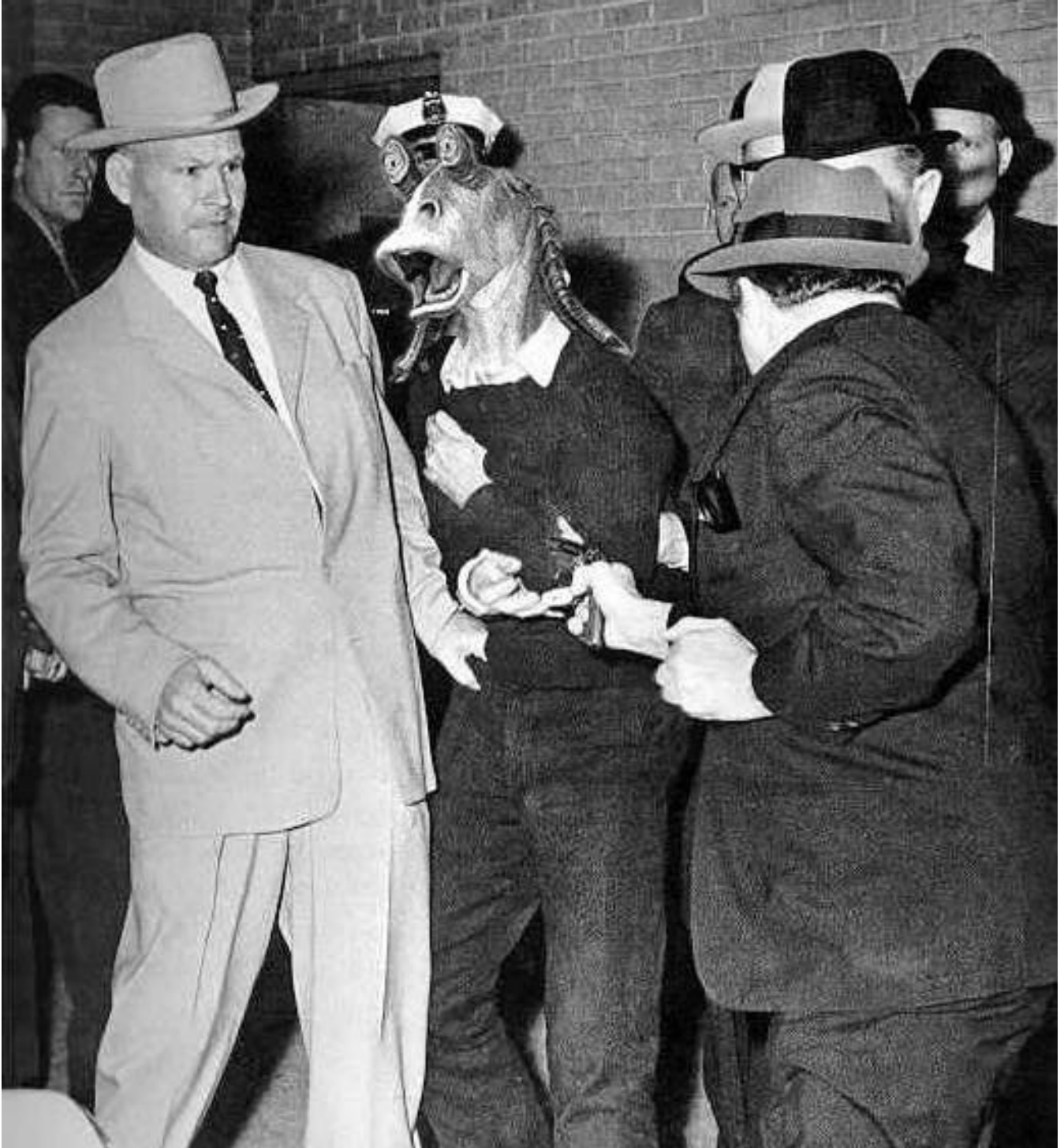


BCSFAzine 362

Vol. 31 no. 7

\$3.00

July 2003



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July 2003 Events:

| | | |
|------------------------|---|--|
| June 22-July 27 | Space Toys Double Feature Film Festival will show classic sci-fi films from the 1930s-'50s at noon on Sundays | The Museum of Flight, May 31 – Sept. 7, 2003, Seattle, Washington |
| July 2 | <i>Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines</i> | Movie premiere |
| July 2 | <i>Sinbad: Legend of the Seven Seas</i> | Movie premiere |
| July 4 | "Eye Of Newt" play live to <i>Tron</i> : Their final show at the Blinding Light Cinema | 8:00 p.m. at the Blinding Light cinema, 36 Powell (at edge of Gastown). 36 Powell is half a block East of intersection where Water Street meets Carrall Street, Alexander Street & Powell Street |
| July 5 | Aphelion Party | Kathleen Moore-Freeman's place, 7064 #1 Road, Richmond, BC, 604-277-0845 |
| July 6 | Toy and Collectables Show | Heritage Hall, 3102 Main St. |
| July 9 | <i>Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl</i> | Movie premiere |
| July 11 | <i>The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen</i> | Movie premiere |
| July 12 at 7 pm | (BCSFA) Feeding Frenzy | The White Spot #134 - 610 6th Street, New Westminster This place is well known for its burgers, chicken, and other good things. |
| July 12 | Furry club meeting (fans of anthropomorphic cartoons) | Location TBA; for more information call Michael Bertrand at fruvous@reddra.com |
| July 13 | V-Con Society Meeting | Marilyn Blew's place, 8190 Greenlake Place, Burnaby, (604) 422-8255 |
| July 15 | China Miéville reading | 7:30 p.m., Kane Hall, Seattle tickets \$4.00 each at University Bookstore, to benefit Clarion West |
| July 15th at 7 pm | Wine-Tasting Event - Strict limit of twenty tickets available at \$25.00 each. A platter of cheeses will also be provided. | at Dunderave Wine Cellar (2448 Marine Drive at 25th St), West Vancouver. Tel: (604) 921-1814. |
| July 17 at 7 pm | Book Discussion Group at BLENZ Coffee 2506 Granville Street (corner of Broadway and Granville) | Book to be discussed: "Manhattan Transfer" by John E. Stith |
| July 17 at 8 pm | Medieval Minstrels Night - "Folk Heroes" playing at El Cocal Restaurant | El Cocal Restaurant is at 1037 Commercial Street, Vancouver |
| July 18 | <i>Johnny English</i> | Movie premiere |
| July 22 | Patrick Neilsen Hayden reading | 7:30 p.m., Kane Hall, Seattle tickets \$4.00 each at University Bookstore, to benefit Clarion West |
| July 24 | Furry club dinner (fans of anthropomorphic cartoons) | Location TBA; for more information call Michael Bertrand at fruvous@reddra.com |
| July 25 | <i>Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life</i> | Movie premiere |
| July 25 | <i>Spy Kids 3-D: Game Over</i> | Movie premiere |

