

Tightbeam 195

For Members of The National Fantasy Fan Federation



September 1995

Table of Contents

Editorial by Diane Miller.....	1
Obituary.....	2
N3F History by Donald Franson.....	3
Letters of Comment:	
Stephen K. Metzger.....	4
Mike Deckinger.....	7
Dorothy Kurtz.....	8
Kerri Raw.....	9
Dr. Bob Blackwood.....	10
Elizabeth Phillips.....	10
Jeff Black.....	11
Jeffrey Kasten.....	11
Debra Lucas.....	12
Jennnifer M. Mackay.....	13
Fred Schütz.....	15
Charles D. & Barbara Brown.....	16
Margaret (Mickey) E. Howard Williams.....	16
Franz H. Miklis.....	17
Nicole DuBow.....	17
Penina Keen Spinka.....	18
Eugene Austin.....	19
John D. Rollins.....	20
Confessions of An Art Card Addict by Cardia.....	22
Virtual Reality and Other Electronic Intimacies by Howard L. Davidson..	23

Art by Heather Spears (Front cover, page 4, page 29, back cover)

All artwork in this issue of *Tightbeam* is drawn by Heather Spears. Each picture is a pencil drawing of Samuel R. Delany, the Guest of Honor at the 1995 World Science Fiction Convention. Heather is an artist and writer. She has won awards for her poetry and has two novels published, *Moonfall* and *The Children of Atwar*. Heather hails from Copenhagen, Denmark. [Her address is Thorvaldsensvej 10, st., 1871 Copenhagen, Denmark]

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Editorial by Diane Miller

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Tightbeam is late AGAIN this month. I managed to figure out that the SFRA meeting was going to make last issue late, but I didn't figure out that my vacation to Scotland and Intersection was going to make this issue late. Apologies. My report follows:

The five minute report of
The five minute tour of
Scotland, England & France
Including Intersection,
The 53rd World Science Fiction Convention

Why the five minute tour? Because with only two weeks overseas, we tried to cram as much sightseeing in as possible. It was a good thing there was a Worldcon in between to give us gals a rest. I traveled with my sixteen year-old daughter, Amanda and my friend, Lee Troutman-Von Ruden. We all have some Scottish heritage, (me & Amanda - McLinden and Grey; Lee - Graham) and our clan affiliations were landed in the Glasgow area, so it was really exciting to be there.

The good news was that there were close to 4000 people at Intersection, so they should at least break even financially. The Bad news was John Brunner died of a massive stroke on August 25th. I had just been talking to him the night before in the SFWA suite.

All the artwork in this issue of *Tightbeam* is by artist and author Heather Spears. I met Heather at a dinner gathering at Intersection. She is a fun, talented and lovely lady. Heather is a prize winning poet and has two post apocalyptic novels out, *Moonfall* and *The Children of Atwar*. The novels are published by Beach Holme. If you are interested in writing to Heather, her address is Heather Spears, Thorvaldsensvej 10, st., 1871 Copenhagen, Denmark. Not only was Intersection international, but so is this issue of *Tightbeam*, with an artist from Denmark and letters from Germany and Austria.

Baltimore won the Worldcon vote for 1998, so Worldcon will not be Labor Day weekend in

1998. Personally, I was rooting for Boston, but Baltimore was my second choice.

Lois McMaster Bujold won the Novel Hugo for *Mirror Dance*. Mike Resnick won best Novella for *Seven Views of Olduvai Gorge*. *The Martian Child* by David Gerrold won best Novelette and Joe Haldeman picked up a Hugo for his short story, *None So Blind*. "All Good Things" -- *Star Trek: The Next Generation* won best Dramatic Presentation. *Interzone* picked up the "Locus" award (best Semi-Prozine) and Dave Langford got the Fan Writer award and his fanzine, *Ansible*, won the fanzine award. Jeff Noon won the John W. Campbell Award.

Intersection took place in the Scottish Exhibition Center, just a five minute walk from our University of Glasgow flat. Most of the parties took place in the Forte Crest and Center Hotels and were much more combined than US parties usually are.

I missed the opening ceremonies, taking care of travel business, but I really enjoyed Chip Delany's Guest of Honor speech and the closing ceremonies were fantastic with the laser light show. The fireworks on Saturday night were great too.

While at Intersection, I met Neffers, Leyla K. Harding, Taras Wolansky, and Terry McGarry. Also saw Forry Ackerman. We never did manage to all get together for any kind of N3F event.

I did manage to collect plenty of hugs and kisses at Worldcon, including a kiss from Joe Haldeman after he won his Hugo. I also managed to hurt Seth Briedbart's feelings; seems he doesn't like being referred to as "another short bald guy" <grin> even if it is absolutely true.

Ross Pavlac bought a complete Scottish daywear outfit including kilt in the Ross clan hunting tartan. He showed up at the business meeting in full dress! Then he worked for Boston the rest of the day in it and attended the parties that night (Saturday). He looked fantastic. Sure do like those men in kilts! Maria bought a cane so that she could keep the ladies from personally finding out what he wears under

his kilt <grin>. Maria told me that she had to teach him how to sit and to bend in a "skirt."

Ross, Maria, Lee, Amanda, and Mike Glycer and I went out to dinner that night to the Icelandic restaurant across the street from the Glasgow Cathedral. Beautiful view. You cook your own food on a hot rock! Fun. Mike Glycer and I shared the "meat fantasy" since you have to have two or more people for that meal (venison, beef, lamb and chicken). Since I talked him into it, I did the cooking. Ross told me I'm going to have to join a 12 step program to quit being an enabler for Worldcon chairs. Maybe he's right, I shared a taxi with Dave Clark over to crash the Tor party the night before, that night I helped Kathleen Meyer at the Chicago party taking pre-supports, and John Mansfield still expects me to help with ConAdian stuff.

Around the Worldcon, I tried to see everything. Didn't succeed, but I had fun trying: London - St. Paul's Cathedral and the Tower of London and a bus tour, Trafalgar Square, and the National Gallery, Inverness, submarine ride in Loch Ness with Wombat and Jeremy Bloom, Drumnadrachit and dinner and whiskey tasting at the Hunters Bar Restaurant (excellent meal), Scottish highlands - Tarbet on the ocean and dinner at the Seafood Restaurant (fantastic view), Glen Ord distillery, Robie Falls, Ullapool, Blair Castle at Blair Atholl. I'm having Inverness FAXed over as soon as I can track down the "Municipal Baud Rate" -- I love that city!! Dalwhinnie distillery tour. The military Tatoo at Edinburgh. The restaurant and party tour of Glasgow. St. Mungo's museum of religious life in Glasgow, and a walking tour of the town. The Glasgow museum. On back to Edinburgh for an actual tour of the castle, and shopping. Then down to London in time to catch the train to the ferry for France. Paris - the Arch de Triumph, Champ de' Eliesy (and McDonalds restaurant, only thing we could afford in France), to the top of the Eiffel Tower, and through seven parts of the Louvre (dead feet, real Michelangelo statues, the Mona Lisa) and Notra Dame cathedral. Back on the bus to the ferry to the train to London, find our rooms and crash. MS. SAIGON at the theatre. Very impressive. Then I did Oxford and Windsor while Lee (who had hurt her toe) and Amanda did Harrods department store. Then we met the last night for CATS at the New London Theatre. Saw OUTBREAK on

the plane flight back after reading *Hot Zone* on the trains and ferry. I think I had a great time. I'll let you know as soon as I recover from jet lag and get my thoughts organized. I tried to see too many things and go too many places. Thank goodness there was a Worldcon in between to slow things down.

Hey! Did you see the article on the SFRA meeting in *Locus*? Nice pictures, Bob Blackwood. And Amy Sisson got her first by-line. Congrats Amy.

=END=

OBITUARY:

John Brunner (1934-1995)

Author John Brunner (Preston Crowmarsh) died at Worldcon on August 25th, 1995 from a massive stroke. He was struck early in the morning and passed on later in the afternoon. The night before his death, he partied with friends in the SFWA suite until early hours of the morning.

Brunner was the author of *Shockwave Rider*, *The Sheep Look Up*, and *Stand on Zanzibar* among his most famous works. He was the founder and administer of the Martin Luther King Memorial Prize from 1968-1993. He served as past vice-president of The Science Fiction Foundation, and past chairman of the British SF Association.

Brunner received the British Fantasy Award, 1965; the Hugo Award for best novel, 1969; the British Science Fiction Award in 1970 and 1971; the Prix Apollo (France), 1973; the Cometa d'Argento (Italy) in 1976 and 1978; the Europa Award, 1980; the Premio Italia (Italy) in 1983; the European SF Award, 1984; and the Gigamesh Prize (Spain) in 1986. John was the special guest of the 1995 Science Fiction Research Association conference.

John Brunner is survived by his wife, LIYI, and their two dogs who still reside south of Avalon near London.

N3F HISTORY

by Donald Franson

Recruiting Through the Years

Every club needs to recruit, but the N3F more so, because of attrition. It seems the average fan's activity lasts about three years. This is just a guess, but it accounts for the necessity of replacing the membership of N3F regularly. This doesn't necessarily mean that the members are no longer happy with the club, but that they have gone on to other things that take up their time. Long ago, it was decided that the N3F was "The Gateway to Fandom," so in the early days, efforts were made to get new fans into N3F from the outside.

By outside I mean not from conventions, other clubs, or even from fanzines; but from total strangers, who were nevertheless SF or fantasy fans. These were to be found in the letter columns of the prozines. The Welcommittee, in fact, started out by writing letters to these "letterhacks," if their addresses were listed, which was mostly the case. They were even sent a "welcome booklet," which explained all about fandom (not just the N3F). When the Welcommittee became only a means of welcoming new N3F members into the club that had already joined, it was left to the recruiting department to contact the prozines' letter-writers. This is occasionally done today, but not very often. (Joy Beeson had some success recently.) It would be a good idea to do as they once did, assign N3F members to recruit from various prozines. We might be surprised at the number of members who might be found this way.

Of course, the magazines have now been surpassed or eclipsed by paperback books. Now these do not have any letter columns. How to reach their readers? There is a way: through book stores and chains of book stores.

Does anyone remember T. Kevin Atherton? He was one of those "three-year-wonders." In his short N3F life, he did a lot of things to recruit new members into N3F. One of them was getting a letter in Xignals, the house organ of Waldenbooks, the circulation of which was in the millions, as it went to all stores of the chain, nationwide. I wish I had that issue of Xignals, so I could find out exactly what Kevin said, and what the editor said about the N3F. The readers wrote to Kevin for membership blanks in droves, and new memberships in N3F came in to the secretary by the dozens, overworking Lola Andrew to the point of almost complaining! I figured he was responsible for about 150 members all told, and they were good solid members, many of whom stayed with us. This experiment should be repeated, if we can contact anyone in charge of book chain house organs, and we can somehow get a mention of N3F in them.

Book stores can be contacted in other ways. You have seen the current Hugo winners list, a tri-fold leaflet which is just the thing bookstore managers would want too, because it may sell more books that are still in print that won Hugos. Go to your friendly neighborhood bookstore with a stack of them. This harks back to the early days, when local clubs put notes in book stores about their meetings.

The Hugo list, by the way, almost was a disaster. Catherine Mintz found such a list that someone else had put out, and said she thought there was a mistake in it, and asked me to check it out. It was full of mistakes, which I corrected. Seems they copied directly, and wrong, from the DeVore-Franson book, taking the first name on the page as the winner, instead of the bold-face type listing. So I feel no obligation for using someone else's idea in this case!

DF.



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Diane: This letter will be a response to the LOCs in TB193, and I will try to mail it for one day delivery tomorrow (the 19th, deadline day). Comments on the Babylon 5 First Season Summary will have to keep until next week.

P. 1: Congrats on your first paid writing work. Doing the reviews must be quite a thrill. I hope Magill likes what you do. Good luck!

P. 2: You're small, cute and sexy, so I could imagine you as "door bimbo" at Minicon. Wish I was there to render a well mannered ogle! It must have been fun to meet so many authors; I've always found Alex and Phyllis Eisenstein to be especially good company, and Bill Roper is nice to have around. All three were at Picnic, recently, held here in Chicago. Phyllis is working on a new novel. Bill Roper brought some musical friends who played and sang folk (not filk) on their guitars.

P. 5: Tim Esalen: You have an interesting list of questions there, but first, congrats on being selected to participate! It must be neat to receive this kind of recognition. I hope what follows will be of some use to you.

