

VSFA Valley Voyager



Table of Contents

Credits & General Info	2
State of the Union	3
Future Robots	4
Sunday Social	5
Dinner & a Movie w/VSFA	5
Luncheon in VSFA-land	6
www.VSFA.us Update!	7
Book Review NOT by Mindy	7
Letters of Comment	8

ARTists:

Ruth R. Davidson; cover
 Sarah Glasgow; pg. 7
Photos by Carol Kern.
Screenshot by Ruth R. Davidson

Not sure what to send?

Art work is always needed and Letters of Comment (LoC's) are always appreciated. Fannish articles are also welcome. If you are unsure if something is acceptable please ask me about it. If you have local SF/F group reports, turn those in to Arnie Katz, the editor of Vegas Fandom Weekly, a fanzine dedicated to all of Las Vegas fandom. His email is crossfire4@cox.net.

V3 submissions go to rcmalgroups@gmail.com.

Please send only copies of your work, whether it is art or text.

If you've never submitted an article to any zine, and aren't comfortable with writing an article per se, you can always write about something in an LoC and the editor can do a bit of editing to turn it into an article. More than one article started out that way. Just let me know.

VSFA Board of Directors

President:

Rebecca Hardin
 hardin673@aol.com

Treasurer:

Terry Wilsey
 AAnswerTravel@hotmail.com

Secretary:

Mindy Hutchings
 lady.shayir@gmail.com

Member-at-Large:

Star Trek Liaison
 Joshua Andrews
 andrews1701@gmail.com

Member-at-Large:

Internet Publications
 Ruth R. Davidson
 ruthiechan@xarph.net
 (for website issues only)
 rcmalgroups@gmail.com
 (for V3 submissions and inquiries)

VSFA Valley Voyager Vol. 1. No. 4

The official organ of the Vegas Science Fiction Association

This issue was completed on September 15, 2005.
 Edited by Ruth R. Davidson – Internet Publications.
 Send your submissions to rcmalgroups@gmail.com.

All Letters of Comment (LoCs), and other submissions are to be sent to the official editor at the above address (rcmalgroups@gmail.com) with V3 in the subject line.

Do NOT send submissions to the listserv!

Submission Deadline for the next issue is October 9, 2005.
 V3 is published monthly.

All opinions herein are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the VSFA Board of Directors or other VSFA members except where so noted.

All copyrighted © materials are used with permission of the author and/or artist and revert back automatically.

©2005 Vegas Science Fiction Association
 We're on the web at: www.vsf.a.us
 To subscribe to our listserv send an email to:
 VegasSFAssociation-subscribe@yahoo.com

State of the Union

Things are looking up. Even though some of the Board of Directors were stricken ill the last couple of weeks, we all survived – maybe a little worse for wear, and a little behind schedule, but alive. I’m optimistic about the future of VSFA.

The major announcement this month is that we’ve found a new home for the VSFA Sunday social. Thanks to the tireless effort of Bettye Hardin, we will be having future socials at The Blue Ox Tavern at 5825 West Sahara Avenue. It’s in the Burlington Coat Factory shopping center across the street from Desert Chrysler. The cross street is Dunesville. There’s an Enterprise Car Rental in the corner of the lot. It all seemed kind of karmic with the SF/F names (Blue Ox, Enterprise and DUNESville).