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Art Credits

Cover: forwarded by Dave Malinski

Page 1: Michael Morse

Rantings and Ravings



Apparently I have to apologize not only for typographical errors in the last *BCSFazine*, but for a misleading italicized passage at the end of "Purple"'s defence of Gor novels; apparently it wasn't clear that the writer's bio was "Purple"'s work, not mine.

Apparently I also have to apologize for expressing my opinions - for losing my temper, even - at several officers of BCSFA, of the VCon committee, and of the V-Con Society. I have this lingering impression, you see, that real people maintain some standards of performance, and my impression of those standards is unrealistically high. I wasn't aware of the fact that certain hotel managers don't always let VCon committees meet the advertising and promotion schedule I had deduced for them. I knew that we need to recruit more energetic and enthusiastic members for BCSFA, in order to maintain or revive activities; but I haven't had useful suggestions to contribute.

(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.)

Quite apart from my opinions, or how I express them, there are real issues to consider here. Has anything changed in the hotel industry, or in other practical issues that our conrunners have to work with, over the past twenty or thirty years? For that matter, has anything changed in the general interests of fans, or in the range of activities and interests that BCSFA offers to them? Does either our club or our con overlook opportunities to recruit, and to advertise?

These topics ought to interest you, because if you want to engage in some club activities -

activities like fun, interesting meetings, the Ether Patrol, movie previews, Science World expeditions, or BCAPA - or if you want to participate in VCon, these topics become important.

(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.)

I've been trying to raise these topics for discussion here, and so far very few people have responded. Why is it we won't come to grips with these things?

Some useful descriptions of other club's regular activities have appeared in the trade clubzines we receive, even when they don't carry news. For instance, in the spring 2003 issue of *Warp*, a chronicle of the Montreal club's activities includes appearances by guest speakers, such as writer Donald Kingsbury; panel dialogues, on topics such as "space monkeys", and whether clones or androids or aliens deserve human rights; film showings; game demos; summer barbecues, and Christmas dinners and parties. Also, the May 2003 *Westwind* lists a number of social events for Seattle fans, including dinner outings, tours of the Seattle harbour and the Columbia Gorge dam, and an October trek to pay homage at Powell's, the "city of books" in Portland. Also they list club members' birthdays each month.

Any ideas for us there?

LoCs

Michael Morse, June 2003

Plain Speaking: I'd like to go back in time to when you were a neo and tell you to expect only that fans would eat, sleep, and shit. Then you'd be pleasantly floored by the bright, educated, ironic, humorous, creative, active, and brilliant minds you'd encounter at FRED.

(Probably wouldn't make any difference. I formed my impressions from the fanzine library at the first club I encountered; not from what people said, or did in front of me.)

Otherwise, that's a lot of pressure to perform the next time I go to FRED. As it is I don't even think I want to deal with the contest at the end of the column.

(Aww, and I was trying to suggest something fun and interesting for everyone.)

Littera Scripta Manet: Ashtar (or Ashtar Command) seems to be a New Age space religion. I say "seems to be" because that's all I know and their website - <http://www.ashtarcommand.ws/> - studiously avoids giving any basic information about what it is. I vaguely gleaned that Ashtar is a superior being who wants to help the human race reach enlightenment.

(I wonder if I could get away with another article about SF-type creativity ... "Creative Religion"?)

All the News ...: "What Happened to Arn Saba": Why did the police confiscate \$7,569 in cash?!
(Back taxes, I guess.)

"Altered Carbon Gets Optioned": I only realized this after I read the item in *BCSFazine*, but I have an old issue of *Starlog* containing the last interview Philip K. Dick ever gave, and he mentioned this story idea. He also had an interesting idea about putting "stacks" in animals to increase their intelligence. I also like the fact that Dick lived long enough to see *Blade Runner* and liked it.

The Other Media News: Can you spot the mistake I deliberately made in the *Astro Boy* item? ☺

In Honourable Defence: From reading the article, it doesn't sound like Purple was responding just to "The Unpublished Titles of Gor" (see the article's sub-headline). It sounds like he's witnessed hostility towards Gor in fandom in general. For example, I remember when Graeme read John Norman's open letter to fandom at the last VCon at

the Elrons. There were retching sounds emanating from the audience. Not knowing that much about Gor, I don't really want to get involved, other than hoping that Purple feels comfortable coming to FRED ...

(When John Norman's incredibly verbose, pompous and self-justifying letter was read at VCon, I figured that if he wanted to make himself an object of ridicule, that was his lookout.

(When Purple wrote us a five-page article justifying not only a Gor ideology, but a lifestyle, I figured people could take him as he was, it doesn't reflect the views of BCSFA or the BCSFAzine editor. It's still sort of a free country, we even let Liberals and Fraser Institute types walk the streets without supervision.)

We also heard from: Frank Skinner, Barb Dryer, Duncan McGregor

SOME WORDS FROM OUR ADVERTISERS

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Real News

BCSFA and Vcon:

I have no news to report.

