the V-Con Society membership database should have this information (access restriction) explained to them."

The motion was carried.

PREPARATIONS FOR VCON 29

Meeting as a whole; Palle (WCSFA VP), Clint (WCSFA President)

Clint moved that WCSFA be empowered to arrange for a hotel ahead of time (i.e., more than a year before a desired VCon date), and also be empowered to invite Guests of Honour as far ahead of time. Chilam seconded.

Paul discussed the pros (i.e., the fact that he would like to respond to Robert Silverberg's and Esther Friesner's offer to attend as GoHs, not at the currently-planned, but at the following VCon). Palle discussed concerns (i.e., their usual desire to choose their own GoHs). Paul suggested adding the phrase "from time to time", i.e., WCSFA just prearranging matters for VCon 29 and 30. Clint withdrew the second part of his motion.

The redrafted motion was read: "Moved that WCSFA be empowered to arrange for a hotel ahead of time (i.e., more than a year before a desired VCon date) and (from time to time) to arrange for a GoH(s) ahead of time".

The motion, as reworded, was carried.

Clint moved that a VCON convention logo be chosen by the chair, in consultation with the Board of Directors. Duncan seconded.

The logo that Clint is negotiating for is the image of the "rocket ship" metal sculpture at the southern end of the Cambie Street bridge.

The motion was carried.

The WCSFA section of the meeting concluded at 2:50 p.m., and the VCON 28 section commenced.

REPORT ON VCON 28 - Paul Carpentier (VCON Chair)

We discussed the provisional VCon 28 flyer which Paul has produced. While it includes an email and URL, it could do with a phone number; after discussion, we concluded that Palle's home number is the best choice.

Duncan will write up a short biographical blurb on Jordin Kare. (What about Adrian Kleinbergen?)

Chilam reported that he has no information on the artshow prior to the last two years' attendees. He later added that it is IMPERATIVE that we repaint the artshow display boards. Discussion followed.

Gregg reported on entertainment sessions: There will be a dance.

Kathleen reported that there will be filking. She later added that a double room will generally be open for filking "and other strange things".

Marilyn will handle Membership/Registration, and will coordinate with Paul and Palle.

Palle is in charge of programming, gaming and the website. As far as programming and gaming overlap, any such programming awaits confirmation of gaming guests, and while none are yet confirmed, inquiries are coming in. Palle also discussed discounts to game publishers. As to the website, it is open to updates and new input.

Palle reported that the deposit has been given to the Days Hotel Surrey.

A general discussion followed, in this case revolving around choice of writer GoHs. The most generally-supported first choice appears to be

Robin Hobb/Megan Lindholm, second choice R.A. Salvatore, and, we generally desired, a Canadian guest, e.g. Sean Russell.

Fran reported that the writer's workshop will consist of two groups; six pro writers have confirmed their involvement so far; entry fee is \$11, as compared with \$10 last year. (The 4th floor conference room we met in will be used for the writers' workshop.)

Karen Moore will be head of the Dealers' Room. Palle is to meet Karen but it must be soon. Palle, Paul, and Gregg discussed whether a table fee should continue to include two memberships as usual, whether the Dealers' and Artists' areas should be open to the public.

The dealers' table fee will now include one membership, with a second one available at a discount.

Garth reported that he desperately needs all the blurbs he can get on every department for the progress report, which should come out, as he put it, "a week ago".

A question was raised by Barb Dryer about VCon's spelling. Our registered trade-mark (for the convention) is "VCON"; but in connection with the Society, it's "VCon". Another "general discussion" ensued, segueing vaguely from Registration's to-do list to publicity to The Moving Van to someone's out-of-context remark about late bus service.

Lorna is minding the Video Room.

"Chang" is in charge of Hospitality.

Chilam reported on a promotional item: the peripatetic wine-tasting will now be held July 29th, still at the winery in West Vancouver, on Marine Drive between 24th and 25th, still at \$25 a head, and now we can register by the 24th; this time, it was established that one can get there by the #250 or #253 (Horseshoe bay) West Van bus.

Promotion of VCon 28 is planned at AE (Anime Exposition), July 25-27; at Con-Version, August 15-17; at the H.P. Lovecraft Birthday Convention (August 15-16, a gaming con in Vancouver's Marpole area); at Worldcon in Toronto (VCon may have a table, as well as a delegation present); and at Foolscape.

The email list came up for discussion. A general suggestion was made to email to Paul, rather than to write to the VCon committee list.

It was moved to accept the VCon 28 report to WCSFA, seconded, and carried.

Clint resumed the Chair at this point. Clint said the Society hasn't had a Treasurer in some time. Kathleen Moore-Freeman has offered to serve. Clint moved that the WCSFA General Meeting appoint Kathleen Moore-

Freeman as WCSFA Treasurer. Graeme seconded the motion. The motion was carried.

The next general meeting is scheduled for September 14th, again at the Days Hotel Surrey. We also scheduled BCSFA meetings at Kathleen's for August 23rd and September 20th, also to be noted in the BCSFAzine calendar.

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August 2003

August 6 - *Freaky Friday* premieres in movie theatres

August 15 - *Freddy vs. Jason* and *The Medallion* premiere in movie theatres

Aug. 15-17: **Con-Version XX** at the Westin Hotel, Calgary, AB. A general SF convention. Guests: Terry Brooks, Esther Friesner, Charles deLint, Robert J. Sawyer. Memberships: TBA. For more information, see www.con-version.org.

Aug. 17: *Red Water* premieres on The Superstation.

Sunday, August 24th, 11 AM to 5 PM: **Comix & Stories** at Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street (Main & 15th Ave.), Vancouver, BC. A day of alternative & small press comics, zines, artwork & culture. Guests to include (as of 6/30/03): David Boswell (*Reid Fleming, World's Toughest Milkman, Heartbreak Comics*), Shannon Wheeler (*Too Much Coffee Man*), Ralph Alfonso (*Ralph*), Greg Stump (*Urban Hipster, Dwarf Attack*), David Lasky (*Urban Hipster, Boom Boom*). Smell of Steve, Inc. (*Smell of Steve*), Robin Bougie (*Cinema Sever, Deviant*), Damian Wilcox (*Dorkboy, Workin' Jones*), Gareth Gaudin (Magic Teeth Comix), Ira Hunter (*Champions of Hell, Hemp Island*), Robin Thompson (*Captain Spaceman, Knuckles Malone*), Owen Plummer (*Rubber Popsicle Factory*), James Lloyd (*Other Thing, Futurama*), Shawn Granton (*Ten Foot Rule, Modern Industry*), Andy Mori (*Floppnik*), BENT Comics, Barking Raven Press. Free Alternative Comics sampler to the first 200 attendees.

Admission: \$3 Please note that some of the material featured at this show may not be suitable for children. For more information about this show, please call 604-322-6412 or e-mail Leonard S Wong at ls Wong@uniserve.com. See also <http://mypages.uniserve.com/~ls Wong/Comicon.html>.

Aug. 27: **Academic Conference On Canadian SF&F**, Merril Collection of Science Fiction, Speculation and Fantasy, Toronto, ON. Academic SF conference. Admission: \$15. For more information, aweiss@yorku.ca.

Aug. 28 - Sept. 1 - **Torcon 3 / Worldcon 61 and CONVENTION 2003**. Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Royal York Hotel, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Renaissance Toronto Hotel at Skydome, Toronto, ON. World SF convention. Guests: George R.R. Martin, Frank Kelly Freas, Mike Glyer, Spider Robinson, Robert Bloch as GoHst of Honour. Memberships: see website for breakdown. For more information, www.torcon3.on.ca.

August 29 - *Jeepest Creepers 2* premieres in movie theatres

August 30 – Sept. 1: **H.P. Lovecraft's Birthday**, a gaming convention (moved from mid-August), at the Marpole Curling Club, 8730 Heather Street, Vancouver, BC. Membership: \$30.00. See www.vancouvergamingguild.com

September 2003

TBA: Fall 2003 - *Ella Enchanted* (YA fantasy) premieres in movie theatres

September 5 - *The Order* (suspense/horror) premieres in movie theatres

September 7 – **Vancouver Comiccon** at Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street (Main & 15th Ave.), Vancouver, BC. For more information about this show: please call 604-322-6412 or e-mail Leonard S Wong at ls Wong@uniserve.com. See also <http://mypages.uniserve.com/~ls Wong/Comiccon.html>.

Sept. 11-14: **Gatecon 2003**, Best Western Richmond Inn, Richmond, BC. Convention for Stargate SG-1. Guests and memberships: TBA. For more information, www.gatecon.com.

September 19, *The Cooler* (Limited), *Lost In Translation* (Limited), *The Perfect Score*, *Under The Tuscan Sun*, and *Underworld* premiere in movie theatres

Sept. 19-21: **Foolsap V** - Bellevue, Washington (General SF with an emphasis on written SF)

September 26, *The Big Bounce*, *The Human Stain*, *Secondhand Lions* (Limited), and *Welcome To The Jungle* premiere in movie theatres

October 2003

October 3 - *Bad Santa*, *Dickie Roberts: Former Child Star*, *Hidalgo*, *Mystic River*, *Out Of Time*, and *Scary Movie 3* premiere in movie theatres

Oct. 3 – 5: **Anglicon XVI** - SeaTac, Washington (Annual British Media Convention)

October 10 - *Intolerable Cruelty* and *Kill Bill* premiere in movie theatres

Oct. 10-12 - **VCon 28** at the Days Hotel Surrey, Vancouver, BC. General SF convention. Guests: Jordain Kare, Adrien Kleinbergen. Write to VCon 28, c/o 2116 Macdonald, Main floor, Vancouver, BC V6K 3Y5 or vcon@shaw.ca or see News section this issue.