Personally, what I hate most is when one panelist tries to dominate a panel. It is

not fun to watch someone going on and refusing to let the other panelists have their say. It is almost as bad when one panelist cuts other panelists off and endlessly inserts his own stuff. Finally, put downs in response to audience comments/questions are not very much fun either.

What do I want most from a panel discussion? Info and views not readily available elsewhere, that's what! I am not looking to be entertained, tho a dull speaking style does not always succeed in getting points across (info is one thing, but some kind of emphazizer--wit, wordplay, whatever--can illustrate where you want the emphasis to be).

P. 6: Response to DM's comment on Laura Hazelwood's protest about the price of stamps going up: One of the reasons why I am not eager to link up to the Internet is that I have a suspicion that if we ever become dependent on just one mode of getting info, the companies owning that mode will jack up the price enormously. They would, after all, have a collective monopoly on the info distribution market. Mail for print delivery + phone lines for e-mail and such, in competition, keep both sides honest.

I vehemently disagree with Laura's comment to Keri Raw that "aggression is a part of human nature because humans are a part of

nature." Defending your turf is the part we inherit from our pre-human ancestors; aggression is a culturally learned behavior. Some good reads on this are The Compassionate Beast by Morton Hunt and (if you can endure the math) The Altruistic Personality by Samuel and Pearl Oliner.

In terms of society, I believe that honor and pride are being re-defined as the society changes; we live in a transitional period. Values have been seriously questioned in this society since the 60s, when it became clear that many of the semi-Victorian attitudes which saw us thru the Depression and World War II were not adequate to deal with the post-war changes in society. Furthermore, since our society is technology driven, it is likely that change, and the redefinitions it requires, may well be a constant, for the next few decades at least. I suspect that terms like "honor" and "pride" will mean widely different things to different people.

I agree with you that the Republican formula about legislating morality is a waste of time and that people need to learn things they can be proud of. Socialized behavior may not start from the inside (children can learn it from parents) but the learning must be internalized if it is to stick. Having marketable skills helps a lot, because they make it possible for one to contribute to the world thru job-holding.

P. 8: Debra: My sympathies to you for living in a town that has almost no SF people in it. How sad you must have felt when the local school denounced D&D as satanic! I've played the game for years and found it nothing but fun.

P. 9: Left Column: Response to your response to Roy Tackett: I marvel at your ability to watch all that TV and go out with friends and hold down a job. I'm up to my ears keeping up with DS9 & *Voyager* and *Babylon 5* plus the job plus the writer's workshop and the book discussion group. I suspect the types who tell us to "get a life" have no sense of just how busy a fannish temperament can keep you.

P. 9: Ray, if you need info about a book your public library is the place to call/go. Even if they don't own a title, they may well be hooked up to a regional or national system which does. And they should be able to track down the author and title of just about anything. If they can't, ask for Subject Collections by Lee Ash & William O. Miller,

which should direct you to collections strong in SF or many other fields.

I question whether all Cretan culture came from Egypt. I have a vague memory that the island was peopled from more than one source. P. 9: Right Column: Jacqueline Lichtenberg: I'm glad someone finally said it! H-wood is creative only in a technological sense, not in terms of new ideas, or innovative personalities or role models, or even plot lines. And, yes, all those upfront expenses do make it hard for big entertainment companies to risk something new--there are real pressures to protect their investment.

P. 10: Sarah Glasgow--I'm yet another Ladyhawke fan.

P. 11: Stella Sutkiewicz--Kira seems to be developing a romance with her old guerilla commander. It makes sense; they are both adventurous types.

P. 17: Fred H. Schütz: Right Column: I must take exception to your characterizing Mensans as people who "sit around playing puzzles and counting backwards and sideways and doing other such infantile tricks." Since when is it a crime to like games which challenge the intelligence--especially if you have a lot of it? Face it, the smarter one is, the more likely other things can come across as boring. If you have a muscle, it atrophies if it is not used, the same with smarts.

My book discussion group has considerable Mensa membership--and since it is a SF/Fantasy/Horror discussion group, I'm sure some Neffers would find it interesting.

Socially, Mensa provides a place where smart people can strut their stuff without apologizing. Our egalitarian society/ethos has a hard time with the fact of giftedness; and tends to dismiss new ideas as weird if not dangerous. There is an old Japanese axiom that the nail that sticks up is hammered down. And my feeling is that a lot of people out there would like to hammer down any sign of difference--including smarts. Excepting, of course, smartly put defenses of the status quo.

If Catholics can have the Knights of Columbus, and Afro-Americans the NAACP, why can't smart people have Mensa?

That's all for now--clear skies/live long and prosper!

For *Tightbeam* 194:

Charlie Brown: Correction to your John Donne Quote: "Any (not "no") man's death diminishes

me, because I am involved in mankind;..." TB 194, p. 5 right column. My source is Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations*, 16th ed., 1992, p. 231.

Eunice Raymond: p. 7 right column: I would like to heartily endorse your comments on fanfic. The thing I like most about it is that it "fills in the blanks" -- just how did Han Solo acquire Chewbacca as a partner? or offers a speculation on things which we will never see written -- how would Mr. Spock and Dr. Who interrelate together? What was the Emperor like when he was merely Senator Palpatine? Just how did Darth Vader become a minion of the Dark Side of the Force? These are all questions -- and I am sure there are many others -- which I am sure only fanfic will have the inclination to answer.

Harry Andruschak: (p. 10 at top of left column) -- I liked your pun. But if the dead frog kermitted suicide, perhaps we should find out why he was not kermitted for his own protection!

Joy Beeson: (p. 10 right) Re you comment about the B5 episode "Believers," -- I'll confess to having very mixed feeling about that episode, especially since I will be drawing up a living will to specify that I do NOT want extraordinary measures taken to keep my body going after brain-death has occurred. the conflict between Doctor Franklin's values (a duty to save lives) and that of the patient's parents (to live according to their religious beliefs) was well drawn. But in the end I would have opted to back the doctor, since I would consider the religious reasons for refusing a life saving operation to be essentially superstition. Yes, I know, "superstition" is a value laden term. I think I remember reading in my annotated old Testament that when God tested Abraham's faith by telling him to sacrifice his first born son, the matter ended when an animal trapped in some underbrush was offered instead. One would think that after a certain point in its development, a religion would learn how NOT to sacrifice children. Including extraterrestrial ones.

Amy Sisson: p. 11. I disagree with you completely -- if there is a surplus in the N3F accounts, it should by all means be spent on improving the publications which N3F produces. I have watched *Tightbeam* shrink and shrink over the years and have not entirely enjoyed the process; and with my eyesight, would not mind its size increasing

to accommodate a larger type font. Small does not always mean efficient -- it can mean things left out and difficulties in reading.

You're right about Trek being slow about interracial relationships. It's sad to see, especially since classic Trek produced TV's first interracial kiss. Still, I think that the day may come soon -- after all, Jake had that friendship with a Dabo girl (who was NOT black).

Roy R. Wood: p. 12 bottom of left column "...many do consider the Orthodox followers to be Protestant." I very much doubt that the Orthodox would accept that definition. Up until the ecumenism which began to be practiced in the 1960s, there were wide theological differences between Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, and Orthodoxy. although Christianity in the West may be slowly drawing together, the newspapers, at least, have not given much sign that orthodoxy and the other two are beginning to narrow the gap. Has anyone out there been following this? -- I'll confess my information may well be dated.

Lida E. Quillen: I'm another closet Mensan! And, yes, I'd like to respond to Fred Schütz's comment (in TB 193, right column p. 17) that "All those people do is sit around playing puzzles and counting backwards and sideways and doing other such infantile tricks." For one thing, complicated word and number games can be fun, especially if you have the smarts to handle them; playing such gives Mensans a chance to have fun with the thing which makes them different, that is, their smarts. Another good reason is that you don't have to apologize or risk being thought weird for your opinions. Case in point: back when I was a teenager, I liked to talk about doing genetics in human beings and got called a fascist for my trouble; these days it's genetic engineering and is Quite Respectable. I would not have had to put up with the name calling in Mensa. SF as a genre likes to think a matter through -- we've always been a literature of ideas -- and Mensans are good at thinking through an idea to its logical conclusion. SF also likes to deal with unintended consequences (e.g. post-disaster novels), something Mensa smarts can help spot early on. To sum up, Mensa is a place where thoughtfulness may be appreciated ore than in the rest of the society. Needless to say, I completely disagree with Eugene Austin (TB 194 p.16 left

columnist) that Mensans "...spend too much time sitting in circles contemplating each other's navels." -- unless, of course, you are referring to the nudist SIG [significant interest group], which contemplates anything which strikes its fancy!

Taras Wolansky: EXCELLENT Boskone report -- I especially enjoyed your account of the Hard Fantasy panel. It felt as if I was there listening to the various participants.

Re you p. 17 right column one liner "...liberalism is a religion." This is laying it on rather thick. L-ism is a set of political and social beliefs, just as is any other set of political labels. If liberalism is a "religion," then so is conservatism, fascism, communism and anarchism, to name just a few. What these "isms" CAN do is meet some of the social functions which organized religion likewise meets. For example, it gives people a social group they can identify with and offers a coherent worldview. What the "isms" don't do is deal with the questions philosophy has a hard time with, e.g. why is there a universe? Science may eventually answer the "how" of the universe, but I question if it will ever come up with an answer to why it is there at all.

As for Rush Limbaugh, the guy is into politics as entertainment, complete with (if the columns reprinted in *Liberal Opinion Week* are to be believed) misinformation, distortions, and outright lies. Of course, in politics, one man's lies is another's brilliant insight. Conservative columnists who actually know what a fact is include George Will and John Leo (whose *Two Steps Ahead of the Thought Police* is a fun read, in spots). Ellen Goodman, on the liberal side, has *Making Sense*, which is every bit as good.

That's it all for now -- Catch y'all next *Tightbeam*. FIAWOL!

* * *

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Diane: In *Tightbeam* #194, Joy Beeson mentions a "fanzine clearing house." She may be interested to learn that such a project existed for a time, though perhaps not as first envisioned by Damon Knight. When I first joined N3F in 1958, the man who recruited me, Seth Johnson (long deceased) had just begun this service. He received many fanzines on his own, in response to his unceasing correspondence, but also solicited

fan-editors to send him additional copies for the FCH. He then publicized this service, through ads in both fanzines and in classified sections of the prozines. For \$1.00, he sent an assortment of recent fanzines to anyone who requested them. The stated purpose was introducing the fan world to casual sf readers, and gaining converts to the N3F. He achieved limited success in both. Ill health finally forced him to curtail his activities.

But what really intrigued me was Donald Franson's recap of N'APA. I was an early member, joining by the 3rd or 4th mailing, and remaining active for sometime thereafter. (Also, the FAPA waiting list was probably double three years, which was almost as long as it took me to get in.).

The change from "NAPA" to "N'APA" was made by OE Belle Dietz, for two acknowledged reasons. The most notable was to avoid confusion with the mundane apa: NAPA. This, however, was hardly likely. NAPA zines were printed with more sophisticated processes than the commonly used mimeograph, ditto, or even hectograph of that day. They were uniformly quarter-page size and devoted to non-fannish topics (most often the latest self-lauded achievements of the editor).

The other, less-publicized justification dealt with the fact that "NAPA" was the name of a notorious hospital in Northern California. Norm Metcalf, an early member, even published a zine called *Sonoma*, named for a neighboring Napa county.

Early mailings lacked the heftiness achieved by the reigning apas of that time (FAPA, SAPS and OMPA). Topics centered on N3F functions for the most part, with scattered commentary in other areas. Although congeniality was stressed, there were some disagreements. The best, to my recollection, was "The Great Censorship War."

Ron Elliz (in his fanzine *Hirondel*!) had included some harmless topless cartoon. Belle Dietz suggested this was inappropriate for a mailing that would be sent to many younger members. Ellik responded by peppering his next issue with more of them.

Before sending the mailing, Belle meticulously went through Ellik's fanzine and stamped "Censored" over the offending areas. Ellik responded with some vigor, overlooking the fact that this was viewed by everyone (including the perpetrator) as a joke.

It lasted for perhaps a dozen mailings,

before the combined stress of outside demands and accelerating non-interest forced me to conclude my stay. I know nothing of what occurred following my departure, and I'm hoping this will be unearthed in future installments.

* * *

Dorothy Kurtz
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Hello all! I had a quiet Fourth of July, but the other two events during the month more than made up for the Fourth.