*THE MIC NEWSLETTER 2003 PRIX AURORA
AWARD SUPPLEMENT*

"is now online at

[http://members.rogers.com/mic-](http://members.rogers.com/mic-newsletter/index.htm)

[newsletter/index.htm](http://members.rogers.com/mic-newsletter/index.htm)

.The Prix Aurora Award Supplement is a resource page for the 2003 Prix Aurora Awards. This year's supplement includes links to:

- Excerpts, cover art, reviews and websites for the nominated Best Long-Form Works in English.
- Complete Texts of all of the nominated Best Short-Form Works in English.
- Sample images from the Artistic Achievement works.
- Sample works and information on the Best Work in English: Other nominees
- Nominated material and/or information on the finalists in the Fan Categories.

"Coming soon: Excerpts, cover art, reviews and websites for the nominated Best Long-Form Works in French and complete texts of the nominated Best Short-Form Works in French

"Please pass this email on to all who may be interested in voting on the 2003 Prix Aurora Awards."

Don Bassie, canadian-sf@rogers.com,
June 20, 2003

More Auroras

Ronn Sutton has been nominated (once again) for an Aurora Award for Artistic Achievement.

Both Ronn Sutton and Janet Hetherington, comic artists and studio partners in Ottawa, are working on the comic *Elvira, Mistress of the Dark* (Claypool Comics). They will attend the "Canadian National Comic Book/Science Fiction/Anime Expo" at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre from August 22 to 24.

Ottawa SF Statement, June 2003

Canadian Unity Fan Fund

"Congratulations to Lyndie Bright, the winner of the 2003 Canadian Unity Fan Fund race. Lyndie will attend the 2003 Convention, which is held concurrently with TorCon3, the 61st World Science Fiction Convention.

"Big thanks are also due to Andrew Murdoch and Garth Spencer for making the commitment to stand as candidates.

"Here is a breakdown of all the ballots: There were 17 ballots received. One was received two days after the deadline and is therefore not included in the totals. Fourteen of the remaining expressed a preference:

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Lyndie Bright | 8 |
| Andrew Murdoch | 5 |
| Garth Spencer | 1 |
| Hold Over Funds | 0 |

"Thanks also to everyone who helped out by distributing ballots, and to the voters for their ballots and donations."

Colin Hinz, 2002-2003 CUFF Administrator,
June 6, 2003

TRON AT BLINDING LIGHT (WITH SOUNDTRACK PERFORMED LIVE)

"when: Friday July 4 at 8 PM

"what: "Eye Of Newt play live to Tron"

"EYE OF NEWT's final show at the [Blinding Light] with their soundtrack performed live to TRON. [...] The blazingly colourful, geometrically intense landscapes of cyberspace, [...] A milestone in cyber entertainment, catering to technogeeks while providing a dazzling adventure for hackers and non-hackers alike. A high-tech favorite and a landmark in special effects (Jeff Shannon)"
quote from

<http://www.blindinglight.com/prog.asp#154>

"where: Blinding Light cinema, 36 Powell (at edge of Gastown)

<http://www.blindinglight.com/images/Lmap.jpg>
36 Powell is half a block East of intersection

1) where Water Street meets Carrall Street, Alexander Street & Powell Street

2) which has the statue (Gassy Jack statue?)"

EarthFur, earthfurst@yahoo.ca, June 15, 2003

GOTH HOUSE NEWSLETTER 2:10

Sixth and final supervillains!

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

I was going to write an elegy for *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* this time, but (*sniff*) the pain is still too recent. Next time, maybe. Right now it is starting to act like summer, which I find annoying, since it means that the setting sun shines in the window of the room I use to work on *Goth House* for *hours*. But it also means, Highland Games season! And that is a good thing. ...

Thanks to Kathleen Kralowec for a copy of *Furious Fuzz*, her comic-zine. I found it energetic and entertaining. She asked me for advice about publishing, which I am going to share in the newsletter because people ask me about such things from time to time. For anyone just starting out, I highly recommend the photocopied 'zine approach. It's a low-cost way to hone your skills and start building an audience. Plus, if you sell them, you are now a Professional. Really! People paid you money for it!

Make friends with people who work at photocopy and printing places. Or work at one yourself. You can get things cheaper and usually better as well.

Beyond that, I really have no idea. How to get major distribution, or published by Dark Horse, or a job with DC, or anything that approaches making

a living - no idea. I'm hoping to figure it out, sometime soon, and all of you will be the first to know about it when I do.

Julie McGalliard, May 31, 2003

Goth House Newsletter 2:11:

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...

See you at Westercon!

Julie McGalliard, June 14, 2003

A NEW ARRIVAL

David "Murdock" Malinski writes from Courtenay:

"We have a new member of the family to introduce:

VICTOR JOSEPH MALINSKI

born at 5:30 am on June 18, 2003

8lbs 2oz, Head 37 cm, Length 54 cm.

"Mary & baby are doing well. Alexander [*the dog?* -GS] spent the day in Nanaimo as Daddy, Mommy and Victor rested."

David, murdock@axion.net, June 18, 2003

THE SUNBURST AWARD FOR CANADIAN LITERATURE OF THE FANTASTIC

"The Sunburst Award committee is pleased to announce the following short list of books for its third annual presentation:

Talon by Paulette Dubé (NeWest 2002) 1-8963000-47-2

Skin Folk by Nalo Hopkinson (Time Warner 2001) 0-446-67803-1

Salt Fish Girl by Larissa Lai (Thomas Allen Publishers 2002) 0-88762-111-2

Permanence by Karl Schroeder (Tor 2002) 0-765-30371-X

Dead Man's Gold by Paul Yee (Douglas & McIntyre 2002) 0-88899-475-3

The award, consisting of a cash prize of \$1000 and a hand-crafted stainless-steel medallion of the "Sunburst", from a design by Marcel Gagné, will be presented to the winner in September 2003.