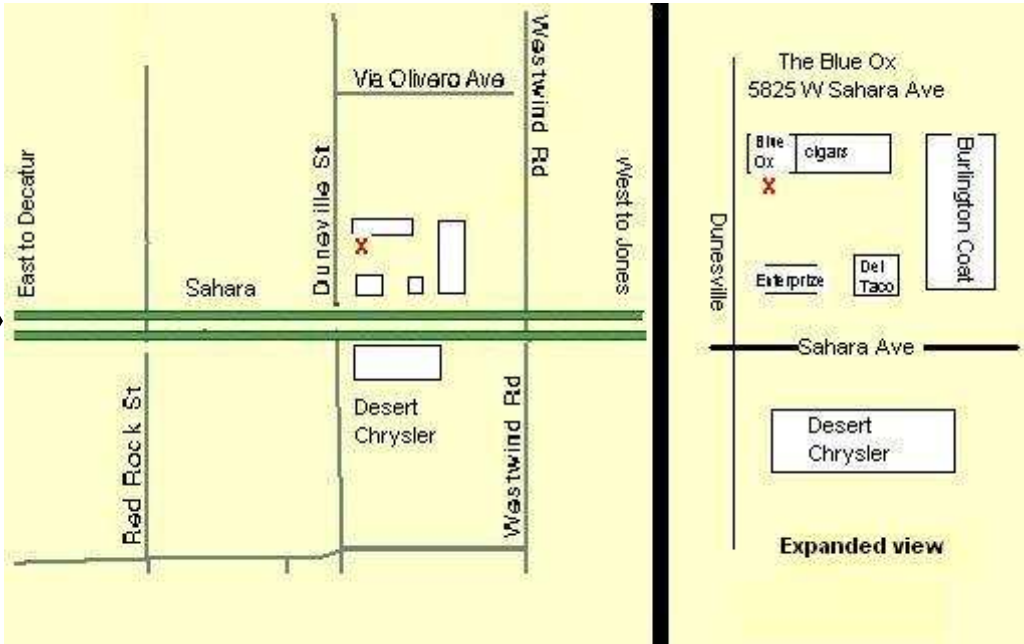
Carol Kern, Bettye and I went to dinner there to check out the place. The food was good and reasonable (no Italian fare like The Tap House, but good nevertheless). We each ordered a different item so we could get a better sampling of the cuisine and we were all pleased. The server was nice and friendly. We talked to her about the social. She gave us a tour of the room, which will hold approximately sixty people, and she seemed to think that we would be happy there.

The manager, who we have not yet met, except by phone, was very welcoming. They do have football there, but the televisions are not in the meeting room and their team (the Minnesota Vikings) schedules their games in the morning at 10:00AM and are usually done by 2:00PM. Of course, there’s no guarantee of that, but we’ll deal. There is a separate entrance to the meeting room.

The best news is there’s no charge for the room and no minimum food/beverage order. So, it all looks good. I’m looking forward to seeing how our first social there goes. A map has been posted on the Yahoo group file section. We look forward to seeing you at our new social venue. When you get there, be sure to thank Bettye for all the work she did in finding us a new home. She’s been invaluable.

The rest of our activities are going on as usual, we have two movie outings scheduled - “Tim Burton’s Corpse Bride” on September 24 and “Serenity” on October 1. The monthly business meetings will resume on October 3 at 7:00PM at the Clark County Library on Flamingo, with dinner afterward at IHOP. Check out the calendar on the VSFA Yahoo Group and our website at www.vsfa.us.

Rebecca Hardin – VSFA President



“One could write a history of science in reverse by assembling the solemn pronouncements of highest authority about what could not be done and could never happen.”
—Robert A. Heinlein

Future Robots Promise Important Role In Our Lives

By Dick Pelletier

In 1940, author/scientist Isaac Asimov wrote "I, Robot," science fiction stories envisioning a robot society. His story, in a 1990s setting, began with "Robbie," a robot whose function was to interact with children. Although Asimov's timing was off, his vision was perfectly clear.

Earlier this year, Tokyo-based ZMP, Inc. began marketing *Nuvo*, a small but impressive \$6,000 robot that walks, talks, dances, and plays music. It responds to voice commands and can relay pictures of what its eyes see to any cell phone. Company executives tout it as a great housemate, child monitor, or home security system.

Experts predict that by 2010, world market for robots will exceed \$75 billion, up from just \$6 billion last year; and this has many companies scrambling to get in on the action. *Sony Qrio*, *Honda Asimo*, and *Toyota Personal Robot*; in development now, will soon market competing models in the \$10,000 to \$30,000 range.

Today's crude 'bots are clumsy and think with insect-like brains, but projected advances in robot skin, voice recognition, and cognitive science will soon create robots that are far more humanlike.

University of Tokyo researchers have developed flexible artificial skin that will allow robots to feel pressure, temperature, light, humidity, strain and sound. IBM's new voice recognition systems will allow a more natural conversation with our silicon friends, and researchers at Redwood Neuroscience Institute dream of one day programming human cognitive behavior into robots.