On Saturday, the 15th of July, I attended the "Steps to Mars II" symposium in Washington, DC. The other event was Phrolicon II, on the 28th-30th of July in Mt. Laurel, NJ.

I arrived at Washington, DC, by train from Philadelphia on Friday, the 14th of July, and took the Metro to the Farragut North Station to see the National Geographic Society's Museum. Compared to some of the Smithsonian museums, it was small but interesting. One half of the floor was about their temporary exhibit on "glass."

They covered the different uses and eras of glass, from the time of ancient Egyptians to the present day. The other half of the floor had exhibits, videos, films, and hands-on computers all covering subjects like archeology, anthropology, different sciences including space science and others. The introduction video about the museum and NGS was narrated by Leonard Nimoy.

The next day, I went to the "Steps to Mars II" symposium. This event was being held at the National Academy of Sciences Auditorium. Louis Friedman (substituting for Carl Sagan, who is still recovering from his illness) talked about what happened in the past 10 years since the last "Steps to Mars" symposium. Then he introduced Arnauld Nicogossian of the American Astronautical Society, who mainly talked about working with different nations in space, starting with Apollo/Soyuz and into the future. After the introductions were over, Roald Sagdeev, of the University of Maryland, talked about "Our Need to Explore." He mentioned what steps are needed to understand the planets: planetary astronomy, fly by orbiting, landing, sample rovers, sample return, pilot mission, and future bases on Mars. Then, Thomas Stafford and Aleksey Leonov, commanders of Apollo/Soyuz respectively,

talked about their mission and presented a film about this historic link-up, which took place 20 years ago. The highlight of the day was when astronauts Bonnie Dunbar and Robert "Hoot" Gibson, who recently returned from the Mir Space Station/Shuttle rendezvous, talked about their experience and showed a sequence of slides of the mission logo, a publicity photo of the crew, and the crew on the Mir space station. Then there was an audio link-up with the Mir Space Station where astronaut Norm Thagard reported that everything was going "good" up there in regards to food, exercise, equipment, crew co-operation, etc.

After lunch, Daniel Goldin of NASA reported on the "State of the Space Programme." He made it a point to say that our goal should be a sustained presence on Mars, not a one-shot event or a few missions, like we did with the moon. Donna Shirley of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and Alec Galeev of the Russian Space Research Institute talked about "Future Mars: The Missions, The Possibilities." They presented slides and videos of what a joint USA/Russia (and maybe other countries) mission to Mars might achieve in this and the next century. Finally, all the guests were on stage, where they were open to questions from the audience.

I did enjoy this symposium and learned a lot, but the weather didn't help much. Remember, this was the very hot weekend, when the temperatures went into the 100s in DC. While it was air-conditioned inside, walking through the scorching streets of DC, taking the slow train ride home (because, just in case the track buckled in the heat), and the hot streets of Philly and NJ, nearly did me in! Then, as if that were not enough, after about an hour of trying to cool our place, we lost power!

So, we stayed at my mother's place to cool off. The next day, the power was back on at our place--until noontime. From noon until about 6:00 pm, the electric company finally put in a new transformer, but we had no chance to cool our place down. So, if the symposium report seems a bit spotty, that's why. (I had to miss a few days of work due to a heat related illness.)

PHROLICON 11 was a fun and convenient con to attend. IT was only a 15 minute to a half-hour drive (depending on the traffic) from where I live. This is pretty much run by the Philcon Committee as a summer relaxa-

con at the Mt. Laurel Clarion Hotel. However, as soon as we set up our table, (I was running a recruitment table for the 4 space interest clubs that I belong to, especially the Philadelphia Area Space Alliance--PASA) the fire alarm sounded. At first, we thought it was a false alarm, until hotel security told us to vacate the hotel. After several minutes, we were told it was OK to go back in. I had only been in for a few minutes, when the alarm sounded again! Since the firemen were still there from the last time, we had to vacate the hotel again for several minutes. (While we were outside, waiting to go back in again, I told somebody that the first time the alarm sounded, it was just a rehearsal.) When we were allowed to go back in, the con continued uninterrupted.

There was a limited programme that was pretty good for a relaxacon. I missed most of it, since I was at my table. But during Friday night, I listened in on a costuming panel revealing how to turn thrift store items and clothes into costumes. Saturday night I went to the party in the Con Suite. The theme was to go as a character in a comic book. (I didn't. I wore one of several space related T-shirts that I own. I felt so strange looking so normal in a group of costumed characters.) After taking photos of several people in costumes, we called it a night. I also saw the art display that had a few comedy drawings, several fantasy paintings and drawings, plus some Star Trek art work done by colored pencil. My favorite piece was Henna Shapero's NFS "City of Light."

I wouldn't go a long distance to a relaxacon like Phrolicon. But as a nearby con, it was fun and worthwhile for me. I look forward to going next year--Ad Astra!

* * *

Kerri Raw
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Hiya Everyone! If you write to me, or I am on your RR, please take note of my new address. I'll be sure to remind you personally though. I start my first year at Northland on Sept. 3rd.

Does anyone know where I can get playing cards for the game Jyhad: The Eternal Struggle? I have to travel about two hundred miles to get them at the moment, and that distance is going to double when I'm at

college. I've already been trading for them, with the *Star Trek* games cards, *Bloodwars*, and *Star of the Guardians*, but I can get other cards also. Anyone willing to trade, or sell me some cards? Of course, if anyone has an address of a business that I could order them from I would be grateful.

Debra Lucas: You mentioned a vampire television series. Did you mean *Forever Knight*? I wish my cable station would carry it, but, alas, it doesn't.

Fred Schütz: I am glad to be writing to you. I agree about Q; he does seem like a spoiled child. Ever read *Q Squared* by Peter David? It's wonderful.

Roy Wood: Thanks for all of the suggested reading. I'll be sure to look those books up.

Taras Wolansky: I think that I have been insulted. Remember though that I did apologize for putting forth my political views. If I offended anyone I am truly sorry; I'll try to restrain myself in the future. I disagree with Rush Limbaugh, but I would be one of the first people to defend his right to free speech.

Riyn Gray: Hiya! I sent a letter to you quite a while back, and a SASE for info about Club Vampire. Did you get that, or do you think it might have been lost in the mail? I was hoping to hear something by now, if you are busy, which I am sure you are, I totally understand.

Everyone: I was planning on sending everyone SAS postcards this summer, but I think my budget got out of hand. I am a college student after all and have limited resources; I know, a bad excuse. I am still planning on writing to everyone individually though. Hopefully, I can reach all the new members through the Welcommittee.

Thank you if you have sent me a copy of your zine, Tom Feller and Michael McKenny. I have been collecting them as a Publicity Bureau project, and you have helped me more than you know.

If anyone else in the N3F runs a zine, please send me info on how I can obtain a copy.

Diane: If you need any help with typing, or anything else for that matter, I'd be glad to help in any way I could.

Anyway, I think I have written more than enough for one letter; catch y'all soon.

* * *

Dr. Bob Blackwood
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Diane: I think I was the guy who said, "I'll be glad to help you out with Tightbeam. I'll just jump on the old pc, and I'll type away like the experienced journalist that I am." What a mistake.

I know it sounds easy; just type the stuff up. But I forgot. I have been teaching English 102 for years. I want to change people's styles. I have entered four letters today, and I wanted to change everyone's style. I wanted to say, use more semicolons; everyone do it. Use fewer exclamation points!!! They don't make things more important!!!

Why don't people just send disks with the letters already written? Why not upload on your e-mail? Why did I open my big mouth? Why didn't I stick to teaching science fiction, literature and film?

OK, how about the shortest and most subjective movie reviews in the fanzine phantasmagoria of experience? Waterworld and Virtuosity: good action films. First post-apocalyptic polar ice cap melting film, Mr. Costner? The soundtrack on Virtuosity had me dancing in the aisles, literally, after the film ended. The Net: yawn, waste of talent. Kerri Raw: Don't be so hard on Rush. When you are cruising the interstate highways and you need someone to aggravate you enough to stay awake, Rush is there. You just can't take him seriously; he is in the entertainment business. Also, anyone who criticizes the federal bureaucracy every day is bound to be right on occasion. Just lighten up and maybe vote for the candidates Rush dumps on.

Bye.

* * *

Elizabeth Phillips
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Diane: Guess I forgot to mention that I'm a card carrying member of The Rocky Horror Picture Show Fan Club. I have it on video and watch it at least once a month (dreaming in my living room). I will admit that I am a virgin, having never seen it in a theatre. There is a theatre here that has midnight shows.

Jeff Black: I don't think the removal of Sinclair was part of the story from the

beginning. I read an article (in the Space-Time Continuum, I think) where JMS said he'd rewritten the main story and took it in a different direction. I've also read where Sinclair will continue to be part of it. (As Diane said at the end of your TB194 LOC). Personally, I hated to see him go. Besides Susan Ivanova and Talia Winters, he was a favorite.

Amy Sisson: I agree with you about being bugged by Sisko being set up with black women. I've discovered that some people, diligently involved in Trek, don't truly believe in infinite diversity in infinite combinations. If Sisko were to get "hot and heavy" with a white woman (in any incarnation) the uproar would be tremendous. No one could stand seeing a black man with a white woman. Yes, I remember he's kissed both Kira and Dax, and even slept with Dax (or so it was implied), but that was in the mirror universe and "didn't count" because it's not a constant thing. I found it strange that he dropped his pants so quickly for a "woman" he's friends with but knew as mostly a man. He could've put her off somehow. Ever seen any homosexual relationships? TNG's "The Host" played vaguely and briefly on the subject. Also "The Outcast" had gay overtones and many Trekkers didn't like it. I've read where Frakes wanted a male for that role. What would that kiss have done for ratings?

Don Fitch: Re: your comment to J. Lichtenberg in TB#194: As it said in TB#193, that was only an excerpt of a personal letter to me. Originally, it's an 8 page letter. If you'd like a copy of it, and Mrs. Lichtenberg does not disapprove, I'll send you one. There is much more detail than what was printed and includes book publishing. If you're interested, drop me a line at the address above.

Cardia: I really liked your review(?) of fantasy art Trading cards. I've only heard of three of the artists you mentioned and have some of their cards. Tim Hildebrandt--I have a Flights of Fantasy set he did (plus many extras). Don Maite--Have only 9 of his cards, and they are beautiful. Olivia is the third. Don't own any of her cards, but I'd like to. I've only seen her work in magazines and a book for sale in one of the upteen catalogs I get. I have 10 Tim White cards, which are really cool. My favorite cards are the set of Richard Corben cards I

own. I also have a Flights of Fantasy set (Horror, SF and F) by Edward Beard, Jr. and Ron Roussele II. Each different story is 30 "pages" long (it's printed on the back) and also appears to be a game, Galactic Empires, I think. Re-reading, I see you did mention Tim White. Have you tried writing to one or more of the companies that produce the cards? Taras Wolansky: I really enjoyed your Boskone Convention Report. I'm a rarity in that I've never been to any kind of con. I would've enjoyed reading more about "Bloopers and Bad Science on TV" rather than the "hard fantasy" though.

Stella Sutkiewicz: I disagree with your outcry to bring back Vedek Bareil. He'd outlived his usefulness; there was nothing else to be done with him. Killing him off was a mutual agreement between Mr. Anglino and DS9 producers. It's not the end of Kira's nurturing, gentle side; it opens the door for more romances. Bringing him back would serve no purpose (TB#193).

Lida E. Quillen: I laughed out loud at your corollary to the Theory of Searches! I read an article the other day, and it had a funny Mensa-type joke in it. Descartes walked into a bar and ordered a drink. When he finished it, the bartender asked him if he'd like another drink. Descartes said, "I think not" and, appropriately, vanished.

Harry Andruschak: Really liked your dead frog joke.

Any/everyone: Watching *Sliders*? Notice how it's becoming *Quantum Leap: The Next Generation*? Anyone out there a fan of Jacqueline Lichtenberg's Sime/Gen Universe?

That's all for this time. May you all dream of Borg.

* * *

VD

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fers: Since there is some ps named *Enterprise*, I looked the *Dictionary of American* There have been eight ships *Enterprise* in the U.S. fleet. Here is ef rundown.

I. A British supply sloop captured in 1775. It fought during the Revolutionary War and was burned to prevent capture in 1777.

II. A schooner purchased for the Continental Navy in 1776. It served until at least 1777.

III. A schooner built in 1799. It served

throughout the Caribbean and Mediterranean, including spectacular battles off the shores of Tripoli. It also fought in the War of 1812.