These short-listed works represent the best in Canadian literature of the fantastic. The authors are either Canadian citizens or landed immigrants. For information about eligibility and the selection

process, we invite you to visit the Sunburst Award web site or write the committee.

The jurors for the 2003 award were Lesley Choyce, Hiromi Goto, Terence M. Green, Eileen Kernaghan and Arthur Slade.

FOR MORE INFORMATION please contact the committee secretary at: The Sunburst Award, 106 Cocksfield Avenue, North York, Ontario, CANADA M3H 3T2, phone 647-282-8379, email mici@sunburstaward.org.

Also visit our web site at www.sunburstaward.org
"Mici Gold" micigold@sympatico.ca, June 3, 2003

SF/F/H MARKETS

After Dark-Premiere Radio Networks, 777 NE 7th St., Suite 207, Grants Pass OR 97526. Editor: Lisa Lyon. "After Dark is currently seeking nonfiction articles and essays which reflect the general subject matter discussed on America's largest overnight, radio program in history, Coast to Coast AM. A list of past guests and programs is listed on [the Web site]. Writers are encouraged, if they are unfamiliar with the program, to visit the Web site for a sampling of the types of guests and subject matter which are relevant to the newsletter."

"In general, the areas of interest are broad. They include life after death, paranormal, psychospiritual, demonic possession, exorcism, theoretical physics, apocalypse, Earth changes, weather patterns, UFOs, alien abductions and phenomenal sightings, remote viewing, futurism and predictions, animal mutilations, spontaneous human combustion, Big Foot, Mike the Headless Chicken, toxic contrails, comets, Ancient Egypt, Fatima, brain science, cool technology, that list goes on ..."

"We are not looking for politics, most personal accounts of abductions or sightings, poetry, fiction, or articles debunking various phenomena. We are looking for pieces that are well-written, tight, entertaining, and in the case of more technical articles, easy to read. Subject matter must be treated with respect, yet a sense of humor is very much encouraged. Current news items of bizarre events are acceptable if not very long. Interviews with experts or authors are encouraged, especially if the subject matter is appropriately strange, alarming, 'out there,' magical, wondrous, or fascinating."

"For your convenience, you are encouraged to submit proposals before submitting articles. This is not required, nor is it a guarantee that approved ideas will be used in any way, shape, or form. It is strictly for your convenience, since the subject matter is so esoteric."

"Pictures and artwork relevant to the article are greatly appreciated and requested but are not compensated."

"You must own all the materials which you submit. After Dark will have no obligation to publish any materials you submit. You should also understand that After Dark may use and choose to publish similar material created by other writers, as well as by After Dark staff."

1200-1800 words (including sidebars); pays professional rates, upon publication "for rights to publish in After Dark and to reprint on the Web or for other promotions relevant to the publication and the radio program. You will not otherwise publish the article for a period of six months after its first publication in After Dark." Submit with E-mail attachment or "regular mail (preferably with floppy disc and printed manuscript)." [E-mail: DarkEditor@aol.com; www.coasttocoastam.com].

Gila Queen 120, June 2003

AUGUST 15 DEADLINE FOR THE FREE STATE PROJECT

Jacqueline Passey writes from Seattle:

"I wrote to you a few weeks ago about the Free State Project – a plan for 20,000+ liberty-minded individuals to move to one state and work together to move that state government in a libertarian direction. I'm signed up, and I and many others are very excited about this project as a possible way to bring about liberty in our lifetimes.

"Big news! We're fast approaching a big milestone for the Free State Project: choosing the state! 4,179 people have signed up already (that's 495 more since I wrote to you last), and tentative dates for the state vote have been set. If membership growth continues as expected, the Free State Project will reach 5000 in early August. State ballots will be sent out to existing members on July 15, and August 15 is the tentative deadline to sign up in order to participate in the vote. The deadline to return your ballot will be September 8, and the result will be officially announced by September 15.

"So, if you want to participate in the Free State Project and you want to help pick the state, sign up now! Also, write to all of your liberty-minded friends and encourage them to sign up. New Hampshire (my personal pick), Montana, and Wyoming are currently in the lead in unofficial polls, and the other states under consideration are Alaska, Delaware, Idaho, Maine, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Vermont.

"For more information or to sign up, visit:

www.FreeStateProject.org "

Jacqueline Passey, mail@jacquelinepassey.com,

June 21, 2003

3-DAY NOVEL CONTEST 2003

The 3-Day Novel Contest in 2003 will be handled by Blue Lake Books of Vancouver, rather than Anvil Books as in the past. The rules and a PDF registration form are available online at www.bluelakebooks.com.

“THE RULES ARE SIMPLE: Entrants must complete a registration form (pdf) and return it to Blue Lake Books along with an entry fee of \$50.00 CDN or \$40.00 US (non-refundable).

“Registrations must be postmarked by Friday, August 29, 2003 to qualify. Entrants begin writing no earlier than 12:01 a.m., Saturday (basically, Friday night), and must stop at or before 12 midnight, Monday, September 1, 2003. Novels may be written in any location (yes, the honour system still exists!) and using whatever method you choose (by hand, typewriter, word processor), as long as the copy submitted is typed, double-spaced, on 8½ x 11 (or A4) white paper, with pages numbered. (No folders, clips, or staples please.)

“In the case of those writers who choose to compose their novel in longhand, participants may use the week following the contest to have handwritten manuscripts typed and converted to hard copy.

“Send finished novels to Blue Lake Books, postmarked no later than September 7, 2003, along with:

“(1) a non-legal statement signed by a witness confirming the novel's completion over the Labour Day Weekend, and

“(2) a self-addressed envelope large enough for the novel's return (if desired).

“If mailed from within Canada, include enough postage for the cost of return. If mailed from outside Canada, a cheque or Postal Money Order in the amount of \$7.00 CDN is required for the manuscript's return (U.S. postage cannot be used in Canada).