Oct. 10-12: **Ditto 16** at the Valley River Inn in Eugene, OR. GoH: Stu Shiffman, famous fanartist, prominent steampunk, Wodehouse, Holmes fan and Hugo winner. Memberships: US\$45 / C\$70 including Sunday banquet. Make checks to Janice Murray, P.O. Box 75684, Seattle, WA 98125, U.S.A. See also the Ditto 16 website, <http://home.att.net/~ditto16/>

October 17 - *Eulogy* (Limited) - *The Runaway Jury* - *Veronica Guerin* - *The Whole Ten Yards*

Oct. 17 – 19: **Incon 2003** - Spokane, Washington (General SF)
(*Northwest SF Resources*, © *Jack Bestanwitch*, Apr. 03 download)

NEWS

VCON 28

Minutes after Vancouver was named the host of the 2010 Olympic Games, VCON 28, the region's annual science fiction and fantasy convention, announced the Days Hotel - Surrey Vancouver as the location secured for the upcoming VCON, 10-12 October 2003.

VCon 28's Science GoH will be Jordain Kare, and the Artist Guest of Honour will be Adrian Kleinbergen, the professional artist first known for his illos in *Neology* and other Alberta fanzines. His URL: <http://smallmountain.homestead.com/kleinbergenexhibit.html> (uses JavaScript)

Contact The Days Hotel - Vancouver Surrey at 9850 King George Highway Surrey, British Columbia, Canada, V3T 4Y3, by telephone: Reservations: 604.588.9511 or 1.800.663.0660, Fax: 604.588.7949) or email: info@dayshotel.ca. (<http://www.dayshotel.ca/>)

(from Paul M Carpentier, July 2, 2003 and Garth Spencer)

NEO-OPSIS SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE: A BRAND NEW PRINT AND ONLINE MAGAZINE

"A brand new magazine is starting up. We need new magazines, especially in the SF/Fantasy/Horror field. We are looking for Stories, Fact, Opinion, and Artwork.

"*NEO-OPSIS Science Fiction Magazine* will entertain and inform. Published on the west coast of Canada. It will be a fresh look at science fiction from a new direction.

"The name *Neo-opsis* reflects this fresh look with its meaning, 'new-view' and 'new-opinion'.

"This is a local (for us BCers) magazine. Support! Support! it is only \$24.00 for 4 issues and you get a nifty free CD of amazingly neat stuff with your subscription. We need more paying markets in Canada. NOTE the word 'paying,'

"*NEO-OPSIS Science Fiction Magazine* will be printed quarterly. The size of the magazine will be approximately 8" by 5 1/2", and around 80 to 96 pages per issue. Each issue will have a full color cover, black & white interior illustrations, and some ad space. We are interested mostly in science fiction short stories, but we will accept fantasy stories, factual articles and opinion articles such as reviews. Since this is our first issue we are interesting in almost everything!) Later, when we can't read, because of eyestrain, our acceptance rules will get more detailed and refined. :) For now if it is interesting we are interested.

"... The site, <http://members.shaw.ca/neoopsis/>, is only a temporary site until we sign with a host. It will become a side site in about a month when we will start using the formal site at www.neo-opsis.ca. We have registered the magazine's domain name, Neo-opsis.ca, so it won't be long before the guidelines will be at the Neo-opsis.ca address. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to drop us an email ..."

NEO-OPSIS Science Fiction Magazine, 4129 Carey Road, Victoria, BC, Canada V8Z 4G5

Email addresses: neoopsis@shaw.ca or mhz400@shaw.ca

Current website: <http://members.shaw.ca/neoopsis/>

Future website: www.neo-opsis.ca

Business Phone: (250) 881-8893

NEW ROYAL SWISS NAVY MEMBERS

FRED-goers and BCSEFAZine subscribers who correctly identified last issue's cover illustration include Julian Castle, Ray Seredin, Joe Devoy, Purple Crow, and Michael Morse. These people win free memberships in the ROYAL SWISS NAVY, the only voluntary organization in the world that proposes to fight terror with humour.

The Royal Swiss Navy still needs more co-educational members.

HARRY WARNER'S LEGENDARY FANZINE COLLECTION "is in limbo, Rich Lynch reports. Although Harry wanted the fanzines and \$10,000 for packing/shipping costs to go to the University of California-Riverside, he never put this into the will which left his estate to the local Lutheran church. Despite an earlier church statement that Harry's plans for the collection would be carried out, the church and the lawyer representing the estate have been seduced by the heady smell of money. Bizarrely, they 'have gotten the idea that the monetary worth of the Warner collection is upwards of \$750,000. This was based on erroneous information that the Pelz collection was worth that much when it was acquired by UC-R. Because of this, they want to see how much they can get for it on the open market, regardless of Harry's stated wishes.' All the lawyer would say was: 'the collection will be sold.'"

Ansible 192, July 2003

GOTH HOUSE NEWSLETTER

27 June 2003, Vol. 2 Issue 12: This fortnight's feature: Picnic - <http://www.gothhouse.org/>

It's a July Fourth Spectacular! Who! Red, white, and blue! Which, incidentally, are the colors one would wear to celebrate Bastille Day (14 July), which you could think of as the French Independence Day. ...

In addition, in case I forgot to mention this before, the third collection is back in print! http://www.gothhouse.org/gb_stuff/ghouse.html

(Julie McGalliard)

Vol. 2 Issue 11: This fortnight's feature: Ophelia's nightmare

<http://www.gothhouse.org/>

Most of the elements are from real dreams, although I didn't have them all at the same time. They are all work-related nightmares, except for the bit about the curfew. That is a Bush-related nightmare, it just happened to be set at my workplace. Seems I just keep having these dreams about waking up in a police state...

Julie McGalliard, 13 June 2003

LOVECRAFT'S WEIRD MYSTERIES—*Pentagram Publications*, PMB 270, 11410 NE 24th St., Kirkland WA 98034-2168. Editor: John Navroth. Published 3 times/year. *Lovecraft's Weird Mysteries (LWM)* is a 5½ x 8½ print magazine dedicated to the tradition of classic horror inspired by the weird fiction pulps of yesteryear."

Stories: "LWM is a market for traditional and classic horror, ghost, and supernatural tales from the era of Lovecraft and the 'weird' pulps. LWM is not a market for science fiction, mainstream or high fantasy, contemporary 'dark fantasy,' sword and sorcery, psychological or surreal horror, erotica, vampire or werewolf stories, and stories with derogatory language or excessive violence. ...

"Include a cover letter stating your published work, including a short bio with at least your first submission. These biographical references may sometimes be used to introduce your work if it is published in the pages of LWM. Manuscripts can either be accompanied by SASE for reply, or you can save paper and state that an E-mail reply is acceptable (be sure to include your E-mail address in these cases!)."

Pays **\$10 + one contributor's copy** (fiction); **2 contributor's copies** (poetry and artwork), upon publication, for FNASR "unless other arrangements are made between the author/artist and publisher. Although rights are reserved for each publication's design and compilation, the author retains subsequent rights to his/her work, and it is recommended you register your own work for additional protection against infringement other than for which your work was intended. LWM reserves the right to cancel and return any accepted work at any time with a zero kill fee."

No E-mail, multiple, or simultaneous subs. "If your work is selected, the preferred method of final submission is to send, whenever possible, either an E-mail or an IBM-formatted 3½" disk, with your work saved as a Word for Windows DOC file or as a TXT file. This method, as mentioned, is preferred as it reduces greatly the amount of production time." [E-mail: lotus@oz.net; www.oz.net/~lotus] . RT—3-8 weeks.

Gila Queen's Guide to Markets #121, June 26, 2002

"H.P.LOVECRAFT is in the news again, with the first (Spring 2004) issue of *H.P. Lovecraft's Magazine of Horror* now scheduled for October 2003 publication by Wildside Press. See also www.cthugle.com ..."

Ansible 192, July 2003

RUE MORGUE: HORROR IN CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT—*Marrs Media*, Inc., 700 Queen St. E., Toronto, Ontario Canada M4M 1G9. Editor: Rod Gudino; Associate Editor: Mary-Beth Hollyer. Contact Rod Gudino. Bimonthly. "A knowledge of horror entertainment (films, books, games, toys, etc.)."

Nonfiction: "Essays, exposé, historical/nostalgic, interview/profile, new product, travel. No fiction. Reviews done by staff writers." 500-2000 words; pays **\$50-200**, on publication for all rights.

Columns/Departments: "Classic Cut (historical essays on classic horror films, books, games, comic books, music)." 500-700 words; pays **\$60**, on publication for all rights.

Editorial Calendar: E-mail them for the calendar.

Tips: "The editor is most responsive to special interest articles or analytical essays on historical topics; published examples: Leon Theremin, Soren Kierkegaard, horror subgenres."

"Query with published clips or send complete ms." Send seasonal stuff 4 months ahead. E-mail queries ok. [E-mail: info@rue-morgue.com ; www.rue-morgue.com] . RT—6 weeks on queries, 2 months on mss.

Gila Queen's Guide to Markets #121, June 26, 2002

AN E-BOOK REVIEW

By Garth Spencer

The Sidhe Rose, by H. Ragueneau. Creative Guy Publishing, Canada: 2003. ISBN 1-894953-002.

This e-book contains a map and glossary as well as a story, and an essay by the author on "The Guilty Pleasure of Reading (and Writing) Smut". By which he means merely writing sword-and-sorcery fantasy, instead of Literature. (Pity.)

The Sidhe Rose is basically written around a quest, simply for a love token, set in a standard fantasy land. To some extent the unfolding story

of the various semihuman races, and how the land got the way it is, plays a role in the story of the major characters.