IV. A schooner commissioned in 1831. It patrolled South America and was decommissioned in 1844.

V. A sloop-of-war commissioned in 1877. Its busy career included a round-the-world oceanographic mission and use as a training vessel at Annapolis. Sold in 1909.

VI. A noncommissioned motorboat serving during WWI.

VII. CV6. Yorktown-class aircraft carrier commissioned in 1938. This ship has one of the most glorious histories of any U.S. ship. It fought in nearly every U.S. carrier battle of WWII, most notably the Coral Sea, Midway, Truk, Leyte Gulf, Iwo Jima and Okinawa. For a brief, perilous time in late 1942, it was the only operational U.S. carrier in the Pacific. Personally, this is my favorite *Enterprise*. Sadly, it was scrapped in 1959. Read *The Big 'E'* by Commander Edward P. Stafford, U.S.N., for a detailed history.

VIII. CVN65. This is the current *Enterprise*, the nuclear aircraft carrier launched in 1961. This ship was seen in *Star Trek IV*. (Actually another carrier stood in for the *Enterprise* since it wasn't available for filming when the film was shot. I forget which carrier was actually used.)

I hope this letter clears up some of the questions.

* * *

Jeffrey Kasten
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I was very pleased to see the season summary for *Babylon 5*, which is done in a style rather similar to my Trek articles for *Tightbeam* (he said modestly). Nice job, Amy. Eugene Austin: Miscegenation is sex between two different races, not species, which is what's shown on Trek. And Trek's "basis" for it (established in *The Paradise Syndrome* and *The Chase*) is total garbage. Even if humanoids were seeded on many different planets, allowing human actors to play aliens, most of these groups still wouldn't be able to have children together. They're just too different. For example, Vulcans have green (copper based) blood, a heart where the right kidney should be, and live more than twice as long as humans do. These differences alone already make them more

different from us than chimpanzees and gorillas, who at least have similar blood to humans and internal organs in the same areas. This explanation also violates what we know of evolution. No Trek viewer should accept this so-called biology as being remotely plausible.

Kerri Raw: I don't think too many fans are having trouble disliking various *Voyager* characters. I agree with B'Elanna's opinion of Paris myself (you're a pig) though the actor does a good job of playing him. Many fans apparently hate Neelix, presumable because he's often used as comic relief. All the acting by regulars has been fine, and there's been no characters with obvious miscasting and/or early development problems like we've previously seen with Chekov, Troi, Wesley, Yar or Dax.

Charles Broerman: Thanks for the nice comments about my reviews. Lynne Holdom once nicely suggested publishing them together too. I do hope to eventually clean them up and collect them, but first I've got to rewatch all those second season *Next Gens* (the Pulaski season) and critique them, since I missed doing so the first time!

Bernie Nicewicz: Reading the Lensman series for the first time some 15 years ago, I was amazed at how familiar it all seemed. I suspect Doc Smith is practically in the racial subconscious of most SF readers and watchers by this point, since he's been imitated so much (even if the imitation is now most third and fourth hand, by people who've never heard of him!)

Diane: My copy of TB #194 had pages 1 & 24 blank. This is the second time that this has happened to me in a year. [Bummer! That must have happened in the printing and collating process. There isn't time in the mailing process to check individual copies, hope that isn't happening lots to other people. I will send you copies of those two pages. - DM]

Art Hayes: I'm glad not all the old time fans I've met have been as misogynistic as you. Don't be surprised when you're deluged with complaints by (justifiably) outraged femmefans.

Jeff Black: Re: *Babylon 5*: Sinclair's removal was not part of the story from the beginning. It occurred because the backers didn't like his character and made his removal a condition of renewing the show for a second season, over producer Straczynski's objections.

Amy Sisson: Although all of Sisko's would be girl friends have been black so far, the women Geordi went after (usually with no success) were a fairly even mix of Black, Hispanic and white. And, of course, Kirk never let little matters like skin color interfere with his hormones in the slightest.

Roy Wood: Re: the name of the *Enterprise*. "The name, contrary to prevalent belief, was not original." Oh really? Whose belief? The two aircraft carriers named *Enterprise* are both very well known, and how the name got picked was clearly spelled out in *The Making of Star Trek*!

Everybody: given the recent controversy over too much Trek in *Tightbeam*, I will not be submitting any more Trek articles. The claim that these articles have scared people away from the N3F hurts me a lot, even though I doubt it's true, since I've always eliminated factual mistakes (and then often saw them trashed by typos). I do consider myself primarily a reader of SF and have been proud to be able to say when episodes stole from (for example) Robert Heinlein or Donald Wollheim, who the average Trek fan has often never heard of, let alone read.

Given how fast this controversy has spread and how thin *Tightbeam* usually is (I think a size increase is in order after the large dues hike), almost any article can be criticized for being too long and hogging the issue. I'm sorry if I seemed to be doing so, but as Diane says, she can only print what people send her. [Jeff, I have enjoyed your season reviews, and would enjoy reading (and typing) more of them, but I also understand your desire to get away from doing them as I too am planning to "move on" so to speak in about a years time. Three years of editing *Tightbeam* will be enough for me. I will be moving and starting a new job, etc. by that time and it will be time for someone else in the club to take on this job and gain this experience. -DM]

* * *

Debra Lucas
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Hello, all, and how are we enjoying the heat? Seems like most of the nation is "enjoying" temps in the 90's and 100's. I heard they forecast 118 for Phoenix today (July 28).

Yes, *Highlander*, *SeaQuest*.... Maybe seems things heavy-Trekkie because there are so

many variations of the original out there now.

Oh, I'm finally getting around to reading William Shatner's book. So far, I haven't noticed the undue slashing that Nichelle Nichols (Uhura) claims Shatner does in his book. Maybe I just haven't gotten that far yet, but I'm on the chapter regarding "The Journey Home." I eventually intend on getting Nichelle's book, too. Do any of the other "crew" have books out regarding the movies or the original series?

Anyway, I am amazed at the number of SF shows out there if one looks. . . . I can't watch them all. I don't have enough hours in the day or enough VCR tape. And since my fiancé isn't a die-hard SF fan, I do have to let him watch what he wants once in awhile! Actually, it's the other way around. When we're home together, it's usually on golf, or *Beyond 2000*, or *Movie Magic*, or *The Know Zone*, etc. Sighser.

I've begun watching *Sliders* whenever I am near a tube when it's on. That is different. A kind of twist on *Quantum Leap*. *Highlander* will always be a favorite, even though I think I've seen each episode 5 or 6 times now. *SeaQuest* is excellent. I enjoy a change of scenery from spaceships and space. I'm going to miss *Earth II*. I don't watch *Forever Knight* or *Babylon 5*. They're on too late. But yes, Eunice Raymond, there are plenty of fare out there even if one isn't a Trekkie.

How many *Highlander* movies are out there? I'm missing a lot of background on the immortals because I never saw the movie that the series is based on. There was a new one out this summer, was there not?

Sarah Glasgow: Yes, I've seen a couple of the *Hercules* shows. It's on here about the time I go to bed, though, so I usually don't watch an entire show. I'm not a real big fan of mythical based SF, so . . . I don't like it as much as other shows.

I'm not actually a Rocky Horror fan, but when I'd mentioned to my fiancé I'd never seen the movie, he looked at me like I had been living in a black hole up until that moment. That weekend we rented the movie, and I had my first experience of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. My fiancé would then explain what would happen in the good old days of theater when the toast was flying and the water spraying and the dancing in front of the screen. I believe I saw a glimpse of

this in the movie *Fame*. At least now I can go around and say, "Yes, I've seen that."

Harry Andruschak: My fiancé is hooked on *SimTower*. We've had the computer tied up from Friday evening until Sunday afternoon in a Tower-a-thon. Those elevators get to sound like white noise after awhile . . . ahhhh. Amy Sisson: Re: dead characters coming back to life. This may sound corny, but . . . soap operas do it all the time and those characters do fantastically. Of course, other types of shows don't have such flexibility with the script, and no one is going to balk at a soap character coming back whereas any other show's character . . . well, I do realize not many would accept that.

Stephen Metzger: and now there are *X Files* and generation X . . . re: use of "X."

Eugene Austin: Re: *Finger Prints of the Gods* sounds a lot like *Chariots of the Gods* by Eric VonDonagan (sp.?). He had a similar theory about extraterrestrial intervention. Even the titles of their books are the same . . . hmm.

Leyla Harding: What is your full address? The post office keeps returning the letters I send. Help! They keep telling me they need the correct APO number.

Well, the summer or pre-empt season is upon us. Half the time *Voyager* gets pre-empted; the other half *SeaQuest* . . . sigh.

Interesting concept in last week's *SQ* where evil could take on a life of its own and begin killing other life. Hmm.

About enough for now. I have to bug my fiancé to put the compressor belt on my car A/C. Driving in this heat is not fun. The windows down a must. And, well, -D Laugh, there goes the "do." I arrive at the dentist looking like Jim Carrey (sp.?) in *Ace Ventura* in his psychiatric hospital scene/slo mo football pass. Clear skies.

* * *

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Hello, everyone. I finished reading TB 193 awhile back and recently enjoyed TB 194. I've seen a lot of dissing going on about Media versus Literary SF/F, and STAR TREK TAKES OVER THE ENTIRE GALAXY OF SF! in here.

I'm a SF fan (all past and current incarnations included) and I do realize that it gets a lot of attention, but it is not the

only thing out there. I happen to like both media and literary SF/F. Both can take you where you've never been before

Media SF

I have been following *Babylon 5* since the movie. I really love the series! D'Lenn and Ivanova tie for my favorite female character. Garibaldi is my favorite male character because of his sense of humor and attitude. I like all the characters, and I think the current cast is terrific.

I really enjoyed reading Amy's B5 review because I did miss a few episodes here and there. It was nice to catch up. Though I didn't agree with Amy on one point: I never liked the former station commander very much because of Michael O'Hare's acting. Other fans may have just liked Sinclair, but O'Hare's B movie acting was the least believable and most wooden I've ever seen on a TV series!

I'm pleased with Bruce Boxleitner as the new actor for station commander. (And smiling is a sign of a happy person.) I've seen his acting on *Scarecrow and Mrs. King*, and he's an improvement. Sorry, I can't take bad acting. It does horrible things to an otherwise great cast and script.

I don't mind Sinclair being on Minbar. I agree that he seems to have more going on with D'Lenn than has been revealed yet. And from what I have read, it was part of the story for him to leave from the beginning, or so J. Michael Straczynski said. But we haven't heard the last of Sinclair yet.

On Amy's other beefs: the swooshes are likened unto the ones in *Trek* and *Star Wars* and explosions in space. Harlan Ellison said on his Sci-Fi Channel commentary segment for *Sci-Fi Buzz* that he wrote to some kind of space science expert about sound in space, and the man wrote him back. He read the letter saying that something like a sonic boom would be noticed as a ship passed by the station.

Now, I've always wondered if a space ship with oxygen would blow up if hit. (I know about space vacuum though.) I'm not sure about the answer, but that hasn't kept me awake at night. Nor would I quit watching B5, *Star Wars* or ST in a fit of disgusted disbelief if I were disappointed with the answer. I'm more concerned with the characters than how the thing works, anyway, but some attempt at realism doesn't go unappreciated by me. I also love the

continuing story which runs like a novel would.

Angela Scott: Re: *Star Wars*. In contrast to SW, I believe the reason ST gained such a large fan following was because more new Trek appeared while George Lucas did other projects. ST and SW are very much a part of our pop culture, and I'm a fan of both Universes. Lucas' Universe is more chaotic than Roddenberry's, which seems to be analogous to the way things are today. There are seldom threats from Earth to humans in Trek, but other humans can be a threat to each other in *Star Wars* (The Empire had lots of humans in it).

I also enjoy *Battlestar Galactica*, the 80's rendition of Buck Rogers (though I wonder if the costume designer was drunk), *Earth II* (what I saw of it), *Lois and Clark* (it's the funniest and most upbeat version of the comic book hero I've seen yet), *Tek War*, and I'm hooked, line and sinker, on *The X-Files*! (Mulder and Scully are a great team! I love Mulder's dry sense of humor, too.)

Literary SF and Fantasy:

It offers you the opportunity to experience worlds inside the privacy of your own mind where you control your own visual mind's eye of the characters, places, etc. A book takes you to all the aliens, beings, creatures, and unusual or magical places where Hollywood dares not to tread, either for the lack of money, necessary imagination, because there are no preconceived visual images set in stone for you. Your mental image may be completely different from another reader's.