“Manuscripts not accompanied by a SASE or sufficient return postage will NOT be returned.

“The Grand Prize Winner will be announced November 30, 2003. All entrants will receive a press release regarding the outcome of the contest. The jury consists of the editorial board of Blue Lake Books and guest writers and editors.

“SOME FURTHER GUIDELINES

“1. Outlines are permitted prior to the contest; however, the actual writing must take place during the Labour Day Weekend.

“2. Collaborations are permitted, but no more than two per novel.

“3. There are no limits to the novel's length, but entries average 100 typewritten pages, double-spaced.

“Published copies of previous 3-Day Novel contest winning entries are available.

“Yes! I want to register in the 26th Annual International 3-Day Novel Contest, to be held Labour Day Weekend 2003, from August 30th at 12:01 a.m. (basically Friday night) to Monday, September 1st at 12 midnight. I understand I am to return my finished novel to Blue Lake Books in the week following the contest (postmarked no later than September 7th!), along with a self-addressed stamped envelope (for return of manuscripts, if desired; accompanied by a cheque or money order in the amount of \$7.00 if from outside Canada; manuscripts arriving without a SASE or sufficient return postage will NOT be returned) and a statement signed by a witness confirming the novel's completion in the three prescribed days.

Entry fee: \$50 CDN / \$40 US (outside Canada)

Please make cheque/money order payable to Blue Lake Books, (non-refundable) with the following registration form (pdf) completed (form may be printed or handwritten).

Return to:
Blue Lake Books
Suite 364, 3495 Cambie St.
Vancouver, BC V5Z 4R3

If you require further information, email 3day@bluelakebooks.com.

MARKET NOTE

“I don't usually mention markets, but JEANNE CAVELOS, fair-minded sf/horror goddess that she is, is doing an anthology and wants to give a shot at it to as many writers as possible. The GLs are lengthy and must be read, so I have them in PDF to download from <http://www.darkecho.com/anthogls.pdf>.”

DarkEcho #24, June 10, 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.

::

ASTONISHING TRAPDOOR STORIES / TRAP DOOR
#22 (Robert Lichtman, editor & publisher, P.O.Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442; email to locs2trapdoor@yahoo.com; available “by Editorial Whim for The Usual (letters, contributions both written and artistic, and accepted trades) or \$5.00 per issue”)

Herewith I break an unwritten rule of this column – not to review a fanzine previously reviewed here. I reviewed the last issue of *Trap Door* about a year ago (which gives you an idea of its publication schedule), but this is a special – unique in fact – issue. The title – *Astonishing Trapdoor Stories* – gives a clue. This 60-page issue (published as usual in the folded half-lettersize of 8.5” x 5.5”) is overwhelmingly devoted to one piece of fiction, “Sense of Wonder” by Gordon Eklund. The issue has only an introductory two-page editorial (largely given over to appreciation of the late Harry Warner) and a three-page reprint (from 1946) of Charles Burbee’s “Invasion 1949” to bookend Eklund’s novella.

Eklund is a major SF writer of long-standing (he was first professionally published in 1970), but

he was a fan of some note for the decade that preceded his professional debut. In recent years he’s combined the two to write fanfiction.

“Fanfiction” is defined here as “fiction about fans”; this is its original definition and it still flourishes. Most fanfiction is short and humorous or satirical in its writing style. But some fans – notable among them Marion Zimmer Bradley in the ’50s – have written serious fiction about fans.

Most of Gordon’s previous pieces of fanfiction (all published in fanzines over the past 10 or more years) have been short and ironic. “Sense of Wonder” is at once both longer and more ambitious, incorporating an actual SF plot (time-travel) and a journey back to the days when Hugo Gernsback was cooking up the first issue of *Amazing Stories*. The story is told first-person by Charlie Frap, and has the feel of a loopy ’40s time-travel story by Robert Bloch – but translated into fannish terms: a fannish “Lefty Feep” story. I’m not convinced by its time-travel logic (which seems to me to have several huge holes), and I’ve written a letter to Lichtman and Eklund about that, but I am impressed by the overall concept and execution of the story, which is fully professional in quality.

I’m also very impressed by the *look* of this issue, which is completely due to artist Dan Steffan, who has illustrated the entire issue. The front cover – logo and all – is marvelously evocative of the SF pulps of the ’40s, while the back cover creates the cover of the April 10, 1936 issue of *Time* magazine – the one with Hugo Gernsback on the cover (in “Sense of Wonder”’s universe, anyway) – with striking fidelity to the look of the magazine at that time. Inside the issue Dan opens Gordon’s story with a double-page spread and follows that with five full-page illos. And his half-page illo-title for the Burbee short (a delightful story which could have appeared in an early issue of *F&SF*, but didn’t) is a bold piece which stands out on its own. Steffan is long overdue a Fan Artist Hugo; he towers over recent winners.

Conventions and Other Events

July 2003

July 11-13: **Toronto Trek 17**, Regal Constellation Hotel, Toronto, ON. SF media convention. Guests: James Marsters, Julie Caitlin Brown, Erin Gray, Gil Gerard. Memberships: See website. For more information, www.tcon.icomm.ca.
(Lloyd Penney's con list, Jan. 03 update)

July 12-13: **Animethon 10**, Hotel TBA, Edmonton, AB. Animé convention. Guests and memberships: TBA. For more information, www.animethon.org or www.anime-alberta.org/animethon.
(Lloyd Penney's con list, Jan. 03 update)

July 25: **Anime Evolution 2003**, an anime con at Simon Fraser University (Burnaby Campus), Burnaby, BC. Guests TBA. Memberships C\$25 at the door. See <http://www.animeevolution.com>.

August 2003

Aug. 15: *American Splendor*, *Freddy vs. Jason* and *The Medallion* previews in movie theatres.