By 2010, household robots will be far more intelligent than today's primitive 'bots. Many will find their way into homes performing limited chores, providing valuable services for children, and enabling elderly people to live in their houses instead of going to nursing homes. In a recent survey, disabled patients said they'd prefer a bath given by an intelligent robot over a human; it's less embarrassing.

By 2015, robots will look, feel and sound more intelligent. They will rapidly become irreplaceable as they perform most household chores. They will love doing laundry and home maintenance, and act eager as they help us make sense of our mega TV channels and Internet.

By 2020, much smarter 'bots will understand our moods; know when we are happy, angry, in a hurry, or tired; and conduct meaningful conversations. We will rely on them to keep us organized, informed, and aware of everything happening in our world. They will express personal attraction for their masters and display near human-like personality. Politicians will create 'Bots Rights legislation that defines robot-human relations.

By 2025, robots will become the most important family acquisition. These brilliant silicon creatures, endowed with powerful intelligence, will understand our world and seamlessly interact with us. They will help us manage an incredible array of 2020s technologies – medical nano-

bots that keep our bodies in perfect health, counter-top replicators that provide food, clothing, appliances, and immersive virtual reality simulations that whisk us away to entertainment dreamland.

Finally, by 2030, human-machine merge will become possible. Enhanced brain capabilities will enable us to transfer information directly from robot to human mind, providing huge increases in brainpower.

Could this future happen? Experts say it absolutely can; strong commerce and government support assures that this "magical future" will become reality – and in our lifetime.

Dick Pelletier writes science and technology articles for VSFA Valley Voyager.

You may contact him at futuretalk@cox.net.

Who says technology can't be sexy?



Screenshot from City of Heroes.

Sunday Social

By Carol Kern

It was a dark and stormy night. The air was electric with potential. My spidey-senses were on high alert. Ok, so it was a very bright and warm Sunday afternoon and it was really the Sunday Social and I may have just had a cafeine buzz. It was my second Social! Yee-haw!

We arrived in the parking lot with the Katz' and proceeded with the solemn ceremony of the table arrangement. After much discussion and experimentation, we arrived at a setting that vaguely dissatisfied everyone. So that worked out.

As the gang trickled in, we all began ordering various edibles and drinks and settled in for the afternoon. Linda Bushyager arrived with a sack full of DVD's that were up for grabs. They made the round of the table and mostly got dispersed amongst us. Katheryn and James Daugherty were there regaling us with stories of their travels, Worldcon and the state of the bid for Westercon.

Fairly quickly, the topic of the day was brought up over in the Katz' corner and it spread to the general group - To have a set program for the Social or not? Arnie started things by explaining the reason programs were begun. He and Woody decided that since the social was held in a more formal setting than someone's home like the historic Socials of SNAFFU's past, the group might need a starting point for conversation.

The general trend of the discussion seemed to come down to this: No one really hated the programs and no one really loved the programs. There was a comment that if we had programming it should be "good programming". (I didn't know that the effort till now had been to produce bad programming. I have to say good programs are better than bad.) Most of us seemed to feel we could manage to converse with one another for a couple of hours without a formal topic. However, there was also a general consensus that a special program three or four times a year might be nice too - for variety. While there was no vote or anything, I did get the impression that the majority of the

regulars agreed to dropping the topics for standard Socials.

Rebecca announced the newest problem to hit the Socials – location. The dreaded football season is upon us and forcing us onto the streets. Apparently there is more money involved in Sunday football parties than SF Socials. This just proves the skewed standards of the world.

This newest issue was not going to get us down though. Rebecca already had her faithful sidekick, Gramma VSFA (a.k.a. her mother, Bettye Hardin), lined up to help with phone calls and culling out prospects for new sites. Rebecca did call for general help from the group in finding a new place. While a couple of names of places were thrown out, I don't think anyone actually offered to make calls or anything. (Since this time, a place was found thanks to the single-handed efforts of our Hero – Gramma VSFA. We all owe her a big thank you for finding a place for September and what may turn out to be a perfect long-term replacement. Go, Bettye!)