You can revisit this place anytime of the day or night you choose. You don't have to have a TV to enjoy Anthony, Asimov, Benford, Bradbury, Bova, Butler, Card, Cherryh, deLint, Dick, Dickson, Eddings, Farmer, Friesner, Gunn, Hand, Heinlein, Herbert, Jordan, Kessel, Lackey, LeGuin, Lewis, MacCleod, Moon, Norton, Reed, Rusch, Silverburg, Tolkien, Van Vogt, Williams, Zelazny or anyone else.

I read Asimov's, *Analog*, *F&SF*, *SF Age* and *Realms of Fantasy*. Short stories have a different flavor than novels, but they are just as interesting. I've rediscovered the power and effects a short story can have on the imagination and the intellect. I've read thoughtful Social SF and clear Hard SF. LeGuin had me pondering the deeper side of her short story "Solitude" in the Dec. '95 *F&SF*. It's very interesting. Check your

library for back issues (smile).

I have a serious interest in getting a list of Golden Age SF/F authors, so I can hunt for treasures in the library and used bookstores. Anyone with a good list of forgotten, overlooked or just "new to me" authors, please speak up! I did find some paperbacks of SF Masters put out by Carroll & Graf Publishers in the library, but I don't know if they're still in print at the bookstore. Help from the wiser for a twenty-year-old would be appreciated. Thank you. [An excellent place to start research would be *A Reader's Guide to Science Fiction* (A comprehensive and fascinating source-book for every reader of science fiction) by Baird Searles, Martin Last, Beth Meacham, and Michael Franklin with a forward by Samuel R. Delany. My copy is a 1979 edition published by Avon. You might see if they have a newer edition. Also, *Magill's Guide to Science Fiction* will be publishing a new, updated edition this coming year and it contains short (1000 word) reviews of almost a 1000 works. It is published by Salem Press out of Pasadena. Also a past issue of *Tightbeam* contained an article by Robert Miller III listing good reference books too. - DM]

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Fred Schütz
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Aloha Diane, hi Gang,

Our Man in Germany is at it again, replying to things you've nearly forgotten you said weeks and weeks ago. Consequently, my words will seem all checkers when you read them so and so many weeks from now.

Surely you're right, Laura Hazelwood, if you say that society is seemingly breaking up, that we are living in what the Hindu calls Kali Yurga, and Black Era. Treachery and graft prevailing, murder and mayhem on the rampant, traffic in narcotics the single most profitable enterprise; are we, the denizens of this age, destined to go under in this shlamassel?

"It's that Man is good, only people are bad!" said one trusting Bavarian soul. Amen. Ever since the first humanoid raised arm or weapon in attack or self-defense times have been bad. Yet mankind has weathered them, time and time again, if only by pulling itself up by the bootstraps. Why shouldn't we now? I trust in Man and his ability to overcome. Insight, as Jacqueline Lichtenberg

said, insight would be the first step of many to follow in humanity's long voyage into the far, far future!

The following recipe, Debra Lucas, is said to be a surefire remedy for colds: Simmer one teaspoonful of ginger in a large cupful of boiling water two minutes, pour over one teaspoonful of thyme, let stand five minutes, strain. Sweeten with honey to taste. Gesundheit!

Do you always say "hello" when you say hello, Roy Tackett? Shouldn't one expect Polynesians to have evolved beyond a few mere grunts? As my stepuncle Fhaffrd Oxbegot would say, isn't the cohesion of the language of a minor people distributed over such a large "territory" as Polynesia a veritable miracle? The Samoans, however, owing to their proximity to another culture (Micronesia) would be likely to stray from the norm.

Gaelic is the language of Ireland, Harry C. Andruschak. Sorry, but the number of languages of Great Britain remains at four - unless someone uncovered a pocket of surviving Picts?

Thanks for the kind words, Charles Broerman. There was no need to "con" Franz Miklis out of a copy of his zine - he gives it away freely in exchange for "the usual." As for Karl May, dig around in used bookshops; Bantam published two of his novels in 1980: *Through The Desert* and *Ardistan & Djinnistan*. I liked the latter better, but then, should you read it, keep in mind that he was an ardent Christian.

About *Star Trek* - or *Star Dreck*: look, whoever calls it that, if you have to pull the series down, do it correctly -- I can't cease to marvel at the perfect enunciation of English emitted by all and sundry, and unbelievably alien Aliens dropping up unexpectedly from the wild blue yonder.

Finally, I would like to introduce a subject dear to me for discussion; Witchcraft and its origins. What is its relationship to "Wicca"? Why would it be the exclusive domain of women? Why should it evolve in Europe and nowhere else? Why go "skyclad" in a northern climate? What exactly is a witches' sabbat? Why did the prosecution of heretics by the Church give rise to a wildfire of witchhunts? and what's Satanism got to do with it? ABRAXADABRA

* * *

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We have just received the "large print" issue of *Tightbeam* 194 (July 1995) and I find there is a serious error in the way my LOC was printed on page five.

Under my comment to Susan A. Van Schuyvan the quote from John Donne was printed as:

"No man's death diminishes me because I am involved in mankind..."

The quote is not only wrong, but totally illogical as it presently reads. The correct quotation should read:

"No man is an island, entire of itself... any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind;..." John Donne

Would you please see to it that this is corrected. Thank you. Charlie.

[Sorry about that, guess I should have checked my book of quotes before I went to press the first time - DM].

From Barbara: LoC's seem more political than Science Fiction. This is why I don't do LoC's anymore plus I got tired of arguing with people over silly things that don't really matter.

Tightbeam seems OK - but the print was very faint - you might check your printer.

*Hot!! 95-100's with high humidity for weeks -- plus 4.9 aftershocks. Good old California in the summer -- "Shake N Bake."

Margaret (Mickey) E. Howard Williams
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Greetings to all!

It was suggested that I introduce myself being new to the group, so here I am:

To all I care to call friend, I am known as Mickey.....that is unless I am playing with my favorite historical recreation group, the SCA (Society of Creative Anachronism). When I slip out of mundania into the Middle Ages, I become a 10th century Irish bard by the name of Lady Megwyn O'Bardain of Caledon Wood. Besides being a bard (entertainer of song, poetry, and storytelling), I am a herald (one who helps people register their persona name and coat of arms, in the society).

In mundania I am an aspiring freelance writer, a single parent (mother of four), and help to get the labels made and shipped to the breweries, so you can have your favorite brew....we specialize in the one who uses the

cute frogs in their ads.

From the earliest of childhood, I have loved fantasy and SF; a legacy past on to me from my parents, as I passed that love onto my children. I especially love unicorns and dragons, chivalry, and traveling between time and dimensions, as well as the stars and exploring new and wonderful worlds populated with new and unusual beings.

I have been a "Trekkie" since the first raised eyebrow of Spock.

I cut my literary teeth on the writings of Ray Bradbury. My favorite was and still is *Martian Chronicles*, although I never forgot his short story of the doctor who sucked the bones out of his patient. I have many favorites now, especially Anne McCaffrey, Marion Zimmer Bradley, C.S. Lewis, Mercedes Lackey, and Piers Anthony. More names tumble into my mind, as I said, many favorites.

I have wanted to join for a long time, but coming from a small town (Ridgecrest, CA - Mojave Desert), I didn't know how. It wasn't until I found the N3F listed in my Writer's Market, and was encouraged by the gracious lady Mercedes Lackey to write for fanzines, that I finally joined.

I appreciate the warm response I received in both the inquiry I sent in and upon joining the N3F. I hope to be very active in the RRs and writing, and hope to attend many cons. More importantly, I hope to meet many new friends. Enough about me.

Diane: May I please receive the TNFF with the directory of members? [I will e-mail Craig Boyd, editor of TNFF and see if he can mail you the most recent copy - DM].

Kerri Raw: Some more after everything fell apart novels are: the *Pelbar* series by Paul O. Williams (Delray books). I can only remember the title of one, *Breaking of the North Wall*; the *Battle Circle* trilogy by Piers Anthony, and I think Philip Jose Farmer did a series (Daw books).

Sarah E. Glasgow: I am trying to trace my family roots, but got stopped by my paternal grandfather. Will you please send me the addresses of genealogical libraries, please? Send your answer, please. Tell me how much postage will be, and I will be more than happy to send you a SASE. I know how expensive postage gets. I would be very grateful.

Ed Meskys: I would be glad to send you a LOC about NIESAS, if you'll send me a free sample, as well as a contributor's

guidelines, of your fanzine.

To all editors of Fanzines: If you would also tell all of us how much it costs to send a sample issue of your fanzine, I'm sure many of us would be happy to send you a SASA, plus cost if any.

To all: Thank you for being there. I look forward to a future with you in it.

* * *

Franz H. Miklis
A-5151 NUSSDORF 64
AUSTRIA

TB 194 arrived safely and intact by my Alpine shovel and was swallowed up instantly by my fannish appetite. And, wow, how great its contents: many long-time fen and neofans mixed up into a nicely chilled fanzine-cocktail. The right stuff for hot summer evenings.

Apropos hot evenings: I think it is about time to tell the neffers about Ben Girard's and my "fannish tradition" of the World Wide Party! Every year on June 21st, at exactly 21:00 o'clock local time, all fans should raise a glass in celebration of our common hobby. This idea soon found interested members and annually I get numerous letters and cards of how fen joined our festival. Shouldn't this be some nice idea for the one or another Neffer to join in?

Some friendly Neffers helped me by explaining the American custom of "bronzed baby shoes" for which I would like to thank them. In this sense, my special thanks go to Barbara and Charlie Brown who wrote me the longest letter I ever got in fandom (and this is more than 15 years now). Neffers, what a friendly folk!

Well, in issue #194 there is just one sentence (from Arthur Hayes) that I didn't quite understand: "Despite the fact that you are a woman, you seem to be doing a creditable job in the N3F so don't let old fogies like me get your dander up." (???) Is this meant as criticism or compliment or can one even suspect a certain Jurassic attention towards women being inferior to men? Oh what a shock! [Now I think you are both playing with me trying to get my "dander" up. I'm perfectly content, and quite happy being a woman. And as you have both acknowledged, I do a very credible job on TB as with most things I do. You know the old saying - "In order to succeed, a woman has to be twice as good as a man. Fortunately, that is easy." <grin> - DM].

Finally, maybe we will meet in Glasgow (or have already met if you get this letter too late) and may chat about our favourite obsessions. [Sorry we didn't get together. I didn't get this letter until after I got back. Should have left me a message on the Voodoo message board. - DM]

* * *

Nicole DuBow
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S NYACK NY 10960

Hi Fellow Neffers!

Usually I don't get too worked up over whatever the Powers That Be at Paramount cook up for us *Star Trek* fans, but Stella Sutkiewicz's letter in *Tightbeam* #193 and Amy Sisson's reply in #194 prompted me to write.

I strongly disapprove of bringing characters back from the dead by means of screwing around with time. I find it often feels like a cheap out. If the writers feel that they have a good enough reason to kill a character off in the first place, they should stand by their convictions and leave him/her dead. I agree with Amy that the "Yesterday's Enterprise" episode was clever enough to pull off bringing back Yar and I'll take it on faith that Vulcans live long enough for Spock to be a Federation ambassador ("Unification"). I, however, have a hard time swallowing that Bones made it into the 24th century to send the *Enterprise D* off on its maiden voyage ("Farpoint"). Neither do I buy Scotty being caught in a transporter for 75 years ("Relics") while Kirk is conveniently sucked into the Nexus to be retrieved by Picard at just the right moment (*Generations*). Possible, yes, but highly unlikely.

I also find a little disturbing the notion that anyone with a spacecraft can just find the nearest space/time anomaly and fly into it to retrieve their dead loved ones and carry them forward in time. It seems a little disrespectful to me as well as just plain confusing. The episode about Bareil's death was all about letting our loved ones die with dignity. If the writers were to do a "Dallas" type episode and say "It was all a dream" or the equivalent, it would entirely undermine that message. If you really object to the death of a character, write your own fan fiction. That's what that medium is all about. LaVern Loretz (Hi LaVern) gave some very good examples of how creative you can be in #193 and Eunice Raymond explained nicely

in her response in #194 so good reasons why fanfic is a great outlet.

I also want to give a rousing cheer to Fred Schütz! I have a wonderful time trying to keep up with your engaging use of the English language. I look forward to the next installment!