Aug. 15-17: **Dragonflight 2003**, a gaming con at Seattle University, Seattle, WA. See www.dragonflight.org

Aug. 15-17: **Con-Version XX**. Westin Hotel, Calgary, AB. SF convention. Guests: Terry Brooks, Esther Friesner, Charles deLint, Robert J. Sawyer. Memberships: TBA. For more information, see www.con-version.org.
(Lloyd Penney's con list, Jan. 03 update)

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.
(Lloyd Penney's con list, Jan. 03 update)

Aug. 28 – Sept. 1 - **Torcon 3 / Worldcon 61 and CANVENTION 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 Glycer, Spider

Robinson, Robert Bloch as GoHst of Honour. Memberships: see website for breakdown. For more information, www.torcon3.on.ca.
(Lloyd Penney's con list, Jan. 03 update)

September 2003

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.
(Lloyd Penney's con list, Jan. 03 update)

Sept. 19-21: **Foolscape V** - Bellevue, Washington (General SF with an emphasis on written SF - more information and link coming soon)
(Northwest SF Resources, © Jack Beslanwitch, Apr. 03 download)

October 2003

Oct. 3 – 5: **Anglicon XVI** - SeaTac, Washington (Annual British Media Convention)
(Northwest SF Resources, © Jack Beslanwitch, Apr. 03 download)

Oct. 10-12 - **VCon 28**, Hotel TBA, Vancouver, BC. SF convention. Guests: TBA. Memberships: Can\$25/US\$20 to May 31, more after. For more information, write to VCon 28, c/o 2116 Macdonald, Main floor, Vancouver, BC V6K 3Y5 or vcon@shaw.ca.
(Lloyd Penney's con list, Jan. 03 update)

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. A make-your-own-program fanzine fans' convention. Room rates: \$95/night single or double, extra persons \$20/night, plus 9.5% sales tax; suites available for \$175/night. Membership rates: 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 Ditty 16 website, <http://home.att.net/~ditto16/>

Hugo Nominee Reviews

by Donna McMahon

A couple of years ago, seized by some eldritch whim, I decided to review all the Nebula nominees, and subsequently I did the same for the Aurora Awards. This year, since I'll be casting a Hugo ballot at Worldcon in Toronto, I resolved to read and review all five nominees for Best Novel:

BONES OF THE EARTH, Michael Swanwick (Eos)

HOMINIDS, Robert J. Sawyer (Tor)

KILN PEOPLE, David Brin (Tor)

THE SCAR, China Miéville (Macmillan; Del Rey)

THE YEARS OF RICE AND SALT, Kim Stanley Robinson (Bantam)

Well.... so much for resolutions. I won't go so far as to say that this is a terrible year, but it sure isn't a year for somebody with my taste in reading. I reviewed *THE SCAR* back in February, rating it as a flawed but spectacularly imaginative and beautifully written novel, and that's the only detailed review you're going to see. However, since I went to the trouble of borrowing all these hefty hardcovers from the library (and nearly broke my shoulder lugging them around) I'll toss out some brief, highly opinionated comments.

BONES OF THE EARTH - This time travel/dinosaur novel has a convoluted (literally) plot that takes place in half a dozen different time periods, and involves a group of paleontologists who have been offered their dream project - studying real live dinosaurs in their natural setting. Of course, everything has a price, and our paleoprotagonist fears the shady, mysterious operators of the time travel technology. Readers who enjoy keeping track of intricate time paradoxes and who are into dinosaurs may well like this book, but it is almost entirely plot driven and the characters failed to seize my interest. About half way through I discovered that I didn't CARE who had done/would do what to whom when (or how often in different time lines), and I fled.

HOMINIDS - This near future SF novel follows two groups of physicists: Ontario-based researchers carrying out experiments in the underground Sudbury Neutrino Observatory, and their counterparts in an alternate timeline where humans died off and Neanderthals developed an advanced global culture. On the positive side, this is the least windy Hugo contender, with the most straightforward and coherent plot, and an earnest attempt to speculate about Neanderthals. Deficits include entire chapters where people sit around regurgitating everything the author knows about Neanderthals (or physics), a jarring rape scene that is unnecessary to the story, and a pacifist-fascist Neanderthal culture which fails to convince.

KILN PEOPLE - What would it be like if you could make a copy of yourself - not a clone, but just a cheap, temporary xerox who could be dispatched to do anything you really don't want to do? Well, in Brin's future U.S., this technology exists and everybody is using it. People send their duplicates to drudge away at the office while they go to the beach, or they send copies to play extreme sports and then download the memories later without risking so much as a bruise. And for a private detective,

it's handy to run off a bunch of 24 hour copies to send on boring or dangerous assignments, which is exactly what our hard-boiled protagonist does at the start of this novel. He makes three duplicates who swiftly become entangled a hazardous case involving the company that owns the copying technology.

I'll give Brin this - he's given whole new meaning to the term "serial first person narrative." Four versions of his protagonist take turns telling the story, which is further complicated by the fact that all the other characters have multiple copies running around. If you have patience for complex detail and enjoy hard-bitten detective stories you may want to read this, but I did not. Once again, this story is not character driven and by the half way point Brin's macho detective had failed to engage my interest or sympathy. Finally, I had recently read the very similarly themed SF/detective novel *ALTERED CARBON* which leaves this book entirely in the dust.

THE YEARS OF RICE AND SALT - Fans of Kim Stanley Robinson will probably enjoy this alternate history of Earth, which follows a very similar formula to his Mars novels. In this case, Robinson's starting point is the 8th Century AD, when the Black Death kills off 99% of Europe's population (instead of one third) resulting in very different social/political/religious/scientific scenario where the Muslim and Chinese civilizations carve up the world between them.

This is certainly an interesting concept, but *YEARS OF RICE AND SALT* is not a novel - it's really a single-author anthology with a central theme. There is a unifying conceit: every few chapters all the characters die off, then they assemble in the afterlife, argue about the meaning of existence, and go back for another round of reincarnation. By this method Robinson jumps forward by decades or centuries, and moves from El Andalus (Muslim Spain), to Mecca, to China, and so on. In each instalment we witness a major event or scientific advancement, and characters spew information about physics, astronomy, God, the status of women in Islam, or the evolution of Chinese government. Many of these segments have interesting sequences (such as the Chinese discovery of North America) but they are not coherent stand-alone stories, nor even successful mini biographies.