Things began to wrap up. James Taylor did ask for donations to help with John Hardin's second (forced) move. We all gave it up for the cause. Rebecca also made a special tip to Natalie, our regular waitress, in appreciation for her kindness and care in serving the group for the last several months.

We had to disband a bit more abruptly than we would have due to a wedding party scheduled in the room right after us. With a bit more general chat, we all headed to the parking lot and called it a day. All in all, it was a good time, well spent. I may actually try for a third!

In attendance:

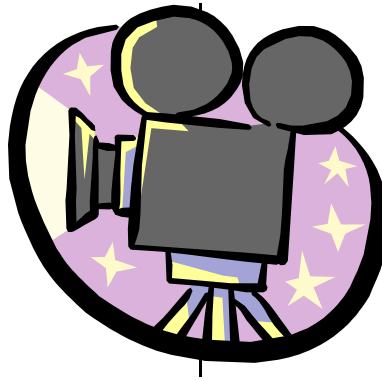
Lubov & Scott Anderson	Rebecca Hardin
Joshua Andrews	Kent Hastings
Joelle Barnes	Joyce & Arnie Katz
Linda & Ron Bushyager	Carol Kern
Kathryn & James Daugherty	James Taylor
Bettye Hardin	

Dinner & a Movie w/VSFA - "Brother's Grimm"

By Ruth R. Davidson

When you go to see a movie, you want to see a good movie. This one failed. *Brother's Grimm* was an awful movie. A few moments showed that there was a neat vision there, somewhere, but it got lost along the way with excessive gratuitous violence (so much so it requires two words to describe the over the top gore) and bad writing.

Matt Damon is a great actor, but his talents are wasted, as are the talents of everyone else in the movie. It's a modern B



movie, so if you like bad movies or horror B movies, you would probably enjoy this one. The acting is as fake as the accents, the plot laughable.

For me, if I had not been in good company I would have been most displeased at wasting my time and money.

However, the after dinner part of the event made up for it. We chatted till 9:30pm about all sorts of stuff, from eye balls, to the movie, to a bit about fandom.

Luncheon in VSFA-land

By Rebecca Hardin

Since the first Monday of the month fell on a Holiday (Labor Day) and the library was closed, the VSFA Board of Directors decided to have an informal non-business lunch instead. After phone calls to several restaurants Marie Callender's on Eastern and Tropicana won the bid and lunch was scheduled for 2:00PM on September 5, 2005.

Several of us (Ruth & Hazel Davidson, Rebecca & Bettye Hardin and Carol Kern) carpoled and arrived at the same time as James Willey. The six of us walked into the restaurant together where we were greeted by Joyce & Arnie Katz, Teresa Cochran, James Taylor and Joelle Barnes. Ayesha Ashley, Richard Brandt and Terry Wilsey were the last to arrive. There were a total of fourteen attendees.



James Taylor

The conversation was lively and varied. I interrupted briefly to announce that we had found a new site for the VSFA Sunday Social, thanks to Bettye Hardin (AKA Gramma VSFA). Everyone seemed happy about that and then the talk continued. I couldn't hear much of the discussion between James W., Carol, Ruth (Hazel didn't appear to be very talkative). I couldn't hear anything from Ayesha, Richard and Terry at the

other end of the table, but they appeared to be talking and having a good time.

At my end of the table, Arnie talked about the Chicago Science Fiction League and their plan to impose a Pleasure Tax. I couldn't do justice to an explanation, but it's covered fully in issue #43 of the Vegas Fandom Weekly.

We, also, discussed a possible joint Halloween party sponsored by the members of both SNAFFU and VSFA, if a suitable site could be found. Not many of us have a large enough house for a party. We thought if we could find someone to host the party, we could get volunteers from all of Las Vegas fandom to help out so it wouldn't be a lot of work or expense for any one individual.

Many other things were talked and laughed about during the couple of hours we were there. The food was good, the company was great and most of us had pie at the end of our meal. As we parted company, we agreed that a good time and a good meal was had by all and we should



**The illustrious Gramma VSFA (Bettye Hardin).
This is the lady to thank at the next social for all the hours she put in to find another home for the Sunday Socials.
THANK YOU GRAMMA VSFA!
YOU ARE AWESOME!**

do it again sometime. After all, how can you not enjoy any event that ends with pie?