Some of the references and place names in *The Sidhe Rose* are at least as jarring as in Clive Barker, e.g. “Nelfheim”, “mitre”, “java”, “Camelotte” and the name of the fantasy world, “Selestya”. There is food for thought here, about why some stories need glossaries and how we may interpret them.

Sooner or later I have got to recover the name and email address of the publisher who sent this ebook for review!

Film Review

The Matrix: Reloaded



(reviewed by Ryan Hawe)

“This is a war, and we are soldiers. What if tomorrow the war could be over? Isn’t that worth fighting for? Isn’t that worth dying for?”

—Morpheus (Laurence Fishburne)

If the release of *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* marked a “When It Changed” point for science fiction fandom (and film-making) in the last quarter of the 20th century, then the turn-of-the-millennium had its own turning point with the release of *The Matrix*. Part action-movie-for-intellectuals, part Christic allegory, part philosophy text in comic-book format, *The Matrix* took the concept of Plato’s Cave (which, in a nutshell, asks, “Can we really know if reality is real?”), turned it into a conspiracy theory, and wrapped it all up in some nice Gibson-cyberpunk-at-a-Gothic-Fetish-Night packaging. When you consider that the other big science fiction film of 1999 was the decidedly lacklustre *Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace*, the runaway success of *The Matrix* demonstrated that the torch had been passed.

The first movie had something for everyone. Film-effects buffs added “bullet-time” to the toolbox, while Carrie-Anne Moss’ crane kicking received hommages (or was ripped off) in numerous other films and genres.

Comic-book fans saw hope for improved adaptations of their favourite works (“Now, we have the technology...”), while conspiratologists found endless analogues in a rainbow-coalition Resistance fighting seersucker-suited, body-

swapping, thin-lipped machine-men. (Indeed, noted British conspiracy-compiler David Icke took the metaphor and ran with it, naming his following title “Children of the Matrix.”) And the French were pleased as punch that Beaudelaire (who postulated that the “real” has already been replaced by the “hyperreal”) was getting the “easy-to-view” treatment. There were even the odd American pundits trying to make links between the lobby shoot-out sequence and the events at Columbine that same year.

It was, perhaps, inevitable that the Wachowski brothers would be asked to come up with a sequel. The way they did it, however, was decidedly not “just more of the same old.”

2003 will definitely be the Year of the Wachowskis Cashing In, yet this is hardly cause for bitterness. With two sequels (*Reloaded* and *Revolutions*) released six months apart, a computer game (*Enter the Matrix*) which contains footage and information not in the theatrical films, and a compilation of animated shorts exploring the world the characters inhabit, the call for more story was answered, and served up with loads of extra trimmings and side plates, a veritable feast for fannish appetites.

Because so many of these projects are interconnected, it’s hard (though not impossible) to review “*Reloaded*” on its own. Events early in the film refer to sequences from the game or animated shorts (particularly *Final Flight of the Osiris*), while the full ramifications of later events will probably not be understood until “*Revolutions*” hits the screens in November. And, of course, reviewing any film of this nature is fraught with concerns of giving away the whole (or half, in this case) story...

All that said, here’s my take on “*Reloaded*” as it stands alone.

Hot **damn**, what a picture.

In an age of sci-fi/pop-cultural ennui, this film is the bracing tonic. Yes, there’s all the requirements for a summer popcorn action feature— and so very much more. They start things off with a suite of their classic tricks (done as cinematographic art), then layer on more. More twists, more turns, more action, more philosophy, more layers of control within (and without?) the Matrix – and of course, a challenge to everyone who cribbed “Bullet time” for their own films in the form of a fight between Neo and over a hundred Smiths that becomes the first VR filmmaking experience. “Okay, master this.”

The film’s plot begins simply enough: The machines that control the Matrix have finally learned the location of Zion (the underground city that serves as the last bastion of human resistance), and have sent an army to destroy it. Morpheus, still captain of the *Nebuchadnezzar*, firmly believes that Neo (“brilliantly non-acted”, as Garth would say, by Keanu Reeves) will fulfill prophecy – but to do that, he requires guidance from the Oracle (Gloria Foster, who sadly passed away during filming of the two sequels). The Oracle finally shows up to tell Neo that he must seek a captive program called the Keymaker, whose function is to lead the One to the truth about the Matrix and his own destiny. Of course, with rogue programs, Agents, and a newly independent and empowered Smith (Hugo Weaving) who is now able to replicate himself, even the first step won’t be easy...

In the end, one is left with more questions than answers, as *Reloaded* ends on a cliffhanger – but they are questions of the sort that give fen endless hours of pleasure. (Myself, I’m wondering to what extent the character called “The Merovingian” signifies any sort of link to the Christic elements in Neo’s story path, or a nod to Icke who has borrowed from theories about this obscure Frankish dynasty as well as cribbing the Matrix as a metaphor.) Is Neo the Messiah, or does he simply have the Messiah program installed? If so, to whose benefit? Could he pass this program to others? Has he unwittingly done so (partially) to the viral Smith program? Will Trinity become Mother to the Future? Is the love between Trinity and Neo “part of the pattern” or the means by which the cycle will be broken? And dude, why am I here?

So there you have it. This film is a must-see. Especially if you want to make any sense out of "Revolutions" when it comes out.

MEDIA NEWS

DR WHO

"The BBC has announced that 38 year old actor Richard E. Grant will play "The 9th Doctor" in the fully animated segment of the "Dr. Who" 40th anniversary special to air on November 23rd. 2003 on BBC1.

"He will also be the role if the meeting between the American "Sci-Fi Channel" and the BBC plan for the 14th and 15th of July does produces a new live action series for airing in early 2005.

"That's all for now, I wish you the very, very best and I'll be seeing you."

Ray "Dr. Media" Serredin, July 9, 2003

MORE DR. WHO

"British newspaper *The Sunday Express* reported that Shane Richie (actor, presenter, comedian, Cockney) is in talks with the BBC to play Dr. Who! Shane has been a TV presenter for years—think *Wheel of Fortune*, *The Price Is Right*, etc.—and not particularly highly thought of. However, in the last few months, he has joined the cast of our most popular soap *Eastenders*, and showed personality and actual acting ability. He is fast becoming a national institution over here, you can't help but love his funny & charming character Alfie. I had heard a while ago that he was throwing his hat into the ring for *Dr. Who*, and his new found celebrity maybe just the thing to resurrect the series."

<http://www.aintitcoolnews.com/display.cgi?id=15570>

(from Ain't It Cool News, June 30, 2003, via Michael Morse)

STAN LEE'S POW! SIGNS DEAL WITH DIC (July 10, 2003)

POW! Entertainment and DIC Entertainment have signed a joint venture development deal for a slate of original properties aimed at the kid's TV market. DIC will work directly with Stan Lee and POW! to develop and produce the new animated television series. DIC will retain the rights to distribute the programs globally. First in line will be *Stan Lee's The Secret Of The Super Six* – a superhero-based animated series with a humanitarian spin that will feature Lee as a main character.

"Stan Lee dominates the superhero industry," comments Andy Heyward, CEO and chairman, DIC Entertainment. "A true artist, Stan pioneered and defined the world of comics and is as important and recognized in this genre as Walt Disney is in family entertainment. There's a lot of equity in his name; he's more than a creator – Stan Lee is a brand. Working with him to create fresh and stimulating children's content is a dream come true and a dynamic marriage for POW! and DIC. I'm excited to have the opportunity to develop a line of products that creates a universe – the Stan Lee Universe."

Gill Hampton, coo, POW! Entertainment, added, "Stan Lee is truly a global icon. His body of work is enjoyed by every generation on every continent. Stan's visions are forward thinking: exploring diverse revenue streams by way of films, television, both animated and live-action, video games, publishing, licensing and merchandising. All of these ancillary markets are vertically integrated during the development process to further ensure the success of his franchises. DIC is the perfect partner to continue on this successful journey."

The Secret Of The Super Six will follow a team of genetically engineered, super-powered alien teens who are chased to Earth where they meet a reclusive

cartoonist. Stan Lee becomes a member of this band of heroes to help teach them what it means to be human.

Both companies have entered into a large scale branding campaign for their programs. Currently, DIC is seeking licensing partners. Nancy Bassett, DIC's SVP of worldwide consumer products said, "We see no stronger avenue to enter the boy's superhero industry than under the banner of Stan Lee. With Stan's reputation and global success, we anticipate a groundswell of interest from potential partners and are excited to be a part of this new arena."

DIC Entertainment is a leading children's entertainment company with more than 3,000 half-hours of programming in its library. DIC programming is aired in Europe, Asia, Latin America, Africa and Australia as well as the U.S. DIC's properties include *Sailor Moon*, *Strauberry Shortcake*, *Super Duper Stamos*, *Madeline*, *Liberty's Kids* and *Sabrina's Secret Life*.

POW! Entertainment is represented by Endeavor and is a partnership between Lee, his producing partner Champion and Arthur Lieberman, the company's business strategist. Within a year and half POW! has made more than a dozen development deals for feature films and television series.

http://news.awn.com/index.php3?type=top&newsitem_no=8784

(played by Michael Morse, July 11, 2003)

TRON COMIC TO HIT SHELVES (July 10, 2003)

Quebec City, Canada-based 88 MPH Studios, Inc. and Disney Publishing Worldwide have announced the introduction of a new monthly *Tron* comic book series based on the groundbreaking 1982 movie. The first four-part mini-series will hit comic book stores in the U.S. and Canada this winter. 88 MPH Studios will develop comic books based on both the original movie and the new game *Tron 2.0*, which will be released this August through Buena Vista Games.