Information-driven doesn't begin to describe this book. And as a method for de-motivating the character-driven reader, killing off all the characters every fifty pages is a humdinger. As with the Mars trilogy, I found this book easier to put down than pick up and eventually it started gathering dust.

So there we have it - one massive Fantasy tome and four heavy duty Guy-Fi books which left me wondering whether the Hugo is awarded for fiction-writing or research, and why neither female readers nor authors seem to be represented.

Or maybe it's just a terrible year. <g>

Colophon

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

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F.R.E.D., the weekly gathering of BCSFAns and all others interested in coming, happens every Friday at 8:00 p.m. at the Jolly Alderman Pub, 500 West 12th Avenue (entrance on Cambie Street, just south of 12th Avenue), in the ground floor of the Plaza 500 Hotel (diagonally across from Vancouver City Hall).

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Creative Sociology

Part 3

Cyteen (C.J. Cherryh)

C.J. Cherryh's future history gives a far less nebulous picture of a rigorous psycho/sociology. In Cherryh's "Merchanter" history (outlined in *Downbelow Station* and subsequent novels), interstellar colonies have to force-grow the population and labour force they need, in order to establish a self-reliant state. They mass-produce artificially-incubated human zygotes *in vitro*. These "azi" (for "artificial zygote incubation," perhaps?) are selected for useful genotypes (for strength, for immunity to disease, etc.), but they are also conditioned from birth with teaching-tapes, in an effort to produce predictable skill levels in *azi*. Many *azi* are eventually prepared for independent citizenship. Their conditioning is a set of tools – hypnotic drugs, and teaching tapes – for raising people efficiently, in great numbers, to meet the industrial and colony demands for specifically skilled labour.

In *Cyteen*, Cherryh goes into detail on the workings of the "Reseune" (21) research and production corporation. It not only raises most *azi* in its interstellar Union, it provides most of the teaching-tapes used throughout the Union by *azi* and citizens alike; and nearly all technological development in embryonics, embryology, and developmental psychology.

By the time the action takes place, Reseune has accrued so much political power, it is a major official constituency in itself and a nearly-sovereign power. For many years, Reseune is led by Ariane Emory, a prominent researcher and practitioner in prescriptive developmental psychology. Emory is the originator of a "flux-matrix" approach to the creation and management of *mindsets*. (This and other "-set" compounds in the novel seem to mean any group of factors, and anything analogous to a program, which acts on a human being.)

The story of *Cyteen* is, firstly, the story of implementing Emory's "psychogenesis" project – in this case, striving to recover the talent, the mind of a genius, as well her body – following Emory's assassination. Only later, as the clone grows up, do we discover Emory's further project: "*sociogenesis*" – the formation and modification of *societies*. And all the while, politics and intrigues thicken around Emory the clone.

It is worthwhile to look at the models Reseune staff use in their work. For their practical purposes, *azi* and CIT (Citizen) *mindsets* alike are seen as the combinations that "genesets" plus "psychsets" combine to create in people. Reseune's educational tapes are quite open efforts to produce predictable skill levels in subjects, tailored for their sets." *Azi* are simply as programmed as people can be, in the Union. Tape training is highly dependable by this period, but in *azi*, it produces "passive-dependent" personalities, not flexible, inventive or independent ones. It also creates distinct second class of people, who depend on Citizens (anyone not force-raised) for direction. Teaching in this mode, it develops, is very little removed from *creating a mind* itself, if you start on a child early enough; but the teaching tapes are distinct from the "deepset" tapes, which build predictable personalities. Once individual behaviour can be conditioned, and sanctioned by widespread practice, is it so far a step to conditioning social behaviour? Part of the discourse throughout *Cyteen* assumes that tape-teaching, *à la* Reseune – the means of imparting values and associations, as well as skills and knowledge – turns out to have a powerful influence on the shape of societies.

At one point Ariane junior is presenting an analytical exercise, to speculate how well certain deepset instructions will be passed on in a fictional society. Her instructor says:

"I asked Florian and Catlin how they'd interpret that instruction to *defend the base* (my italics – GS). Florian said you just build defenses around the perimeter and wait if you're sure you're the only intelligence there. Catlin said that was fine, but you train your people for the next generation. Florian agreed with that, but he said they couldn't all be specialists, somebody had to see to the other jobs. But their psychsets aren't in the group. ...

"I'd tend to agree with them, except everybody will have to be trained to some extent or you can't follow your central directive and you'll have some who aren't following it except by abstraction. Once you get that abstraction, that growing potatoes is *defense*, then you've got a considerable drift-started. Everything becomes interrelated. Your definition of *base* may or may not drift at this point, and if I were in charge, I'd worry about that.' ...

"I've handled that abstraction,' she said, 'so that there is a change like that. Because they're not stressed and there isn't an Enemy early on. But I think you're right, two variables is going to blow everything full of holes.'

"*Maintain* would have been a more variable word than *defend*,' Justin said, 'but *defend* brings all sorts of baggage with it, *if* any of your group is socialized. And you say three are. The AJ, the BY and one of the IUs. Which means, you're quite right, that you've got three who are likely going to do the interpretation and the initial flux-thinking; which means your value-sets are going to come very strongly off these three points. Which is going to hold them together tolerably well to start with, because they're all three military sets. And they're likely going to see that '*defend the base*' is a multi-generational problem. ..." (22)

This sort of shorthand terminology tends to make technical conversations in *Cyteen* opaque.

Cyteen is rather like an onion. Behind a story of technology and intrigue in the future is a story about a child growing up, and struggling for her own identity; behind the story of her training to be Ariane Emory is her detective story, discovering Emory's growing concern with sociogenesis; and at the core, the discovery that a culture may act like a self-perpetuating program ... and it might have a serious bug in it.