Attendees

- | | | |
|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Joelle Barnes | Ruth Davidson | Carol Kern |
| Ayesha Ashley | Bettye Hardin | James Taylor |
| Richard Brandt | Rebecca Hardin | James Willey |
| Teresa Cochran | Arnie Katz | Terry Wilsey |
| Hazel Davidson | Joyce Katz | |



Joelle Barnes and Rebecca Hardin

**"YOU LIVE AND LEARN.
AT ANY RATE, YOU LIVE."
—Douglas Adams**

www.VSFA.us Update!

By your Webmistress; Ruth R. Davidson

The best thing about this month's update is that I've got the Calendar of Events up and running! I am rather proud of it.

There are two calendars. One has all the VSFA events, as well as those from other local fannish events. The second one (the link is beneath the VSFA Calendar of Events) is for conventions only.

Each event is linked and when you click on it, a separate window pops up with the details. If this doesn't work be sure that you have java enabled in your browser.

Now if you have anyone you would like to invite to any events, VSFA or SNAFFU or any other SF/F event, you can direct them to www.VSFA.us, since it's all right there in Calendar of Events!

The Links of Interest section now has links of interest in it! Web-sites for other local and non-local fannish groups are listed as well as other fannish links, and some about sciences are available too. If there are any other sites that you feel should be linked, please let me know so I can add them.

The fannish e-cards are giving me a bit of trouble. There's some coding error I've gotta hunt down and kill before it'll be available for public consumption.



I've added a new section called Extra Fun. This is the spot where I'll be putting up spiffy stuff that doesn't belong in any other section. I have a few ideas floating around but I'll keep those to myself so as not to ruin the surprise. Once some content is up, I'll let everyone on the VSFA and SNAFFU list-serv's know about it.

The Intergalactic Complaint Department is ready for complaints! Send them on to Cosmic Trouble. It can be about anything! There are a couple of posts there already, and one complaint I read about is a bit eye popping. O.O

The Logo Contest rules have been html-ized and is up on the home page. This contest is especially good for unknown amateur artists who would like

to get a little publicity.

Ideas and suggestions on the website are always welcome. I am putting this together for every fan out there, new and old, so I greatly value any and all input! It lets me know what I am doing right, what could be improved, and what direction to take the site to reflect VSFA and Fandom At Large.

Ad Astra!

Book Review NOT reviewed by Mindy the Sickie

The Story of the Stone
by Barry Hughart (Doubleday, 1988);
reviewed by Ruth R. Davidson

This book is quite the page turner. The story is about Master Li, an anti-Neo-Confucian, and his apprentice Number Ten Ox, who is from peasant stock and very loyal to Master Li. When it comes to peasants, Ox is often called on for his expertise. Master Li says a few times in the book, "I wish I were 90 again," so he is ancient, yet spry of mind and body; his age is never revealed. With his quick thinking and vast amounts of knowledge, Master Li and Number Ten Ox embark on a journey that starts out as a simple murder and theft case. They gain the help of Moon Boy, a beautiful sound expert who has a few impulsive flaws and Grief of Dawn, a girl with no memory of her past,

who is the only person who can keep Moon Boy in line.

The story takes place in a China that never was. Heaven, Hell, Souls, C'hi, Life, Death, and the Stone, with a bit of Taoism and possibly other Chinese beliefs and myths are all pieces of the story, the elements that make it rich and fun to read. The entire story flows smoothly, like a gentle waterfall from a small stream. The stories told, to help unfold the mystery of what is really going on, are delightful. Some lines will at least make you smile, if not laugh aloud. I am tempted to repeat one or two here, but I'm afraid I'll ruin the joy of reading them in context.

I highly recommend this novel. It's a fantastic world to visit. If you die reading this book, at least you will not have died in boredom.

Note: This book is out of print but available at online book sellers such as amazon.com and tomfolio.com.



Apologies.