* * *

Penina Keen Spinka
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So many statements or opinions in the TB 194 caught my attention this time, I had to respond.

Arthur Hayes: If you find out where, when, and how "Islam" (which is not the same as "Mohammedism") began, please let me know. It had nothing to do with Cain and Able. I have heard the "Arabs" came from the Ishmaelites, descendants of Abraham's first son by Sarah's handmaid Hagar. Hagar was an Egyptian slave woman given to Sarah when she was taken by the Pharaoh (away from Abraham) for a wife. Abe said he was her brother, not her husband, or Pharaoh would have had him killed to get the beautiful Sarah. When G-d gave Pharaoh an incapacitating illness so he couldn't take Sarah to bed, the Pharaoh's magicians learned the truth. Abraham was given back his wife, her slave, presents and told to get the H out of Egypt.

When Hagar had to take her and Abe's boy Ishmael away, G-d sent an angel to save them from thirst and said G-d would make a nation from Ishmael. Ishmael grew up in the wilderness of Paran and when he was grown, Hagar got him a wife from her people, the Egyptians. So his descendants are half Semitic and half Egyptian. It was those people who accepted Mohammed in the 1300's.

Eunice Raymond: There are artificial animals. A common one is the mule, although dray beasts are no longer in use in most of this country. A sheep and a goat can mate somewhat successfully, but the offspring usually dies and never reproduces. I have seen pictures of a leopon, a lion-leopard, and a liger, lion-tiger. Why would people cause such freaks to be born? I heard there was experimentation with apes and humans in Roman times. Those Romans were the Nazis of their day. Anyone not a Roman citizen, had no rights and were sub-human. Hey, being 50 is no big deal. I crossed the line back in February. Does that make us crones? Fiction helps keep me young, at least in my head

under the gray hair. There's nothing wrong with fan fiction if no profit is made off someone else's creation. Good luck with the disability hearing.

Stephen K. Metzger: "Caudal" means tail. Caudalous would mean tail-like.

Eugene Austin: Where do you find Wahabi Tribesmen? Where did you hear of them; from these so-called expert Jewish historians? I don't know about Wahabi people, but Semitic means the descendants of Shem, a son of Noah. Ham is the "racial" father of the Negroid "race" and Japhet, of the rest. Maybe he was oriental. Obviously, this is myth. Three brothers from the same parents being different races? What race were Noah's son's wives? As far as Chasidim being pure Semites, I have to respond. Chasidim is a philosophy that began in Poland by Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov, (Master of the Good Name) who taught that joy, dancing and singing without words has a mystical connection with G-d and can take the place of prayer. Jews flocked to his teachings and many led by rabbis who were his disciples, branched off when the Master died. The movement grew to take in many of Eastern Europe's Jews. They were already there, not the Master's descendants. A philosophy does not bring back a pure race. My daughters joined this philosophy and I've hung around its fringes for almost 20 years learning with them and about them. Not only European Jews but black Jews and converts can and have become Chasidic. I met a black Jew and his family at a Chasidic gathering. No matter what "race" a Jewish daughter marries, her children will be Jewish according to our laws. I think this was instituted because of all the rapes from time immemorial. The religion comes from the mother, but Judaism is not and has not been a race since the days of Abraham. Moses began the Ethiopian Jews when he married a Negroid Ethiopian Queen and she ordered her people to accept Moses' G-d. Taras Wolansky: re your remark to Charlie Brown: "Someone said the only figure from North American Indian history whose name we know other than from European sources; is Hiawatha. Illiterate cultures have a short memory." Illiterate cultures have passed down their histories by word of mouth through "rememberers" whose memories are better than ours (or why would we need to write things down?) European society downgraded North American cultures to give themselves the

righteous excuse that they had to enslave them and kill them to save their souls and clear out the wilderness for civilization. You might, but how many people know about the real Hiawatha and his companion Dananawida who united the Five Nations of the Iroquois? The Longfellow poem borrowed that statesman's name, but not his history. Before I researched the Iroquois nations, I did not know this. Few people care about "Indian" pre-contact history, although it's become more popular these last years. You mentioned North America, but the Mayans and Incas (who lived in Peru, not North America) had books which the Spaniards burned as the work of the devil.

* * *

Eugene Austin
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Arthur Hayes: As told to me by Muslims during the 2 years I worked in Saudi-Arabia: They say Mohammed was a teenage epileptic married to a rich middle-aged widow to keep him off welfare. They developed the Muslim religion as a tourist attraction, competing with Jerusalem. They say that the Torah, Koran and Old Testament are the same, almost word for word. Mohammed got Christianity from a slave, adopted it in distorted form and added his philosophy. Then he went to Mecca to unify the four cults who shared the Ka'Ba and the meteoric rock inside.

Mohammed rebuilt the building. A quarrel erupted over who would carry the rock into the new building. He put it in the middle of a blanket and had each leader carry a corner. There is another story about him feeding his camels drugs. Wherever they collapsed, he built a Mosque. Another story has his wife dying, him marrying the slave's 15 year old daughter and using her panties as a battle flag. He built alliances by marrying women from target tribes, among them a Jewish woman. She tried to poison him, but he recovered. This is the supposed source of hostility between Muslims and Jews.

Or so the Muslims say. I'm suspicious, but it's their religion. Who am I to say?

Roy R. Wood: There are two historical Standing Bears, one a Sioux Chief, the other Ponca. The case revolves around the Ponca.

I have photocopies of the original paperwork obtained from the Clerk of the Federal District Court, Omaha NE. Standing Bear Et Al vs Crook, Case No 136E, filed May

10, 1879. (The "Et Al" is 22 of his tribe.)

The originals were destroyed, no longer available from the Federal Archives in Kansas City. They do not answer query letters and tell telephone callers there is no such case. I got mine from an Omaha Federal District Court Clerk who keeps photocopies.

The facts are: Ponca land in northeast Nebraska was taken away from them and they were assigned a reservation in Oklahoma. They were rounded up by the Army and put through a typical "Trail of Tears" (death march) that left a trail of bodies, including children all the way to Oklahoma.

Under then-extant Federal law, they were not allowed to leave the Reservation. Standing Bear defied that law and took part of his tribe and his son's skeleton to join relatives on the Omaha reservation. They marched in late winter, fed and clothed by sympathetic White homesteaders on the way. It is unclear how many died.

Days after arrival, Interior Secretary Charles Shurz ordered them arrested and returned to Oklahoma. They were so sick that General Crook ordered a delay at Fort Omaha "to let them recover." During that delay, the litigation was filed and served on Crook.

It was a Habeas Corpus, challenging the Federal law that confined Tribal Indians to their reservations. The challenge contended that Indians were "persons," with the same rights as Whites. There is no mention of citizenship, nor would it have been relevant. It was human rights from the git-go.

Judge Dundy's ruling upheld the contention and ordered them released.

The effect of the law as to treat Indians as dangerous wild animals, to be confined to reservations/zoos for the protection of White migrant/ settlers. It's overturn elevated Indians to human status.

There is interlock with Assimilation Policy, which allowed Indian families to disaffillate from their tribes, homestead, learn to read and write English, do simple math and become citizens. When Standing Bear tried to invoke that law, he was told "You're no family. You're a Chief with a band." It's spelled out in the paperwork.

Standing Bear was the first real blow to Indian Genocide.

Taras Wolansky: Sources of Jewish information were named last time. "Us" is WASP honkys who think we're God's Gift to Hell. Assimilation Policy applies to all

minorities, whether Jewish, Oriental, whatever. There has been recent media coverage of Jewish worry over loss to intermarriage. I helped curtail parental snatches done by Catholics against Jewish spouses, with secret Church help provided under Canon Law 60. Go into the original handwritten index to New York Times. You will find a Canon Law 60 kidnapping. The Jewish parents never got the baby back. The Pope issued a statement that was quoted world wide: "We gotta save that baby from Satan!"

The more things change, the more they remain the same!

* * *

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To All Neffers: Bear with me please. I am new, and really do not know what you expect, or how you will react to my presence in the illustrious N3F. First off, let me explain a little about myself: my likes, dislikes, etc... I really do enjoy reading books. My passion is Fantasy. I read the epic writers such as Tolkien, Brooks, Eddings (my fave), and any other material of the sort that I can get my hands on.

Now, I hope that I haven't given you the idea that I am stuck in one mode of the literature life, because I am not. I also enjoy Science Fiction and Horror. I do not go beyond those boundaries much though. I am stuck monotonously in those three areas of the literature field. That is why the N3F is going to be perfect for my mere 25 year old brain.

I am 25 years old. I have blonde hair and baby blue eyes. My hair is naturally curly (very curly). I weight 265 pounds (not much muscle) and I am 6' 1" tall. I also wear glasses.

Now, in the other entertainment mediums (music, movies and TV) I enjoy a diverse taste. I know not a lot about any one of these subjects, but I do know a little of them all.

I like to watch TV programs like *Sliders*, *VR-5*, all of the *Star Trek* series, *Bewitched* reruns, *I Dream of Jeannie* reruns, *Gunsmoke*... The list goes on and on. But, at the present, I am limited to book reading, and magazine reading, because I just can't

afford paying \$85 to rent a black/white tv (\$200 for a color). I am not allowed to own my own in my present state of existence. But, who can afford to rent a tv when they only make 40 cents an hour. No, the fanzines like TB are my only resource to the world of wonder that I love so dearly. Of course, I would get that initial deposit back if I didn't break the tv. Well, enough about boring ol' me. I believe it is time to make comments on some to the letters I read in TB #194:

Arthur Hays: I did enjoy your letter, although I cannot agree to you saying that Science Fiction has been "a primarily male bastion." I believe that women have just as many ideas for this great subject as men do. It's just that they have been held down by the predominant male thinking that women cannot do what a man can do because they are women. In the old days this was so, hopefully with all of the new women SF/Fantasy writers that keep showing up, that is not so. But, I do not agree that they are "taking over," they are just finally getting the shots that they deserve in this grand and glorious profession that so few really try to understand.

Patricia Mathews: I do have to agree with your review of *The Puppet Masters*. I mean if you are going to set a movie in the 90s, you should make the characters relatable to the 90s. I see no problem whatsoever in making a book into a movie by using exactly the same story line and character creations that the author intended in the first place.

Eunice Raymond: I know how it feels to be at "poverty level." I have lived that way most of my life. Of course, hopefully, it won't be for too much longer.

Don Franson: Thank you for the update on the postal rate increase. I thought that my "guardians" were ripping me off on my overseas postage to the pen-pals that I have in England, Sweden, and Holland. You helped me realize that they really aren't out to get me, even though I may want it to seem that way most of the time.

Sarah E. Glasgow: I would be really interested in finding out any information that you have in genealogical research. I am really into finding my ancestors. We have a Family History Center here, and I use it as much as humanly possible. But I am in a rut and cannot find anything on my Mother's biological Father. Any tips that you have

would be greatly appreciated.

To the Youth Committee Members: Please let me join as a volunteer. I would really enjoy helping you out. I mean I am not young as some, but I am not old either.

General Comments: I have read some comments about *Forever Knight*. What is it about? Who does it star? Is it a TV series? [It is a TV series about modern day Vampires in Canada where the main character is a cop - DM]

Do any of you know where I could find all or at least some of the books in a series called "Swampmaster?" One of my friends was telling me about it, and he said that he couldn't find any of the series but the first book. It sounds very interesting, plus I would like to buy all I can get my hands on so that I can get it for a present for him (it won't be for a while that I can actually buy them, as you know, because I told you a little earlier, I am kind of low on money presently).

What happened to *Earth 2* and *SeaQuest*? I haven't seen either one of them for a while, but someone told me that they were canceled. Is that true, or just rumor? If they did cancel, why? What about *Sliders*? I saw the first couple of episodes of that series, and then someone told me that they had discontinued it. How about *VR-5*? I haven't even been able to watch *Voyager* yet, but I know what it is about, because a pen-pal (on his own doing) bought me the first two books of the *Voyager* series. They are both excellent. At least I think so. Has anybody wondered about Lt. Tom Paris besides me? I know that he is played by Robert Duncan McNeil (spelling?); but isn't the "mistake" that got him kicked out of Starfleet highly identical to the cover-up he tried to pull (playing a different character) in *The Next Generation*? In the book entitled *Caretaker* (based on the series pilot) it says that due to a mistake of his piloting, he killed someone and he made a cover-up for it. If they were going to make his character so similar to the one played on *Next Gen.*, why didn't they just keep his character and not create a new one? I believe it would've worked.