On a hidden, "delayed-mail" computer file, Ariane senior writes to her clone:

"You are not my life's work ... My life's work is not psychogenesis, but sociogenesis ...

"I can tell you in capsule form, young Ari, as I have told the press and told the Council repeatedly: but few seem to understand the basics of what I am saying, because it runs counter to short-term goals and perceptions of well-being. I have not been able to model simply enough the complex of equations that we deal with; and I fear demagogues. Most of all I fear short-term thinkers.

"The human diaspora, the human scattering, is the problem. The rate of growth that sustains the technological capacity that makes civilization possible is now exceeding the rate of cultural adaptation, and distance is exceeding our communications. The end will become more and more like the beginning, scattered tribes of humans across an endless plain, in pointless conflict – or isolate stagnation – unless we can condense experience, encapsulate it, replicate it deliberately in CIT deep-sets – unless psychogenesis can work on a massive scale, unless it can become sociogenesis and exceed itself as I hope you will exceed me. ...

"One must pass the right things on. Experience is a brutal and imprecise teacher at best.

"And the time at which all humanity will be within reach, accessible to us – is so very brief. ...

"If I had done nothing at all, I foresaw a war that the human species might not survive: too much of it resides only on two planets and depends on too few production centers ..." (23)

THE SPECULATIVE PICTURE OF FUTURE SOCIAL SCIENCE IN SF; SUMMARY

Critical Assumptions

Asimov assumed, for the Foundation series, that very large populations show predictable, sequential patterns of behaviour, over historical spans of time; and that some millennia in the future, mathematical tools would exist to describe and predict them.

Heinlein and Anderson assumed for their future histories that the factors in social situations could be analyzed, symbolized, and their consequences or appropriate interventions logically inferred. Anderson was far more specific about sources for key concepts, and for analytical tools. Kingsbury assumed the primacy of games theory to model, and intervene in, dysfunctional interactions.

The common picture that these SF authors paint is a picture of a professional, bending over a computer screen, a notebook or some foolscap pages, analyzing compiled sociological data in a form of symbolic logic, or planning a psycho-social "intervention" that way.

By now, as much as fifty years since the Asimov and Anderson stories were written, this image seems a bit facile or reductionist. One is tempted to think that these authors, in their period, confused science with engineering and assumed sociology would conform to engineering standards of practice. (Of course it didn't, but the reasons bear articulating.)

It isn't hard to see the evolution of ideas which led to this professional image. Asimov was particularly given to documenting his reasoning. In one of his non-fiction essays he described the classic sequence of events duplicated with great fidelity in a) the "Glorious Revolution" in England, b) the French Revolution, and c) the Russian Revolution. Other historical/sociological patterns are not hard to find. (24) I myself wrote a formula for another, fairly classic sequence of events, almost exactly duplicated through the rise and fall of

the Ku Klux Klan, in the U.S.; the rise and fall of the Nazionale Sozialistische Partei Arbeiter, in Germany; and the rise (and survival) of the Afrikaner Broederbond, in South Africa. I could also cite the classic historical sequence that produces the myth of the Once and Future King, not only in Britain but in several countries across Europe; or the recurring myth that the "real" Czar had escaped from the Court, and was rallying an army to wrest back his throne (a sequence not unknown even in the Roman Empire. But I've said all this before.

Granted, the examples above pertain to the largest social groups we have built – the nation-states. Recurring patterns in much smaller groups, however, have become clearer in recent decades, such as family abuse repeated through generations. When popular nonfiction titles include *Co-Dependent No More* and Wayne Kritsberg's *The Adult Children of Alcoholics Syndrome* (26), at the least, you know that the idea of reiterating, destructive behaviour patterns has sunk into popular culture.

I am not persuaded that a social science as Poul Anderson wrote about it is farcical or ludicrous in principle. (You can persuade me if you like.) There seem to be some practical obstacles, though.

Asimov, Anderson, and Cherryh assume that if a future social science could be powerfully effective, trained specialists might find themselves the only ones aware, concerned, or able to deal with impending social problems.

This raises some automatic questions, at least for a twentieth-century, North American audience. Can we just accept the assumptions in the stories mentioned above, and go on reading? The *likelihood* of effective social science entirely aside, can we buy the premise that manipulating people and their social behaviour is a fit occupation for anyone? On the one hand, we are not generally prepared to lend credence to the idea of effective psychosocial intervention; there is a fairly common sentiment that social work doesn't work, that you can't effectively change the cultural, prevalent ways in which people interact. On the other hand, we are prepared to be powerfully uneasy, and smell something rotten, around anything that smacks of "manipulation" – and statements that it's "for a good purpose" only confirm that impression. One of Anderson's characters raises the question whether anyone has any business dealing with others this way; the answer of another character is that such a specialist has to assume responsibility, to his society, for his knowledge.

Reality's answer is a bit different. If one examines a number of undergraduate papers in different areas of social science, he can have the impression that anyone at all who studies people has his or her hands full, just to record and tabulate data, and identify what are the operative factors in human behaviour, even in quite restricted contexts. Not very firm evidence, perhaps, but suggestive. From a speculative viewpoint, one is reminded of Tycho Brahe ... and astronomers for thousands of years before him ... devoting lifetimes just to recording and tabulating celestial motions. Perhaps we have yet to discover a Kepler, or Newton, in our midst. I'm not holding my breath. Are you?

The frequent premise in the stories described above is that qualified professionals in the future, who modify the behaviour of groups it when some criterion requires it, will eventually have to operate autocratically. Probably this owes more to the authors' need to complete and sell a story, than to paternalism. The Competent Man may be an outdated SF hero, but he still sells books.

It might be important to compare the speculative image of social science with the reality; to ask, how does SF social science look to a sociologist? Or, alternatively, why *doesn't* sociology work like engineering?

(to be continued)