Below are two LoC's from Loyd Penney. I did not receive the first one meant for issue two. So, if you sent an LoC and did not see it in print, I simply didn't get it. Therefore, please send it to me personally so I can include it next issue! My email is rcmalgroups@gmail.com.

Thank you for your understanding and support, and I hope to hear from you soon! —Ruthie :)

Loyd Penney:

Dear VSFAn:

I have here the second issue of V3, and I saw on your list that deadline is coming up in a few days. What better incentive than to get a loc done to help fill the issue? Helps me with catching up, too.

I have started up a club in the past, and the biggest problem in running a club is making sure that club members feel they're getting value for their membership money. Tough to do, and that's the best reason to trade with other clubs...they've got other ideas you can *ahem* borrow, and make your own.

It would be great to see that time travel could be done, even theoretically, and the math written up to prove that it can. I don't think we'll ever have an Asimov-style time machine to climb into, shut the door, set the controls, and emerge a thousand years earlier. Alternate or parallel universes would open the door to mathematics that would take generations to create and solve...nothing like job security, hm?

I am pleased to see that David Brin is using books by Julie Czerneda as an example of using SF to teach literacy. Julie is an old friend, and her husband Roger used to buy dealers' tables from me at our local convention. I hope this teaching programme is successful; the genre needs future readers to keep it alive and vibrant. I prefer freshly-thought-of fiction rather than the pre-thought-of novelizations, or novels set in an established universe, like Trek, but I think we should be pleased that any SF book is being read and enjoyed. Getting a kid to open a book is half the battle right there.

Congratulations to Elizabeth Bear ad this year's Campbell Award winner for Best New Author! And congrats, or commiserations, to Rebecca Hardin on winding up with running the club. That's happened to me, too, and ac-

tually taking your best shot at doing the job will tell you what your abilities and limits are, and that's handy to know for the future.

Before it appeared on eFanzines.com, I downloaded VFW 38 from the website. I also have Implications 1, and must write a loc on that one. So at least now, I am loccing something other than a Katzine. I'll be back to that soon, so until then, many thanks for the second VVV, and see you with the third.

Dear Vegans:

I've hit eFanzines.com hard, and downloaded a lot of zines, and I have here the third issue of the VSFA Valley Voyager. Time to write another letter. By the way, I did send a letter to you on your second issue. If you didn't get it, let me know, and I'll forward it to you.

I know what you're going through when it comes to being dropped by your favorite watering hole. Yvonne runs the local pubnights in Toronto, and twice now has a good and comfortable pub/restaurant told us that we were not wanted back. We weren't rude or rowdy, but for one, we didn't arrive all together and we didn't leave all together, like good girls and boys, I guess, and the other pub didn't want us because we just weren't drinking enough, I guess. Our group would leave about \$1000 behind as a group, but I guess they could have made more with sports fans with porous livers. We are now firmly situated in two pubs (we have two pubnights) that value us as patrons, and that's a good feeling. I wish you luck in finding a new home for the socials.

David Brin's question #1 is pertinent. Some of us have been involved in this fandom stuff for 25 years or more, which makes us feel pretty old sometimes. Some of us have been working cons for that period of time, and take it from me, we want a break. We've been able to make the good times happen because we've cared enough to keep doing it. Time for a rest, but we see few people willing to take over and run the show. (I think most of those willing to take over are in Las Vegas. We could use more people like you just about everywhere.) I can't help but feel that some time down the road, we'll all be reminiscing about those good times we had, but no one will be staging the events we'd like to gather at. I sure hope I'm wrong. Some of that interest in science fiction also has to come about through an interest in science, which will be difficult in an era of smart kids being majorly uncool.

Dick Pelletier's column sounds very optimistic. The base assumptions of unlimited lifespans and a superfast internet are pretty big to make. A question...given the rise of China and a financial superpower, how much of that rosy future will be provided by the USA, and how much by China? Does anyone see them working together to make all of this happen? That kind of future would be the truly rosy future I'd be looking for.

Again, did you get my loc on issue 2? I didn't send it to rcmalgroups@gmail.com, but I will from now on. Let me know if you did not receive that loc, and I will forward it. Take care all, and see you in future issues of VFW.