The first comic book, based on the game, will follow the adventures of Jet Bradley, son of the movie's Alan Bradley, as he explores the Tron universe and comes to terms with living a dual life – one as a normal 20-year-old and one as a hero. The second series, scheduled for spring 2004, will take place in the original Tron universe. Andrew Dabb (*Ghostbusters*, *Happydale*, *Slices*) will serve as writer on the series. Artist Gabe Bridwell, who has done work for Image comics and *Heavy Metal* magazine, will pencil. Inker Serge LaPointe (*Double Take*, *JLA/JSA Secret Files*) and colorist Blond (*Masters Of The Universe*) round out the creative team. 88MPH publisher Sebastien Clavet will edit.

The *Tron* feature chronicled the adventures of Kevin Flynn (Jeff Bridges), a computer genius who gets transported into the electronic world of a super-computer to battle the evil dictator, Master Control. The film also starred Bruce Boxleitner, Cindy Morgan and David Warner. The pioneering computer-generated graphics were done by effects legend Douglas Trumbull.

88 MPH Studios was founded in 2001 to produce the first *Transformers* art book entitled *Genesis*, and has become a producer of high-quality comic books. For more information visit www.88mphstudios.com.

(played by Michael Morse, July 11, 2003)

IN THE WORKS

Mira Sorvino will play the female lead, opposite Robin Williams and Jim Caviezel in the sci-fi thriller *Final Cut* for Lions Gate, Industry Entertainment and writer/director Omar Naim. Production begins later this month. Sorvino plays the girlfriend of a man who edits footage recorded in microchips implanted in people, removing the violence and bad moments. When he must edit the life of the technology's creator, he becomes targeted by radicals.

David Guion and Michael Handelman will rewrite the DreamWorks pic *Used Guys* for Jay Roach to direct, with Ben Stiller and Vince Vaughn starring. Set in a world where women run the Earth, the story centers on two guys who are rendered obsolete by a new clone and go on the run hoping to regain manhood by reaching a guy heaven known as "Mantopia."

Warner Bros. Pictures is developing *The Fall Guy*, based on the 1980s action/adventure series, which Management 360 will produce. Tristan Patterson is attached to write the script. Series creator Glen Larson will exec produce.

Merriwether Williams ("SpongeBob SquarePants") is writing *Wonder Twins*, a live-action film version of the series for Warner Bros. Pictures, to be directed by Shawn Levy.

Rob Minkoff's Sprocketdyne Entertainment is teaming with Bullwinkle Studios to develop and produce the live-action/CGI-animated feature *Mr. Peabody and Sherman*. The story of a brilliant dog and his pet boy who time travel via their "wayback machine," debuted in 1959 as part of Jay Ward's beloved animated series *Rocky and His Friends*.

Via "Michael Morbius" morbius@vcn.bc.ca, June 18, 2003
From SCIFWIRED,

DRINK UP! THE WORLD'S ABOUT TO END

Chicken Run writer Karey Kirkpatrick was being let loose on the big screen version of *A Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy*. Well months later, we finally hear that the project has attracted a director to take steps to bring Douglas Adams' vision into reality. Variety reports this morning that British directing/producing team Garth Jennings and Nick Goldsmith will be let loose on the film as their feature debut.

Now if those names mean nothing to you, that's because this will be the team's feature film debut. What you may remember the duo better for is their work on music videos; this was the team behind the award-winning milk carton video for Blur's *Coffee and TV*.

Seems the delay was due to problems with getting the script into better shape, according to Spyglass Films partner Roger Birnbaum who first bought the book's film rights. 'We finally cracked the story,' he explains, 'and hired these clever English fellows to make sure that the picture is visually inventive and funny and accessible to contemporary audiences while still connected to the book Douglas wrote almost 25 years ago.'

The whole Hitchhiker project has been in limbo since writer Adams died whilst in California doing initial script revisions. It's also done the rounds in Hollywood, being turned down by Spike Jonze who apparently directed Birnbaum to the doors of Jennings and Goldsmith. But better late than never; the late Adams will have an exec-producer credit when the film finally comes out.

From SCIFWIRED, via Michael Morbius, June 18, 2003

FANZINES

by Ted White

Fanzines are a basic part of science fiction fandom, having been in existence as long as fandom itself – the past 70 years. Fanzines are a reflection of many fans' interest in the printed word and amateur publishing. The publication you are reading this in is a fanzine, but a specialized one. A variety of other fanzines are also available – many of them by request – and this column will cover some of them each issue.

All fanzines are published as a hobby and lose money. Their editors appreciate money to defray their expenses and sometimes list single-copy or

subscription prices, but they appreciate even more your written response – a Letter of Comment, or LoC. Feedback – better known in fandom as "egoboo" – is what fanzine publishing is all about.

Check out the fanzine below and broaden your participation in fandom.

ZOO NATION #3 (Pete Young, editor & publisher, 62 Walmer Road, Woodley, Berkshire, RG5 4PN, England; email to zoo-nation@macunlimited.net; probably available for The Usual – letters, contributions both written and artistic, and trades – no mention of price)

Zoo Nation is one of the best of a new breed in fanzines. By its third issue it has achieved a weight and solidity of content which works well with its presentation. Physically, the fanzine is half-A4-sized (A4 being the British paper size which most closely approximates the American "lettersize" sheet, measuring approximately 8.25 x 11.75 inches), being folded and saddle-stapled, and has, including covers, 28 pages. The cover is color printed; the interior is black & white. Most of the pages are double-columned with computer-set type (as is the standard for fanzines these days). Young is a former commercial artist and the design and layout of *Zoo Nation* profits from his experience.

Fanzines have been evolving over the past decade as personal computers have become ubiquitous. At first the computer-generated fanzines aped older models – those fanzines which had been produced on mimeographs from typewriter-typed stencils. And the older model of fanzine had itself evolved over the previous 60 years. With rare exceptions, few fanzines ever looked like professional magazines, and in time this became one of their virtues: they did not attempt to poorly copy professional publications but established their own traditions and standards.

This made sense in an era when professional publishing required machines and technology which was largely beyond the (financial) capabilities of an ordinary person, and amateur publishers (most of whom were students with little money to spare) had to rely on the means available to them.

When computers allowed fans to virtually typeset their fanzines, at first faneditors simply substituted columns of typesetting in layouts originally designed for typewriter type. Many still do, either because they prefer that approach or because they lack the sophistication to do more.

Pete Young is not inhibited either by outmoded traditions or from lack of experience and consequently his fanzine *looks* like a modern magazine. Indeed, he riffs on this appearance, mocking professional magazines with a page or two of what he calls "ClipArt," in which ads and magazine features are spoofed.

Zoo Nation #3 lacks the themes of the first two issues, and is identified as a "Jam – a loosely associated collection of all things fannish & jammish." The issue opens with a brief introductory editorial and then offers over 4 pages of letters. These are followed by Pete's article on Yahoo! Groups' SF and fan-oriented lists (he describes 12); "Online Fandom: Why the Iraq crisis is on-topic for SF lists" by Farah Mendelsohn; "The Ups & Downs of Being Sci-Fi & Fantasy Nut's Mum" by Jan Trotter; two pages of that rarity, *fannish* poetry; two pieces under the heading of "Habitable Zone." "Fandom Roots" by Gareth Jelley and "SF, Me and Fandom" by Nick Honeywell; four pages of intelligent book reviews by Young; a page devoted to a "Table of Condiments That Periodically Go Bad," which is a clever take on the Periodic Table of Elements; a closing editorial; and a page of credits, including the typefaces used.

There's quite a lot in this issue, despite its small size. Pete's produced three regular issues and two single-sheet fractional issues in the course of one year, which bodes well for his future schedule. This is a fanzine I want to see more issues of.

BOOKS

by Donna McMahon

LION'S BLOOD, Steven Barnes (Warner Feb/03)

EXTREMES, Kristine Kathryn Rusch (Roc July/03)

CONTACT IMMINENT, Kristine Smith (upcoming: Eos Nov/03)

LION'S BLOOD, Steven Barnes (Warner Feb/03)

Turnabout social satires have long been popular in SF and Alternate History. American writers, particularly, love to speculate on the South winning the Civil War or the Native Indians defeating American expansionism. But *LION'S BLOOD* is the first novel I've read in which North America was settled by Muslim Africans who imported Northern Europeans as slaves. (Think *Gone With the Wind* with a regal black Rhett Butler and a cast of kowtowing Irish.)

A lot of reverse-role stories founder because they are strictly satiric and the societies depicted make no sense (Catherine Asaro's "The Last Hawk" springs to mind, or that dreadful ST Next Gen episode with the macho women keeping harems of perfumed girly men). But there is nothing simplistic about Stephen Barnes' depiction of bondage and freedom in African North America. Starting with the defeat of Rome by Carthage, Barnes builds a credible world history and a complex political and religious background for "Bilalistan" of 1861, and then he populates it with vivid characters. Kidnapped as a terrified child from his Irish fishing village, Aiden O'Dare is transported in filthy, stinking cargo holds across a world bigger than he'd ever imagined, and then sold as a slave to work on a plantation for dark-skinned foreigners whose language and culture are utterly alien to him. Angry and embittered, Aiden longs to escape, but it seems that for whites, the only escape from Dar Kush is death.

Exactly his age but on the opposite end of Dar Kush's social scale is Kai, second son of the Wakil Abu Ali. Although Kai lives amid lavish luxury, he feels imprisoned by chains of social and familial obligation. Constantly studying with his tutor or drilling in combat with his uncle, the lonely boy envies the apparently carefree life of the estate's slaves who do not have to face enormous and frightening responsibilities.

When Kai takes Aiden as his footboy, the two strike up a friendship that almost transcends their differences. But as adults these two good men are thrown into brutal conflict in a world that will not allow them to be equal.

There is a lot of strong writing in *LION'S BLOOD*. In particular, Barnes excels at creating complex, conflicted characters, and his depiction of cultures and religions is detailed and thoughtful. Even the inevitable digs about racial superiority are cleverly done. And there is also plenty of action to move the story along.