I have only seen *Rocky Horror Picture Show* once, and it wasn't live, it was the Fox TV presentation. I really enjoyed it very much. I would enjoy seeing it again. I have always like Tim Curry anyway, and I believe that he made a spectacular performance in RHPS.

I especially enjoyed watching him star as the "bad guy" in the first few *Earth 2* episodes. He played it so well. You want to see another actor with Curry's acting capabilities, you should watch the *I Claudius* series or the BBC production of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* starring Derek Jacobi. He is great. I saw Patrick Stewart on the BBC production of *Hamlet* before I ever saw him on ST:TNG. He does play more than Picard you know. I mean, he did play on *Excalibur*, *Lifeforce*, and several others. And not too long ago he did a one man version of Charles Dickens' *Christmas Carol*.

Jacobi also starred in a role in Kenneth Branagh's big screen version of Shakespeare's *Henry V*. He was the Chorus.

If any of you have taped and are still taping ST:*Voyager*, I would really like if you would save some copies for me. When I get the money, I will pay up to \$5 per video. No kidding! Of course, you do not send me any of them until I start sending you the money. I'm just asking to see where I stand at the time and so I can get things prepared. Also I would like any back copies of any of the other ST series, and also any of the new *Hercules* series starring Sorbo and any of the B5 episodes also. This offer goes for all the new and old SciFi series.

Anyone like *The Adventures of Brisco County Jr.*? I totally enjoyed it when it was on. The networks seem to take off a lot of the shows that I like. Like that series that only lasted for about six months (probably less) the one which I can't remember the name of for the life of me. The one about a family life in Old England where the father was a Lord (Nigel Terry I believe played the part). It was very funny and I loved it while it was on. If anyone has any ideas about this how and what it was called, and if you have any videos of it, let me know. Or even write if you just want to talk about the injustices of taking off series from television that deserve to be left on.

Well, I believe that I have talked enough. I appreciate this zine, and the N3F for bringing me what I cannot have at this time. It is great! All of you write if you want. I love receiving and answering mail. I already have 25 pen-pals, and I am looking for more.

* * *

Cardia
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CONFESSION OF AN ART CARD ADDICT

I began with a 90 PC. set of Greg Hildebrandt's Fantasy Art Cards I picked up for \$3.00 at a "store going out of business" sale. The high quality artwork of these imaginative paintings opened a portal into new worlds within my own mind. I was absolutely absorbed by the beauty and overwhelmed by the power of these pictures to impact me emotionally. Over the past year, cards have become a passion of mine.

OK, maybe it's an addiction, but the mood altering effect that my new sense of art appreciation has given me is, at least, safer than most substances.

We now have 38 ringed "notebook" binders full of Non-Sports Cards in (9 pocket) pages. Perhaps they should print a disclaimer on the packages. "WARNING! May become Addictive. Card Collecting has been associated with Irrational Shopping Sprees. Potentially Dangerous to Budget. etc."

This is how it happened: I fell in love with the artwork on S.F. books and at conventions. I soon realized that, like most fan, I have neither the wall space, nor the finances to set up a large personal art gallery in my own home. So with that limitation in mind, the idea of 25cent (average) miniatures sounded to me like the perfect solution.

A random assortment of cards by a particular artist usually sells for (about) 10 cards for a Dollar and a Half in a sealed foil pack. Due to varying odds it almost always takes many more than 9 packets to complete a set. Of course, new sets are being produced regularly by the card manufacturers.

And while most sets have 90 regular cards, they also randomly insert one of 3 to 12 special "chase" cards that are rare and more valuable. Chase cards often have unique hologram or foil special effects. Sometimes they bear a gold medallion or the artist's personal signature in limited edition format.

I originally decided to collect only the common (cheap) cards. Then I got "lucky" and found a rare card that had been randomly inserted into my foil packet.

NOTICE: rare card = hard to find card = expensive card! They call them "chase"

cards because, to complete a rare set, the collector may have to "chase" dealers all over the country at Non-Sports Card Conventions.

I never used to gamble! But the very next pack might have an Autographed card worth \$100.00.

Then came the question of what to do with duplicate cards. I became fascinated with comparing different artist's concepts of similar subjects. I started a book of DRAGON cards by various artists. Soon I had subject collections of wizards, cats, mermaids, etc. Now, I frequently needed two or more copies of each card.

Whenever I had more duplicate cards than I could use, I could sometimes trade them in at a Comic Book/Trading Card Shop. The going rate is 2 for 1 of the same artist IF the shop wants what you've got. I found out that it's much more fun to just give them away to friends (There's a method to my madness). The more friends I can get "hooked" on cards, the more people I have to trade with.

Naturally, being in Card Shops so frequently, it was only a matter of time before I started in on Star Trek Cards. From there I expanded to other favorite movie and TV series cards. Then comic book character and Gaming cards. Endangered Species, X-Men, Lion King, The Shadow, Casper the Friendly Ghost, Coca-Cola Ads.....

I knew I was beyond help when I found myself buying Craftsman Tool Cards at Sears. So I decided to change my name to reflect who I am.

So...My name is Cardia and I'm a Cardaholic. I carry a supply of cards with me at all times. I love being this way and I won't quit until my life becomes totally unmanageable.

TRY IT, YOU'LL LIKE IT !

Cardia

Virtual Reality and Other Electronic Intimacies

by

Howard L. Davidson
Sun Microsystems

[Copyright 1993, Howard L. Davidson. First published in *Imaginative Futures: Proceedings of the 1993 Science Fiction Research Association Conference*. (San Bernardino, CA; The Borgo Press, 1995) Reprinted by permission of the author].

1.0 Introduction

Virtual Reality (VR) is not a completely new phenomenon. It is, in fact, the latest stage in the storyteller's art. The earliest form was probably a hunter by the campfire. Later came religious ceremonies and plays. The modern era began with early movies. We then added color, wide field of view, stereoscopic imaging, and computer generated special effects. The second major path to VR is the flight simulator. These are arguably the first incarnation of the public image of VR. They provide high quality computer generated images of an artificial world, and what happens in that world depends in part on the behavior of the participants. They are not quite state of the art VR because the environment is fixed, while true VR systems provide a completely programmable environment. It is the interplay between the behavior of the participants and the behavior of the system that sets off VR from its ancestors. While stories, and movies can certainly take a person far, far, away, they don't usually allow the person to control how the story will progress. The best of contemporary VR has an element of potential magic in its simulated worlds. The only constraints on what can happen in a virtual world are the limits of the programmer's imagination, the available processing power, and the limits of the interface with humans. We can easily simulate the absence of gravity or friction, or light a fire with a gesture. Non-physical objects, like racks of threaded holes for the mechanical designer, are easy to build and manipulate. The definition of VR today is rather fluid. Most workers in the field would agree that it involves interaction between at least one human and a computer generated model. The primary input channel to the human is usually vision, though sound and touch are available on some

systems. The input from the human to the system is most often through gestures, though voice recognition and keyboards may be available. There are two important variants that need to be mentioned. One of these is "Augmented Reality" (AR), and the other is "Tele-Operation" (TO). Augmented Reality is a VR system where the computer generated imagery is combined with a direct, or video mixed, view of the world. The most common form of this is the "heads-up" display that pilots use to see their instruments, or gunsights, while simultaneously watching the outside world. TO is usually a combination of a stereo pair of television cameras combined with an anthropomorphic manipulator at a remote location. The stereo pair of cameras provides a 3-D image of what is at the remote site, and the arm control is usually equipped with "force reflection" so that the sense of touch is projected to the remote manipulator. As the technology improves we can expect more comprehensive remote placement of the senses, and more than a single hand to work with.

2.0 The Human Interface

All of these systems depend on the surprisingly active connivance of the human nervous system in being fooled. An obvious example of this is how effective the early Warner Brothers' cartoons are. Despite the fact that they were crudely drawn, flat, monochrome line images, they are quite effective in entraining the attention of most people. We don't have any difficulty in "being there" with Bugs Bunny or Wiley Coyote. As the quality of the visual images are improved the sensation of being there becomes stronger. The two methods that are most popular in VR systems for increasing the feeling of immersion are to use properly depth cued stereo pair images, and providing a wide enough field of view to include a person's peripheral vision. The potential strength of immersion is well illustrated in a story that Jaron Lanier of VPL likes to tell. In one of their VR systems the first thing you see when you enter the virtual world is a mirror, where you can see yourself reflected. On racks on the walls around the mirror are spare body parts. Many people liked to pick up a spare arm, and stick its shoulder in the middle of their chest. Other people were more attracted to becoming lobsters. The people who installed a third arm on their chest soon discovered that they

could manipulate things with it. The arm had a simple control algorithm: its elbow was midway between your two "real" elbows, its wrist was midway between your two wrists, and closing your hand would close the third hand. After about twenty minutes of practice most people had become quite adept at manipulating virtual objects with their third arm. At that point it was common to "buzz" the index fingers of both of the user's hand simultaneously. Almost everyone reported that they felt the buzz in the third hand! This demonstrates the truly remarkable plasticity in the human nervous system, and its strong willingness to enter the virtual environment.

2.1 Visual interfaces

The "Cyberpunk's Hat and Glove Society" has been a strong element in the public perception of VR. The common media image of a person wearing a cumbersome helmet, and gesturing with a glove attached to a bundle of wires almost defines the image of the VR user. In fact the helmet and glove are only a small fraction of the available interfaces. The most common helmet, called an EyePhone by VPL, consists of a pair of liquid crystal displays similar to those used in pocket televisions, and wide field of view eyepieces to bring them into focus. These helmet displays are extremely low resolution, commonly 180 X 240 pixels. This is so bad that they are legally blind! Despite the low resolution it is possible to do useful experimental work with these displays. Because they are head mounted you can look in any direction, and see the virtual world all around you. A head tracking sensor is attached to the helmet so that the computer can recompute the images dynamically to compensate for head motion. This allows virtual objects to have the ordinary real world property of appearing fixed in space when you move your head. If the requirements of a particular VR system can be satisfied with a monochrome display it is possible to provide higher resolution images, typically about 1000 X 1000 pixels. I know of two different forms of this kind of display. The first uses a pair of miniature CRT's mounted to the sides of the helmet, and folding optics, the second uses a moving mirror to scan a line of 1024 LED's into the optics to make a display. It is much easier to provide high quality, color, stereo pair, images if

the user has a limited range of motion. The easiest one uses a special 120 frame per second refresh rate color monitor to provide 60 frame per second updates to each eye. This system directs the images to the correct eye by using a pair of LCD shutters mounted in a pair of special eyeglasses. The shutter switching is synchronized to the monitor by an infrared link. If more range of motion is useful, but freely walking about in a room is not required, it is possible to use three rear projection screens as three of the walls of a small room. A special projection display monitor is mounted behind each of the screens, and the same shutter glasses are used. The three screen version is about the best compromise currently available between quality of image, and permissible movement. It is, unfortunately, quite expensive. A more ideal solution would be a pair of glasses that had a pair of 2000 X 3000 pixel color displays built into them. They should not weigh more than a pair of fancy sunglasses, and ideally are battery powered and wireless. A short wire to a belt pack wouldn't be too bad. There are a number of technologies in various laboratories around the world that could eventually produce such a display. If they became a common accessory for video games, or could also be used for private viewing of HDTV, the price could be driven down to the consumer electronics range. In addition to the display itself it is necessary to have a head tracking sensor. The current best compromise between cost and performance is ultrasonic ranging to three detectors on the head from at least three transmitters mounted at known locations. This technology can potentially be made very cheap. A further refinement in the displays is to be able to track the pointing direction of both eyes. This can be used to reduce computation by only performing high resolution imaging where the eye is pointed, and to improve the reality of the stereo image by compensating for the eyes pointing inwards for near objects. The lightweight glasses I am envisioning would also have controlled mixing of the real world with the virtual world. If the final element of the optical system is a mirror that is reflective only at the wavelengths emitted by the display it is possible to see through the mirror. An LCD shutter behind the mirror can then provide variable mixing. Both the mirrors and the shutters are off the shelf

technology. If a look through mode is used the requirements on the accuracy of head tracking increase. While a bit of slow drift is unlikely to be noticed in a closed head mounted display, and drift with respect to the room will cause the virtual objects to obviously float around relative to the truly fixed real objects.

