

## **STEVE BERKOWITZ: A NETWORK PIONEER HAS PASSED AWAY**

**Barry Wellman, November 2003. Published in *Connections*, 25, 2 (Winter, 2003)**

We lost one of the original thinkers in social network analysis in November 2003. Steve Berkowitz was a true and important pioneer.

Steve and I worked closely together during his time at the University of Toronto. He was a brilliant co-editor on our 1988 *Social Structures: A Network Approach* (Cambridge University Press; since reprinted with some updating by first JAI/Elsevier and then Canadian Scholars Press). This has been a major book presenting North American social network stuff, combining case studies with explicit comparisons to non-structural ways of doing things. Throughout its long course, Steve was a great colleague, holding out for the best possible book. We had great discussions about what the book should look like, and we exacted rewrites from authors until their work gleamed. Indeed, Steve performed the heroic feat of translating Harrison White into English.

At the same time, working with Steve could be maddening. When he moved to Vermont, the book had still not been done. Steve kept telling me that he was mailing edited chapters to me. I was so puzzled by why so many did not arrive, that I finally wrote to the Burlington postmaster to ask about why they were plotting to lose Steve's mail to me in Toronto. (This was in the prehistoric, pre-Fedex, pre-attachment days.)

At the time of his death, Steve was working on a revised edition of *Social Structures* with Doug White. I hope Doug will continue. I look forward to seeing Cambridge University Press publish it, both for its usefulness and as a testament to Steve.

As important as *Social Structures* has been, Steve's most important work was his 1982 *An Introduction to Structural Analysis* (Butterworth), long out of print. It was the first integrated statement of the social network approach. Importantly, it emphasized theory and substance, rather than treating social network analysis as a methodological parlor trick. I still send folks to read it.

Steve left Toronto for Vermont in the mid 1980s. Almost every day since, I have found myself missing his energy and his insights. In this, I am not alone. Steve loomed large to all who know him. As his former Toronto colleague Les Howard says, "Steve will continue to be a presence in our lives." Similarly, his Toronto colleague Janet Salaff writes that "Steve was a large presence in all the terms of that idea. He gave us wonderful stimulating concepts, overarching ideas and challenges."

Steve took ideas seriously, and he took seriously all seekers of the sociological truth, from high school students to old professors. To take one nice example, Steve helped Janet Salaff edit the first sentence of her book manuscript. Janet had written, "Hong Kong markets are penetrated by world capital." Steve instantly replied, "Help! Rape!" and gave her a much livelier sentence, while purging Janet of clichés. He had similar enthusiasms about outstanding young professors. University of Illinois Assistant Professor Yoosik Youm told me, "I had known Steve for a short time since he called me regarding adding my papers with Edward Laumann to the new edition of *Social Structures*. I was amazed and pleased to experience his passions and wonderful efforts in that short period of time."

Steve was a complex guy who never took the easy way. There was always something going on in his life. Everything that Steve did, every call that Steve made was "urgent". Like a vintage wine or a Ferrari, he was difficult but rewarding.

The world is an emptier place now, but who could ever forget Steve? The images I have in my mind are of Steve consuming a dozen bagels one breakfast at my house, of copious amounts of Coke downed while we edited (in pre-diabetic days), of Steve propounding some fascinating idea around the lunch table and holding us all enthralled for hours, of many, many phone calls, and of Terry Berkowitz's sculpture of a Buddha-like sitting Steve, entitled, "Minor Living God." My last vision is of Steve arriving at the Sitges (Catalonia) Sunbelt conference in a voortrekker outfit -- floppy hat, khaki vest, shorts and walking stick -- apparently having walked all the way from South Africa where he was a visiting professor.

The social network analysts will hold a memorial session for Steve at their next conference, in Slovenia, May 2004. I also invite all those who knew Steve to contribute their own Steve stories for publication in the next issue of *Connections*, the informal journal of the International Network for Social Network Analysis. I am sure that as long as social networkers sit around campfires, Steve Berkowitz stories will be told.