All that said, I found *LION'S BLOOD* hard slogging. This is overwhelmingly a Guy Book, loaded with testosterone and carnage. The men spend page after page fighting or pondering war, honour and courage, and the women (at least all the women who count) are gorgeous and happy to have babies. Female readers are liable to find this focus less than compelling, and while Barnes writes several credible women characters, their debasement and lack of choice in this society is even more profound than the men's.

Barnes doesn't go overboard in his turnabout treatment of the whites—in fact, he could have made his story considerably grimmer—but there's a lot of gruesome cruelty in this novel even before the bloody war with the Aztecs gets underway. More seriously, at several points I found myself jerked out of the story by events which seemed excessively implausible, or annoyingly stupid. (Would you try to kill

a renowned swordsman with a sword if you had poison and guns available?) Barnes skates over several shaky plot points in his drive to take *LION'S BLOOD* to a particular outcome.

Fortunately, after five hundred pages of torment and bloodshed, Barnes wraps up with a satisfying conclusion.

There's a lot of intellectual meat in *LION'S BLOOD* and many readers, especially Americans, will enjoy this challenging novel very much. Readers with a low tolerance for macho heroics will not fare so well.

EXTREMES, Kristine Kathryn Rusch (Roc July/03)

In this sequel to *THE DISAPPEARED*, Kristine Kathryn Rusch's moon-based detectives are back. Prickly, bull-headed detective Noelle DeRicci is in the doghouse with her police superiors again, so she gets the latest assignment that nobody wants—a fatal accident at the moon marathon.

Although most Armstrong dome residents think that only crazies would want to run twenty-six miles across the treacherous lunar landscape in an environment to suit, the annual marathon represents a tourist bonanza for the lunar colony. So when DeRicci is sent to investigate, she is supposed to clear up the accident as quickly and quietly as possible. Instead, she discovers a murder that must have been committed by a marathon organizer, and can only be properly investigated if she holds everyone associated with the marathon for questioning.

Meanwhile, DeRicci's former partner, Miles Flint, meets the first client for his new business as a Retrieval Artist (a specialized private detective). The client wants to track down Frieda Tey, a renegade scientist who disappeared ten years ago after releasing a deadly virus which killed hundreds of people. Flint doesn't know whether Tey was a remorseless murderer or a victim of circumstance, and he doesn't trust the client who wants to locate her, so he's got a very bad feeling about taking the case. But he may have no choice. If the Tey Virus is released in Armstrong dome, millions could die.

This is a brief outline of a very tightly plotted, suspenseful novel that kept me eagerly turning pages right to the end. Rusch's previous DeRicci book, *THE DISAPPEARED*, was competent, and this sequel is even better. Rusch's cast is all good, with a stand-out villain—think of an intelligent and chillingly persuasive cross between a mad scientist and Ayn Rand. It's a particularly impressive portrayal, given that the villain doesn't step on stage until almost the last chapter, so her portrait is entirely drawn second hand through other characters.

Rusch also clearly knows a lot about the marathon subculture and the psychology of extreme runners. That, plus just the right amount of technical and forensic detail give her moon setting an air of sweaty verisimilitude.

I'd recommend this book to just about anybody. *EXTREMES* is an entertaining read, with a thought-provoking undercurrent about the perils of social Darwinism.

CONTACT IMMINENT, Kristine Smith (upcoming in Nov/03 from Eos)

If I hadn't previously read *RULES OF CONFLICT*, the second book in Kristine Smith's series, I likely wouldn't have made it through the first chapters of *CONTACT IMMINENT*, her fourth installment. Although there's a great deal to like about Smith's writing, this novel opens poorly, with a large cast of unintroduced characters and few hints to identify their roles or tell one apart from another. It felt like an unbroken continuation of another book, and it took me at least five chapters before I began sorting out who was who and what they were supposed to be doing.

Fortunately, I persevered, driven by my fascination with Smith's protagonist, Jani Kilian, a human woman who has unwillingly been infected with genetic material from an alien species. Jani is slowly metamorphosing into a hybrid creature, neither human nor idomeni. Some view her as a bridge between the two

cultures and races—an ambassador who can pave the way to increased understanding and contact—while others see her as an abomination. *CONTACT IMMINENT* opens in an idomeni consulate in Chicago, where the visionary priest, ni Tschecha Egri is working toward cultural and economic integration of the two space-faring races. But Tschecha's progress is faltering in the face of increasingly vicious terrorist assaults by xenophobic humans, and eroding support from the conservative idomeni leadership at home.

When Tschecha asks Jani to travel to the idomeni colony on Elyas and assist his ally, ni Feyo, she doesn't want to leave this tense situation. But her priorities change drastically when she receives a secret message hinting that she is not unique. There may be other human/idomeni hybrids on Elyas—news that could trigger an explosive reaction from ultraconservatives of both species.

In *CONTACT IMMINENT* Kristine Smith has once again crafted an intricate plot, rife with political, military and religious intrigue, and enriched by a complex alien priest/warrior culture. The angry, emotionally-defended Jani continues to make a compelling protagonist, backed up by a strong cast of human and idomeni characters. Smith does a particularly nice job with the three men in Jani's life—rivals and reluctant allies who circle each other like a bunch of bristling tomcats.

Although this novel is primarily plot-driven, much of the action surrounds a trio of dangerous, yet oddly compelling zealots: Micah Faber, junior member of a conspiracy of military extremists planning an illegal attack on the idomeni compound; Elon, an ultraconservative member of the consulate who is also plotting the consulate's downfall; and Gisa, would-be messiah of a new race of hybrids. As in the previous books, every faction has plans for Jani, but Jani is tired of being run by other people's agendas, and she's ready to make her own future this time—taking the galaxy with her, if necessary.

The final chapters of *CONTACT IMMINENT* wrap up all the major threads of Smith's story arc while, unsurprisingly, leaving possibilities open for future sequels. It's a satisfying finish, but the book itself is far from a stand-alone novel. With so many strengths to Smith's universe and characters, it's a shame that this novel is unlikely to attract many readers who did not read the prequels.

Comments? Questions? Rebuttals? donna_mcmahon@sunshine.net

Colophon

BCSFAzine – *Something to ~~afflict~~ interest everyone!*

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Creative Sociology

by Garth Spencer

(part 4)

I asked a simplistic question at the end of the last instalment: why doesn't sociology work like engineering?

The Squares of the City (John Brunner)

In *The Squares of the City* Boyd Hakluyt, a fictitious traffic analyst, visits a fictitious South American planned city (Ciudad de Vados), obviously modelled on Brasilia. Gradually it dawns upon Hakluyt that the country, and especially the citizens of Vados, are not only chess-mad; they appear to be pawns in a game played by the President and his leading opponent, with living human beings, both affluent urbanites and the rural poor, on a board comprised of the city; and the stakes are nothing less than the country.

But when pawns are taken in this game, people die.

Many of you already know the conflicts in Latin America between rural, traditional culture and modernism, between general poverty and the affluent few, and these are part of the conflicts played out in *The Squares of the City*. But other factors come into play. One factor is the subtle way that traffic flow patterns constrain our movements, and potential conflicts. (One of Hakluyt's problems is that the lower-class citizens in Vados have formed a ragged folk bazaar where the elite don't want it to exist.) Another factor is that the conservative and the popular parties are *both* using TV broadcasting laced with subliminal advertising to sway the Vadeanos.

As Edward Lasker's introduction and the author's note point out, the events in the novel parallel a real chess game, Steinitz-Tchigorin (Havana) 1892. But the story ends three moves short of the game, as two characters decline to play out their roles to the death.

Vados, the longtime chief executive of his fictitious Latin American country, tried to put a 21st-century city in what is frankly a 19th-century South American client state, and did so by diverting water resources that back-country peasants depended on. Rather than open up more attractive places for the peasants to go, or increasing water resources, the Vadeano TV station and paper foster a virulent class and race hatred against the peasants, not least by subliminal suggestion.

It is ironic that Boyd Hakluyt was inspired to his career by the same man, Alejandro Mayor, who is now the Minister of Communications. Boyd Hakluyt explains at one point some of the basis of his profession. He studies people's use of space and the flow of traffic, using equations adapted from hydrodynamics and fluid mechanics. Viewed in that way, people are not individuals but particles in a stream.

"... I think I do understand, pretty well, what forces are at work. But I haven't had time to explore them, trace them to their source. I've just seen them impersonally affecting the lives of people I know ... A few moments ago, when you arrived, I was thinking how different it was to be able to regard Vadeanos as people instead of units of traffic - but you can't separate the two completely. A person is a unit of traffic if he lives in a social group; he's a lot more besides, but that doesn't prevent it. And in a way you can parallel the behavior of people as traffic and people as just people. I'm certain that someone like - oh, Alejandro Mayor, for example, if he'd lived - could develop the kind of math I employ to describe far more general activities than simple point-to-point progress ..."

"... In fact I had an impression from some of Mayor's early work that he might be aiming for something of the kind. ..."

"Señor," said Maria Posador a little faintly, "it is well-known that Alejandro Mayor sought to achieve total control of our people - I myself showed you one method he employed. But are you saying that people can be controlled in this way?"

"People are controlled," I said in surprise. "Look, the man in the subway going to work of a morning has no more real control over his own activities than - well, than a piece on a chessboard! Because he has to earn a wage, he has to go to work. He can choose his kind of work, within strict limits ..."

"What other choices has he? He could quit work altogether, but if he has a family to support, he won't ... So there he is, on that subway train at the same time as everyone else."

John Brunner, *The Squares of the City* [1965] (New York: Collier/Macmillan, 1991), p. 267-269.