2.2 Auditory display

It is well known that people can localize the direction of origin of a sound. The exact mechanism for performing this localization wasn't known until workers at NASA Ames performed a series of very detailed measurements on human subjects a few years ago. The NASA researchers placed tiny microphones next to the eardrums of volunteers, and then recorded from those microphones while a sound source was moved around the subject. It turned out that the shape of the outer ear modifies the sound arriving at the eardrums in a way that makes it possible for the brain to compute the direction from which the sound originated. If the inverse of the outer ear transformation is applied to a sound, and it is listened to with earphones, it is possible to make the sound appear to come from a chosen direction. While each human ear is somewhat different, it is possible to use an average transformation if predictability in the range of five degrees is sufficient. The computational power required to perform these transformations is in the range now provided by Digital Signal Processing (DSP) chips used in home audio systems. These DSP chips are also found in portable CD players and car stereos. It is possible to add sound that appears to come from the correct virtual location to a visual virtual reality system. It is, in principle, possible to construct a purely auditory VR system. What can be done with such a system is a current research area.

2.3 Kinesthetic interface

The kinesthetic interface is most often the input from the human to the computer. In some experimental systems there is also a feedback channel from the computer to the operator. This is the gloves element of the "Cyberpunk's Hat and Glove" outfit. The Dataglove is sufficiently expensive that only a small number of systems are equipped with them. A Dataglove provides the computer not

just with the position and orientation of the hand, but with the curl of the fingers and thumb. This provides enough information to allow gesture recognition by the computer. Some gloves are equipped with small vibrating transducers on the fingertips. These can be used to provide cues. An example is to buzz the fingertips when they are passing through a surface. This is what was used for the third arm demonstration. In addition to the glove, or pair of gloves, it is possible to build a full bodysuit that provides the computer with reasonably complete posture information. Simpler systems often use the "bat", a flying computer mouse. The common forms have a small handle to hold onto with some buttons to provide ordinary mouse functionality, and a position and orientation sensor that is almost always the same type that is being used for head position tracking. A bat is usually equipped with a short plastic rod sticking out from the front. The end of this rod is the operating point. It is extended beyond the body of the bat so you can see what you are working on. It is also possible to provide position and orientation input to the computer with various "ball on stalk" devices. These are usually force sensing, rather than position sensing, devices. To use them you grasp the ball and push and twist it. If the designer of the system wants to provide kinesthetic feedback to the user the problem gets much more difficult. The group at the University of North Carolina has had good success in using the input controller from a TO system intended for remote handling of radioactive material. This device looks like a robot arm bolted to the ceiling of the workspace. The operator grasps a handgrip on the end of the arm. Servo motors in the joints provide forces that simulate what the arm in encountering in virtual space. The handgrip has a simple "lobster claw" gripping motion that allows the operator to tell if he/she has closed the claw on a virtual object. This system has proven to be very useful for allowing chemists to "feel" the forces between a catalyst and substrate for example. The applications of this kind of interface for mechanical design are obvious. Sarcos, in Salt Lake City, has built a number of anthropomorphic TO systems, typically for handling objects outside of deep submergence vehicles. The controllers for these systems are attached to the operator's chair, and

strap around his/her shoulder, arm, and hand. These systems are faster, and have more hand motions, than the ceiling mounted units. It is important to note that these controllers are mounted to some structure that is attached to the ground. Because of conservation of momentum any system that is going to be able to provide forces that will move the operators center of gravity must be able to react against a mass other than the operator. Even a full powered exoskeleton cannot provide the sensation of catching a massive thrown object unless it is able to react against the earth, or some other object much more massive than a person. In addition to being able to feel the shape of an object, and feel forces, it would be useful to be able to feel the texture of a surface. Virtual pets should have smooth silky fur. It should be possible to determine this by feel. There are no available interfaces that have a useful capability for simulating texture. Much of the basic research on how to simulate texture still needs to be done.

2.4 Direct Neural Interfaces

In theory much of the clumsiness of the current interfaces could be eliminated if the VR system merely took over the sensory inputs to the human brain, and could read back motor control commands. This level of interface is often assumed in the more interesting SF stories about VR. The total bandwidth required to do this isn't unreasonable. To a very crude approximation a single nerve fiber has a data rate of about 1 Kilobit/sec. There are about one million nerve fibers in an optic nerve. This multiplies out to about one Gigabit/sec per eye. If we make some more crude estimates for the other senses we get a total bandwidth for the human sensory system of about 6 gigabits/sec. To put this in perspective the data rate out of the graphics accelerator to the display in a modern workstation is about one Gigabit/sec. This is a little less than the most common standard rate for long haul fiber optic telecommunications links. There is already research in progress on how to tap into the mammalian nervous system. Groups at the University of Michigan and Stanford have had implants in experimental animals for some years now. This research is currently driven by a desire to provide prostheses for nerve damage victims. Even a hundred bits per second of output, connected through a

computer to a robot arm, could make a tremendous difference to a quadriplegic's quality of life. The current experimental systems are mostly in the peripheral nervous system, though there are some central nervous system implants present in both experimental animals, and humans. The human implants are visual prostheses. They currently have extremely limited capability, on the order of 32 discrete spots with no grey level. The Stanford implants are made from silicon chips with small holes etched through them. These chips are placed across the ends of a severed peripheral nerve. The nerve regenerates through the holes in the chip. Each hole has an electrode that allows for both stimulating, and monitoring, the activity of the small group of nerve cells, about 60, that pass through it. It is probably not a good idea to make central nervous system interfaces by cutting slots in your brain. A much more interesting approach is to bioengineer taps from desired locations in the nervous system to implants located at a convenient location outside of the skull. The odds of being able to grow new taps into the central nervous system became better about a year ago when a paper appeared in Science reporting that epithelial growth factor would stimulate cell division in rat basal ganglia. Up until this publication it had been thought that it was impossible to induce cell division in the mammalian central nervous system. The other research area that is beginning to provide insight in how to grow neural interfaces is embryology. Much has been learned in the last twenty years or so about how cell differentiation, and the structural development of an embryo, is controlled. It is at least possible that an adequate understanding of how an organism develops will point to the technology needed to grow controlled access into the brain. The interface to the outside world can be accomplished with existing technology. For small bandwidths the current default technology is a low power radio link for the data, and an inductive coupler for power. For the large bandwidths required for a full scale interface I believe that optical coupling will be the technology of choice. In addition to supporting the high data rates required, optical system also provide a compact way of coupling electrical power to the internal components. Note that it is very important to avoid chronic skin penetrations.

A optical interface would consist of two components. There is an internal transceiver chip with power receiver. The power receiver is just a solar cell tuned to the emission wavelength of the external laser diode power source. The transceiver is an photodiode and associated electronics to receive the incoming optical signal, and a small laser diode and drive electronics to generate the outgoing signal. The actual neural tap may be located remotely from the transceiver. Human skin and tissue is transparent enough in the infrared to allow the transceiver to be placed up to a centimeter or so beneath the skin. A particularly convenient location might be the earlobe. This allows for a small, and perhaps decorative, interface earring with an unobtrusive fiber pair to the external electronics pack. The actual connection to the nervous system would probably be located near the base of the skull. The connection from the transceiver part of the interface to the connection would probably be done with a few optical fibers, and the neural tap would be encouraged to grow to the appropriate locations on the connector chip by controlled release of growth factors from its electrodes. If the taps were made a bit further into the nervous system than the raw sensory inputs and motor outputs it is likely that a significant reduction of the total bandwidth could be obtained. A direct neural interface could be used in many modes. In the most obvious mode a person could be placed into a state similar to dreaming. The "sleep switch" in the brainstem could be turned off, so that no body motion occurred in response to motor commands. This state would be very close to daydreaming, except that your ability to do things in the dreamworld could be very real indeed. A more difficult scenario, is to mix VR with the real world. This would allow augmentation of performance for many tasks. A pilot could feel stresses in the airframe directly, a surgeon could really see into a patient, and with highly sophisticated systems a therapist might be able to enter a client's delusions. This kind of direct interface is not a comfortable idea for everyone. When I first circulated the idea by e-mail at work I received about 50 prompt replies. All of them started with "You go first".

3.0 Applications and Hazards

As the successor to stories, movies, and video games VR has many potential applications, and the usual possibilities for misuse. The most popular applications will probably be condemned by the same groups that want to restrict our access to other media. If we look at historical precedent I expect that the initial large scale deployment of VR technology will be in relatively crude systems intended for entertainment. The history of the video game may very well repeat itself. They first showed up as moderately expensive arcade games. They then migrated to dedicated home systems of really low quality. The next significant wave was as software for home computers. The current incarnations are a mix between dedicated game systems such as Nintendo, software for home computers, and new interactive systems such as CDI that make use of home entertainment systems. The other historical precedent that bears examination is the explosive growth of the VCR market. While few people are willing to admit it in public, it appears that what really drove the growth was the availability of "adult" videotapes. I expect that an early, and lucrative, market for VR software will be adult VR environments. VR will probably jump from arcades and theme parks directly to the home computer. The parallel development of industrial strength VR will drive the evolution of open industry standards that will eventually result in the same sort of "plug and play" technology that we have for the PC. Beyond simple games the application space explodes. Everyone can imagine the pedestrian ones; mechanical design, feeling the air in a numerical windtunnel, simulation systems for training people in almost any task, being able to view a new elementary school building from a child's viewpoint, and vacations on Mars. Multiple user VR systems open up a whole new set of possibilities. We already have virtual communities of varying complexity on the net. When fiber optic links reach most homes there will be enough available bandwidth to allow people to be virtually present on any connected system. Whole, almost self contained, arbitrarily weird, subcultures will evolve on the cyberspace frontier. High quality TO is a whole new way to date. It could be the ultimate in safe sex, assuming the absence of communicable software bugs of course. As might be expected this application was one of the earliest ones to occur to the

grad students working in the area. The robotics group at Carnegie Mellon coined the phrase "teledildonics" years ago. There is no requirement that your persona on the net resemble your physical reality, or usual personality. It is already well known that people you "meet" on the net may be wildly different than they are in person. With high performance VR and TO systems the ability to be someone, or something, other than you usually are will be greatly enhanced. I predict a good market for persona and body representation software. The nature of training for physical activities can change in a fundamental way. With a full up powered exoskeleton interface, not to mention a direct neural one, it would be possible to teach a sport in variable time with controlled gravity. Taking tennis as an example you could start out with the ball moving very slowly, and the exoskeleton guiding your arm through the correct motions to return the virtual serve. As you get better the system would gradually move closer to real time and gravity. Being able to immediately experience optimal motion would completely change the nature of training for physical activities. In a virtual world it is possible to manipulate the apparent laws of physics. To help make classical mechanics more intuitive you could spend time in a place where objects continue to move at uniform velocity unless disturbed. Orbital mechanics could be taught by throwing asteroids past stars and planets, and seeing their orbits evolve on a time scale that is useful for direct interaction. Despite the many useful applications for VR, we already have social critics decrying it as the next addictive vice. I don't think that there is any question that VR could be as addictive as television or video games. It might be less pernicious than television because the environment is active, rather than passive, and there are consequences resulting from behavior. Another limitation on the potential for VR to draw people out of reality is the limitation on available computational power. Nonlinear dynamics provides a reasonable guarantee that no computational system less complex than reality can completely simulate reality. VR will never be able to provide quite as rich an environment as the real world. I expect most people to eventually get bored with any environment that is less rich than reality.

We should also remember that the human mind is capable of providing completely compelling fantasy worlds without the help of VR. Some people are able to do this on their own well enough that we keep them in locked wards. The rest of us can manage quite easily with a little chemical help. William Bricken encapsulated this nicely when he said, "VR, nah, it'll never touch the price performance of acid". Multiuser direct neural tap VR systems provide a more dangerous possibility for loosing people into cyberspace. By having both full scale sensory takeover, and other people to provide rich social interactions, this kind of VR could become very attractive, particularly to people with severe physical disabilities, or ones who are uncomfortable in the ordinary world for whatever reason. This theme has been explored in some depth in science fiction. One of the more depressing scenarios is to deal with overpopulation by stacking people up in little hexagonal cells, and letting them think they are having lives, by wiring them into cyberspace. Unfortunately I don't expect any society that has that kind of overpopulation problem will be able to afford enough VR sets.

4.0 Conclusion

Current virtual reality systems are comparable to Edison's movies. As we continue to improve our computers, and learn more about our biology, the range of affordable possibilities will explode. Within very broad limits only the limitations of human imagination limit what we will be able to do in our virtual worlds I think this is one technology that will actually overrun the best predictions from the science fiction community.



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