"... I've done my best to make things better, not worse. Oh, I've been under orders, so all I could do was cushion the blow where I could, but if Vados manages to avoid open revolt within the next few weeks, then he'll get two years of comparative peace - that's my guess - and two years from now the situation will be no better ..."

John Brunner, *The Squares of the City*, p. 270.

"... The sort of absolute system I've been talking about couldn't work unless everyone was ignorant of what was happening. Outwardly there would have to be no change at all in everyday life ..."

"We're bound to accept that we're restricted by forces beyond our control. So long as they remain beyond anyone's control, we're all in the same boat, and we don't care. But to be ruled, and to know one was ruled, by people who were controlling those impersonal forces - that would be different ..."

"... But what I am afraid of is - let's say the situation where in a restaurant at noon the cooks prepare exactly so many of each different dish, because they know that ... just that number

of their patrons will select just those dishes ... You see, there is a subtle horror in that. ..."

John Brunner, *The Squares of the City*, pp. 271-2.

You couldn't rule people totally - they were, as Maria Posador put it, too cussed - unless you were responsible not only for externals like their living conditions, their right to walk the streets in freedom, their binding laws and regulations, but also for far more subtle things: for their prejudices, their fears, beliefs, and hatreds.

I'd been talking wildly about developing mathematical tools ... Now it occurred to me that perhaps I already had some of those tools.

John Brunner, *Squares of the City*, p. 274.

Blood Games (Chelsea Quinn Yarbro)

In one of Yarbro's novels, the several-thousand-year-old vampire St. Germain can foresee impending civil strife threatening the classical Rome where he has settled. He has, very simply, seen it all before:

"It's not time to worry yet. Oh, I agree. There's much more than simple discontent in the air. We're likely to get a few attempts on Nero's life before long, and then we'll have another spate of executions. It's a common enough pattern. But there will be no real trouble until the Senate turns against him. When that happens, it will be chaotic in Rome."

"You speak as if you expected it!" Kosrozd shook himself free of Sanct' Germain's hand. "Don't you know what could happen to you if there is rebellion?"

"I have some idea," he said dryly. "And I do expect something of the sort to be attempted. ... These scrolls," Sanct' Germain said remotely, "talk about a similar occurrence. It took place more than a thousand years ago. There are countless others. Your family was part of one. Mine fell to one ..."

"But Rome," Kosrozd protested. "Rome is rich, and rules half the world."

"Not quite half." Sanct' Germain smiled. "Wealth, plenty and power breed their own particular kind of dissatisfaction, and when it erupts, it becomes rebellion, so that the leaders are cast down. If that fails to cure the ills - and it usually does fail to, because the leaders are often very much alike - then the people turn to religion, the more extreme the better. A hundred years from now, unless Rome is tested by another power as mighty as she, religion will become an obsession with her people. Conquest brings its own invisible chains to the victor."

Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, *Blood Games* (New York: Tor Books, 1980), pp. 174-175.

In The Country of the Blind (Michael Flynn)

About 1990, Michael Flynn wrote what may be the most rational response to conspiracy theories: a novel in which, yes, a secret society does conspire to manage our history and manipulate world events. But they aren't all-powerful; in fact they themselves are subject to laws of human behaviour.

The action of the story follows two tracks: a real estate developer, Sarah Beaumont, and her architect associate investigate a run-down property and some old notes they find there; and the members of, not one, but *two* secret societies strive to mislead or terminate the developer, as her investigations threaten to expose them.

The fun thing about *Country of the Blind* isn't simply watching Beaumont, a self-taught polymath, take on and defeat people who murder by stealth - on their own ground, even. It isn't even the detective/intelligence chase, as Beaumont works out what is happening. The secret societies suddenly realize they were *surrounded* by rival societies, all unawares, each trying to manipulate society and history to their own ends, each assiduously hiding any evidence of its existence ... until Beaumont releases a "worm" program on the Internet which publishes all their databases, and nearly scrambles them all into the bargain.

One of the key phrases in Flynn's novel, "horseshoe nails", is coined when Dennis French interviews a professor of history about the mysterious paper he found:

"... Now this is purely off the cuff, understand. But the items I am familiar with seem to be historical turning points of a rather subtle kind. The events themselves were small - by that I mean that few people were involved - but they had disproportionate consequences. Do you recall the George Herbert poem? For want of a nail, the shoe is lost. For want of a shoe, the horse is lost. And so on. In the end a kingdom is lost. Had Richard III not lost his horse, Bosworth Field might have gone the other way, it was that near a thing. And what then? No Tudors, perhaps; and English history becomes something quite different. Well, these events are like that. You see, most individual events have little impact on the overall course of history; but some build, like an avalanche, into consequences that only become evident in hindsight."

Michael Flynn, *In the Country of the Blind* (New York: Baen Books, 1990), pp. 23.

Flynn's novel picks up its pace when Sarah stumbles on evidence of such a conspiracy - long-concealed calculating machines, which shouldn't have existed when they were apparently constructed, and mystifying, ancient mathematical papers.

Her light picked out the title on one torn fragment. On the Eventual Bifurcation of Highly-connected Dynamic Sets. Great stuff. ...

Index. She pulled the small folder out of the drawer and took it to the table. Holding the flashlight in her left hand, she opened it and tried to read some of the titles in the dim plight. *An Optimal Policy for Commodity Purchases Using Integral Simplicies. A Branch-and-Bound Approach to the Job Shop Problem. On the n-Space Graph Structure of Iroquois Matrilinearity. Applications of Green's Function to Queues in Semi-Closed Networks. The Dynamical Equations of Ideon Contagion.*

What was all this? Mathematical research? No, not entirely. Some of the titles, she saw, dealt with anthropology or economics. Applied mathematics, then. A peculiar mix; and what an odd place for it! The dates written next to the titles of the papers ran through 1892. The earliest one was 1833: a real wowsler entitled *Some Stochastic Processes with Absorbing Barriers* by someone named Jedediah Crawford. ... Sixty years of mathematical papers? A college hidden on the fourth floor of a manufacturing plant?

She pulled out the other folder from the drawer and peered at it in the dim light. *Maintenance and Repair of Babbage Analytical Engines.*

That stopped her. Charles Babbage had been Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge University from 1828 to 1839. Any real computer buff knew about him. He had once described a new kind of calculating machine ...

The storage was to be purely mechanical ... but Babbage had in effect described the digital computer. Unfortunately, the actual construction of such "engines" had been beyond the state of mid-nineteenth century engineering art. None had ever been built.

A ball of ice formed in the pit of her stomach. She turned and stared at the darkness where the machines sat. None had ever been built.

Michael Flynn, *In the Country of the Blind*, pp. 42-44.

Instead of announcing an historical find, Sarah Beaumont finds herself shadowed and eventually shot at. A journalist helps her to assess her situation:

"There are only eight reasons for murder. We can go through the list, if you like."

"Only eight? I would have thought there'd be as many reasons as there are victims."

"No, only eight. It's the details, not the basic motives, that differ from killing to killing. ..."

"There are the impersonal, the emotional, and the rational. As far as the impersonal reasons go, you've already ruled out homicidal mania. What about someone making a political statement?" ...

"Alright. He was a professional hit man and it was important that no one probe too deeply into his reasons for singling you out. Who hired him?"

"If I knew that -"

"And why? What about rage or revenge? Two of the emotional reasons."

She shook her head. "No. Revenge for what? For bringing off a sharp business deal? That doesn't make sense. Realtors don't hire hit men for things like that." ...

"Okay, what about jealousy?" ...

"Well, folks with an emotional reason for murder usually do it themselves; so let's concentrate on the rational reasons. To gain something you possess. ... Number seven: To cover up for another crime. You're not a witness to anything, are you? I suppose a detective or a reporter or a secret agent might be sniffing around the edges of some dreadful secret and not realize it; but a real estate broker? Not likely." ...

"Okay. Eighth and final reason: To protect themselves from you. ... self-defense is like any other motive. It's in the other person's mind. You might not even know it. You might have done something somewhere that someone somehow perceived as a threat."

Michael Flynn, *In the Country of the Blind*, pp. 61-64.

She wrote her thoughts down in schematic fashion, using the fault tree symbols that Abe had taught her years ago. People too often argued in circles, or overlooked possibilities, or even forgot some of their own ideas. Sarah had found that diagramming her thoughts in an orderly way helped to organize her thinking. Abe had called it a fault tree, but she called it a why-why diagram ... He had scoffed at her use of the method for what he called "soft" problem solving. ...

What about Quinn? That's what had actually triggered the attack. What had she learned about him that was so dangerous? He had been a "special-project" statistician for the government before and during the Civil War; and had resigned abruptly afterwards. ...

There was also Quinn's association with the putative Babbage Society. ...

Hold it. She remembered the foolscap sheet with the list of "horseshoe nails." The one Dennis had kept. There had been several murders noted on it, hadn't there? Quinn and the others ...

The Society had built mechanical computers. Babbage engines.

So what? Why keep the machines secret? Especially in such a technophilic era as the Victorian Age? Babbage had actually begun public construction of one, but had given it up as impractical. (Or had he?)

Answer: It wasn't the machines themselves, but the way they used them. ...

An uneasy feeling stole over her as she read. There was something peculiar about some of those titles. Some of them were written long before the events they appeared to describe. Well, it's a science's business to predict, isn't it? And if they had been studying history scientifically ... Yet, another tone rang through. Something in the choice of words. Something her literary ear picked out. A sense of mastery and challenge. The anticipation of action, not simply of observation. Of requirements to be met.

They weren't scientists. They were engineers.

... They hadn't been trying to study cultural systems at all; they had been trying to control them!

Michael Flynn, *In the Country of the Blind*, pp. 75-76, 79 & 81.

Sarah Beaumont is visited by a fortunate stranger, a member of another secret society who not only explains what the Babbage Society is about, but later becomes a friend.

"Start the way Crawford and the others started. They were interested in mass behavior. How many acres were planted in wheat versus corn. How many miles of railroad track were in operation. How many telegraph stations. And so on. Data collection was all the rage back then, during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Reformers like Adolphe Quetelet, the Belgian astronomer, were trying to create a scientific basis for a progressive social policy. They compiled all sorts of figures on population, climate, trade, poverty, education, crime, you name it.

"Then along came Babbage's book, with its rudimentary system theory. Crawford started a small philosophical society to discuss and speculate on Babbage's ideas, and someone got the idea of applying the techniques to the social data they had been collecting. What the Founders discovered was that the data followed predictable mathematical curves. ... And, once the underlying equations were solved - using those Babbage engines you saw - the trajectory could be predicted within statistical limits. ... They developed theories to try to explain what they saw. They weren't always right. Sometimes their errors were ludicrous. After all, it was a brand new technology; and the data wasn't always the best; and their understanding was still too shallow. But they were persistent. Whenever a prediction failed, they went back and studied their models to discover what had been overlooked ...

"The Pareto Principle comes into play. Twenty percent of [the] variables account for 80% of what happens. If you don't believe me, find out what percentage of authors contribute most of the science journal articles; or how many running backs account for most of the yardage gained in football. It's a matter of simplifying the system. We don't need to know what the fifth decimal place

is going to be fifty years from now, as long as we know the trend.

... "We don't try to change the tides of history, but we do try to surf on them." He chuckled. "As undignified as that may sound. We don't try to stop the flow; we go with the flow. It's much easier to modulate an existing trend than it is to start or stop one. So we make a few minor adjustments here and there to enhance our portfolios. That's all. No major surgery. ...

"Think, for example, what an advantage it was to know decades in advance that isolationism would keep the U.S. out of World War II. That all the other industrial nations would be flattened and American companies would have no serious rivals for twenty years. ...

"They saw a confluence of several trends [*by the early 1940s*]: the unification of the Germanies and their rise as a scientific and industrial power; the compression of population on her resources after the mid-1800s, leading to a 'breakout' cycle. But, with all the easy overseas colonies taken by then, the breakout would be against literate and well-armed European nations rather than, ah, 'less sophisticated' opponents. Meanwhile, explosives were becoming exponentially more powerful. Put them all together and ... Well, suppose Germany had had atomic bombs in 1939?

"What would you have done? Stood by, because the forecast might be wrong? Or taken action, because the forecast might be right? You can't stop an exponential trend at the last moment. They did what they had to do. Small seeds. They planted small seeds that they hoped to nurture through the generations. The Society was small and it only operated in the U.S. Their activities didn't carry much socio-kinetic energy ... so they looked for focal points - fulcra, they called them; yokes were the mathematical operators - times where they could get enough leverage over large scale events. They aimed to build the U.S. into a technological counterweight to Germany, to bleed off some of the pressures that were building there. Slavery was stifling our technology, so slavery had to go. The South was a poor, feudalistic, agrarian backwater in a rich, industrial world; but, because of the Constitution, she had a virtual veto over anything the Congress considered. ...

"Seward gave the 'peculiar institution' fifty years at most before it expired naturally. No, the Society simply tried to hurry it along the way to its grave. ...

"How? By nurturing the economic forces that were killing it. The Society didn't go out and foment Abolition. They used their power and resources to push hard for the Homestead Bill and Popular Sovereignty. ... A society of yeoman farmers has no use for slavery or great plantations. Crawford and the others, they never planned on a war."

Michael Flynn, *In the Country of the Blind*, pp. 110-113.

"Ideas are the key, you see. Ideas - we call them memes - cause learned behavior the way genes cause instinctive behavior."

"Memes." Something went click. Some of the titles she had read in the Index. "You used to call them ideons, didn't you?" He blinked in surprise and looked at her respectfully. "Yes. Elementary ideas. Like elementary particles. Protons, electrons ... and ideons. The analogies were all physical back the. Later, when Darwin's and Mendel's works became better known, biological analogies seemed more appropriate. In a way, ideas are like viruses. People 'catch' them from each other through communication media. It's a process very much like epidemics. I could write the equations for you, if you like."

Michael Flynn, *In the Country of the Blind*, pp. 114.

"Cause behavior?" she said with her back to him. "Cause? No, it just doesn't sit right with me. People are killing each other over it and I just don't understand how it's possible! ... How can you say that behavior is caused by a set of equations, like a ... Like a goddam pendulum?" ...

He shook his head. "You've got it backwards. It's not the equations that cause behavior. It's the behaviors that cause the equations. Get the difference? There's no compulsion. The process isn't deterministic; it's probabilistic. Like predicting the weather."

"An eighty percent chance of coups today across South America," she said waving at an imaginary weather map.

Red chuckled. "Something like that."

"But you can't mint an idea and plant it in people's heads!" "No?" Red smiled. "Ever hear of Pet Rocks?"

Michael Flynn, *In the Country of the Blind*, pp. 115.

When Morgan Grimes is killed, Dennis French is kidnapped after a motor vehicle "accident", and she is forced into hiding with Red's faction, Sarah still challenges the society's program; she still sees little to choose between them and their enemies.

"... But don't you see, Red? The means have become the end! Why do they want to domesticate us in the first place? To make us more predictable for their equations; to make us more receptive to manipulation. To simplify Their goddamned arithmetic! If you and your group start down the same path, how long before you adopt the same goals?"

"One hundred and twenty years," he told her. "Plus or minus eight years."

She stared at him. "I don't know you," she said.

Michael Flynn, *In the Country of the Blind*, pp. 173.

In a class led by a Dr. Gewirtz, Sarah finds herself pointing out that the famous Baby Boom of the mid-twentieth century was an example unanticipated spinoff - but a spinoff, she claims, of the American G.I.

Bill, not the automobile. Gewirtz has just shot down the latter claim by pointing out his own father and friends "sparked the gals" in the back of horse-drawn buckboards; illegitimate children were simply more openly acknowledged in the late twentieth than the nineteenth century. Sarah points out that people make love with an eye on the pocketbook - and, contrary to expectation, this explains why poorer families have more children.

Dr. Gewirtz pantomimed surprise. "What? Wealthier people have smaller families? Are you sure of your theory, Ms. Beaumont? Surely, if finance and resources were the root cause behind family size, poor people would have fewer children."

That one she could answer from personal experience. "No, sir," she told him. "Because it isn't a matter of gross resources; but net resources relative to the costs of child rearing. It simply doesn't cost that much to raise a child in poverty," she finished bitterly. ...

"And how does the G.I. Bill fit in?" ...
Now she was not in the textbook. ... "Well... It costs more - in time and energy - to raise an urban child than a rural child; so city birthrates are always lower than country birthrates, other factors being equal. ... So, as the country urbanized, the birth rate declined. That trend goes back at least to 1820. Then, after World War II, the G.I. Bill subsidized the costs of modern urban life for a significant fraction of the population. Veterans' preferences made it cheaper and easier to buy a home, to secure a job, to go to school. Since that reduced the 'cut' the parents needed for themselves, it increased the residual available for child-rearing."

... "If you would be so kind as to reduce your thoughts to the poor and clumsy medium of mathematics, your classmates and myself would be eternally grateful. Your transcript shows that you possess a sufficient mathematical background. Be sure to include intangibles in your formulation of costs and benefits. What is the value of an infant's smile? Many a mother - or father, for that matter! - would sacrifice much for such a payment. Show also how the process leaves room for free will, in the form of a probability distribution around the expected value generated by your equations. Use your equations to predict past birth rates with a standard error of no more than 0.5% for any one year. We will expect your report in, let us say, two weeks."

Michael Flynn, *In the Country of the Blind*, p. 192.

Meanwhile, Jeremy Collingwood (Dennis' roommate and Sarah's friend) and a team of academics are studying the information Sarah's work program has dumped on public networks from the Society databases. The only mathematician to join the team is shocked and depressed when he discovers the Society's historical method *works*:

It was not fear of the Babbage Society that was bothering Jim Doang; it was Fate. Wyrd. The Norms. The idea that his life

was already woven inextricably into some divine tapestry. Jeremy felt surprised at the depth of the man's passion. ...
Michael Flynn, *In the Country of the Blind*, p. 313.

Whereas the problem seems not exist for Herkimer Vane, another member of the team (who is an historian of science, among other things):

"The time span of the forecast and its precision are also important. As a general rule, the longer the cast, the less precise it becomes. Projecting a planet's orbit over several millennia, who cares if it is off by a few hours? But in the case of a spacecraft flying off to the moon, an error of a few hours is intolerable. Much greater precision is required. But increasing the precision tenfold increases the necessary calculations a thousand-fold! One would quickly reach the point where, even with the swiftest computing machines, the computation would simply take too long ...

"Even if there were scientific laws in history, they would be useless for making predictions. With the number of bodies involved, the solutions would become indeterminate much too quickly."
Michael Flynn, *In the Country of the Blind*, p. 316.

As it turns out, Herkimer Vane represents yet another "Babbage society", which operates on the belief that historical processes can be analyzed, but not modified. Until this is revealed, apparently, his job seems to be to put Jeremy Collingwood's group off his society's trail. This may be hardly necessary:

... "None of us really believe that some secret cabal has reduced history to science; let alone that they have been controlling it for the last hundred odd years. No, that is quite impossible."
"But -"

"Oh, I am equally convinced that there is a group that has tried to do so. They might even believe themselves successful. We plan to investigate the claims with an open mind. To discover what would motivate this so-called Babbage Society."
Michael Flynn, *In the Country of the Blind*, p. 259-260.

Correlation of Forces and Means. The outcome of a battle, according to von Clauswitz, was determined by the product NxQxV: the number of combatants; their fighting qualities; and all variables affecting the circumstances of the battle. Whoever had the higher NQV emerged the victor. ...
Michael Flynn, *In the Country of the Blind*, pp. 506.

Tom Paine Maru (L. Neil Smith)

It may seem a strange concept, but a means for analyzing *historical* factors, and a means for analyzing a *contemporary* society, cannot be too

far apart. Both Poul Anderson and L. Neil Smith, decades apart, implied some form of social/historical analysis, formalized in a notational system.

"Praxeology", the gorilla intoned, "the study of 'human action' - by extension ... of the actions of all mankind, taking in everything from ethics and epistemology, through sociology and anthropology, to politics and economics ..."

L. Neil Smith, *Tom Paine Maru*

Not every fictional approach to social or historical analysis is mathematical, in a *quantitative* sense. The end of the following quote might sound more algebraic, and qualitative:

"We have names and historical examples for each of the three possible political systems ...

"All forms of *authoritarianism* are paternalistic in nature, usually oppressively religious, with emphasis on law, order, and swift, sure punishment for the miscreant. *Majoritarianism*, on the other hand ... is characteristically maternal, concerned with social welfare, the survival, above all, of the productively unfit at the expense of everybody else. Each system represents an essentially infantile 'adjustment' to cultural and economic reality preventing further development, either in the individual or society - a primary cause of the cyclic rise and fall we observe ...

"*Individualism* is adult in character, representing self-imposed responsibility, steady growth, individual and cultural maturity.

"Peace, prosperity, and progress all grew from the concept of absolute individual rights, under a system of unanimous consent.

"Given the tragedy of human evolution - that, as defense against the agony of birth, the dangerous mechanism of repression developed, functioning in both mother and child, sabotaging while it soothed, like any powerful analgesic - that revolution looks more and more like a miracle.

"... You'll be asked to make comparisons among Hoand, Earth, and Sodde Lydfe, specifically Podfet, Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia, and Houtty, as opposed to Great Foddu, England, Denmark, and Obohalu. Unlike Hoand, where a relative balance of terror has been achieved, the Sodde Lydfans are, after a long conventional war, about to use nuclear weapons. Employing proper praxeological notation, I want you to tell me why."

L. Neil Smith, *Tom Paine Maru*, pp. 141-2

There's an odd apparent irony, you may have noticed, in that L. Neil Smith's fictional anarchocapitalist "Confederacy", where nobody is supposed to impose on anyone else, is where a discipline like "praxeology" develops. Or maybe the irony is in the eye of the beholder; if any culture is the sum of the habits we are taught to conform to, and in

addition we form our personal habits and rarely change them ... then it isn't so surprising if, in fact, some observers will find regularities in our behaviour. Ways to predict our actions, and ways to influence or compel us.

Divergence (Charles Sheffield)

Charles Sheffield's *Divergence* quotes a fictitious *Universal Species Catalog* on the subject of human culture:

Culture: Human culture is built around four basic elements: sexual relationships, territorial rights, individual intellectual dominance, and desire for group acceptance. The H'sirin model using just these four traits as independent variables enables accurate prediction of human behaviour patterns. On the basis of this, human culture is judged to be of Level Two, with few prospects for advancement to a higher level.

I'm not sure but I think we've just been patronized, there. All six billion of us.

Conclusions

In the subject I call "creative sociology", there are a few non-issues which form popular attitudes. Let us dispense with them and tackle the real issue at hand.

Attitudes I Have Run Into:

I think I have established that there are, in fact, patterns of human behaviour. Societies are, in fact, complex interactive systems. *But* the people I talk to don't believe so. Whether or not this is "false consciousness", they see people in individual, *not* collective or interactive terms, even when they're acting out a dysfunctional pattern.

Maybe that's just a parochial, North American, 20th-century sort of foible.

"A few moments ago you were saying people were

predictable. Does that not imply that they are logical, too?"

"No-o-o ... You run out of logic about the time you start taking imponderables like religion into account, or genetic predisposition."

John Brunner, *The Squares of the City*, p. 270.

Laying Conspiracy Paranoidas to Rest:

It is understood for the purposes of this paper that any community is subject at any time to manipulations by at least one conspiracy or secret society, and often several. (Dr. Timothy Leary remarked, after field work involving prison society, exile in Marrakech, and the perilous Harvard professional community, that he met up with the same twelve conspiracies wherever he went.) It shall be specifically understood that the Bavarian Illuminati have long campaigned to shape public and

professional thought, and withhold certain knowledge and techniques from Western society at large.

Of course, the problem with this is that a dozen or so conspiracies tend to pull in all directions at once, and cancel each other's effects; so also with the Bavarian Illuminati, since they started absorbing all sorts of other secret societies. This naturally suggests that a bit of collegiality might be called for, but the case for it awaits more research.

(Jeez, now I'm starting to *write* like a sociology department ...)

The Real Issue at Hand

Originally this paper was conceived to address questions like, "why doesn't sociology work like engineering?". It seems that "praxeology" works rather more like weather analysis and prediction, or like biochemistry and medicine. Also, it quickly developed that to survey actual, contemporary social sciences as they exist today could take upwards of a year, and would occupy a full-sized book. It became clear, after even cursory reading, that a proper review of sociological literature would vastly outrun the time available for this essay. Evidently, a general perspective must be provided, and more research is required. (Now I'm beginning to write like social scientists ...)

However superficial, summary articles on sociology, e.g. in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, we do not get a picture of a science anything like the speculative one in SF stories. Quite a different evolution of ideas has taken place in the real world. From their beginnings during the Enlightenment, various social "sciences" were ideology-driven: "if science can be furthered and machines be designed to produce what people need, better people's lives and promote the general welfare, surely a society can be rebuilt to the same end." This, again, tended to rely on an early confusion between science and engineering, which seems to be a common fallacy still. Repeated movements in this direction ran aground on the same reefs, or were diverted into stagnant channels. (27) Probably the most substantial obstacle was that social phenomena are not like physical phenomena. In our century, the prevailing conclusions about this are drawn from economics.

From the 1940s onward, economic thought in NATO-allied countries was polarized between free-market and state-control schools, as a result of the Depression from the early 1930s, followed by the apparent success of state planning for the 1940s war effort. The case for economic interventions by the state, Keynesianism, prevailed until roughly the late 1970s in NATO countries and beyond. Keynes' colleague and opponent, Hayek, enjoyed more popularity from roughly the late 1970s onward, among "neoliberals" who then reshaped economic policy. Hayek's case was that more goes on in an economy, indeed in a whole society, than individuals know — indeed, more than its members can know; that societies work to the extent that people create systems of trade they do not plan; therefore, planned economies are bound to fail, and even frustrate, their goals. (28)

Be that as it may, and in the absence of more data, it appears the progress of real-world social science has not much to do with the speculative picture some SF stories have painted.

Were Asimov, Heinlein and Anderson, from the 1940s through the 1960s, naive or uninformed about the actual evolution of social science? No — not all uninformed, to judge from Andersen's writing. But they had stories to write. And this is the field in which to speculate freely.

What would be the *importance* of a predicate, analytic social science, anyway? I suspect that anyone who speculates about it has a hidden motive, the same motive as drove early social science - the wish to change and better the social machine. "Better", of course, is a term you will define yourself. I also suspect that anyone who implements a means to modify others' behaviour – however ineffectual a means it is – has some unpleasant lessons to learn, about personal corruption.

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Notes

- 1 Isaac Asimov, *Foundation, Foundation and Empire, Second Foundation* (1951). New York: Heinemann/Octopus Books, 1981.
- 2 Asimov, *Foundation*, pp. 17-18.
- 3 Robert Heinlein, "Solution Unsatisfactory," *Expanded Universe*, p. t39.
- 4 Heinlein, "Blowups Happen," *The Past Through Tomorrow*, pp. 90-91.
- 5 *Ibid*, p. 110.
- 6 Heinlein, "Methuselah's Children," *The Past Through Tomorrow*, pp. 665-6.
- 7 Heinlein, "Coventry," *The Past Through Tomorrow*, pp. 597-8.

8 Heinlein, "Methuselah's Children," p. 753.

9. It is an observed fact that these professionals cannot use short words in public.

10. Anderson, "Marius," *The Psychotechnic League*, p. 19.

11. *Ibid*, p. 24.

12. *Ibid*, p. 16.

13 "Once I was a flaming liberal, a fact which is probably most obvious in 'Un-Man'. Nowadays I consider the United Nations a dangerous farce on which we ought to ring down the curtain. (In justice to it and myself, though, please remember that when I wrote this novella the U.N. had quite a different character from that it has since acquired ..)" *Ibid*, p. 284.

14 *Ibid*, pp. 187-8.

15 *Ibid*, pp. 173-4.

16 *Ibid*, p. 175.

17 *Ibid*, pp. 195-6.

18 Donald Kingsbury, *The Moon Goddess and the Son* (New York: Baen Books, 1986), pp. 54-55.

19 *Ibid*, pp. 240, 242-3.

20 *Ibid*, p. 249.

21 The major corporation producing and training azi. (Short for "Research Unit"?) Union law and practice permits and encourages azi to qualify for citizenship, after an unspecified period of contractual service. Reseume assumes guardianship of all azi throughout Union, and if they are abused, Reseume prosecutes.

22 C.J. Cherryh, *Cyteen: The Vindication* (New York: Warner Books, 1988), pp. 82-83.

23 *Ibid*, pp. 26-28.

24 Why don't you look up this one?

25 Melody Beattie, *Co-Dependent No More* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987).

26 Wayne Kritsberg, *The Adult Children of Alcoholics Syndrome* (New York: Bantam, 1988).

27 Ernest Becker, *The Lost Science of Man* (1971).

28 "Hayek" on "Ideas," Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1990 & 1991.

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