

"the real work" and people who support people who do the real work. To take AT&T as an example, you have a lot of people not directly involved with telecommunications. They do things like print salary checks, keep the building clean, etc. These people are contributing to the real work, but only indirectly. What is more,

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some of the work is only one step removed from the real work, like emptying the wastebasket of someone who does real telecommunications engineering, and some is more steps removed, like emptying the wastebasket of someone who does the payroll. In fact if you think about it there are a lot of these support people out there. For much of AT&T, the support work of feeding the employees goes to a company like ARA that does nothing but support work. Everyone working for ARA is really part of some company's overhead.

And many of the support people don't have any real association with AT&T. If you go to the grocery, they are providing you with food which you pay for with part of your salary so that you may continue with your work. Part of your salary is for food and housing and entertainment. At this point the whole questions got pretty confused so the government hired a Boston firm, Deutsch and Darrell, to actually figure out who is directly doing the work, and who is just a support person, facilitating work. They made the key observation that companies like AT&T really just make telecommunications equipment to facilitate getting the real work done. We simply provide support. We also make it easier for support people to communicate with other support people. And give them entertainment in that customers call relatives and friends. We facilitate other people getting work done; we don't directly do work, like ARA only supports other companies.

For a while it looked like nobody actually did any direct work, only offered services to other people. D&D's computers eliminated more and more of the population as direct workers until it really looked like nobody was doing the real work. Then, when it looked like they were going to prove this contention the remaining population dropped down to one person, Charlie Wasserman. Nobody will tell us what Wasserman actually does, but he does not administer to make anyone else's job easier. He does the real

work. The rest of us all just make it easier for him to do it, directly or more likely very indirectly. The military protects Charlie and his immense army of support personnel. The President runs the country for the same people.

This attention to Charlie's work has been looked on somewhat favorably by his supervisors, so his salary has risen from about \$20,000 to \$34,000 since he was discovered in 1984. (I think he isn't getting any more than that because people in his company don't want people to think that their jobs are somehow less important. The CEO of his company makes on the order of \$950,000 what with stock options and all. The CEO points out that someone of the CEO's responsibilities really should get a lot more money than the people do the actual nitty-gritty work of the company. And after all, somebody really good should be guiding Charlie's work and the salary for that position should be competitive with similar positions in other companies. Of course, nobody actually

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buys the CEO's work and perhaps not his argument, either.)

Once that was understood, a lot more became clear. These claims that American productivity is dropping off: that's true. Charlie is 62 now and is getting closer to retirement. He is slowing down a bit. Recently he had the flu, had to stay out of work. American productivity dropped off to zero and you saw what happened to the stock market. Of course these days people in the know are watching Charlie's work very closely. People are starting to question if someone should be picked to fill in for Charlie when he is out, but this all is done in secret. Rumors of instability in Charlie's job could easily lead to worldwide depression. Someone has probably already been trained to replace Charlie when he retires, but that transition will, of course, be kept secret.

2. The following books have been donated to the Middletown branch of the Science Fiction Club Library (thanks to Ihor Kinal and David Kemp):

Abbey, Lynn	Black Flame, The
Anderson, Poul	Game of Empire, The
Avallone, Michael	Beneath the Planet of the Apes
Bester, Alfred	Golem 100

Blish, James	VOR
Brin, David	Postman, The
Brin, David	Startide Rising
Brin, David	Uplist War, The
Chalker, Jack	Demons of the Dancing Gods (DG2)
Chalker, Jack	River of the Dancing Gods (DG1)
Chalker, Jack	Vengeance of the Dancing Gods (DG3)
Clagett, John	Orange R, The
Clarke, Arthur C.	2010: Odyssey Two (trade paperback)
Edwards, Frank	Flying Saucers--Here and Now!
Edwards, Frank	Stranger Than Science
Farmer, Philip Jose	Day of the Timestop, The
Farmer, Philip Jose	Father to the Stars
Ford, Arthur	Unknown But Known
Foster, Alan Dean	Deluge Drivers, The
Knight, Damon	Worlds to Come
Laumer, Keith	Invaders, The
Laumer, Keith	Star Colony
Lucas, George	Star Wars
Lymington, John	Grey Ones, The
Matheson, Richard	Shores of Space, The
Niven, Larry	Long Arm of Gil Hamilton, The
Roulet, Alfred	Search for Intelligent Life in Outer Space, The
Silverberg, Robert	New Dimensions 11
Simak, Clifford D.	Project Pope
Sladek, John	Best of John Sladek, The

Also, Harry Harrison's THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT FOR PRESIDENT has been donated to the Holmdel branch and John Ford's DRAGON WAITING

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has been transferred from Middletown to Lincroft.

3. Orson Scott Card's ENDER'S GAME and David Drake's HAMMER'S SLAMMERS are available in the Middletown branch for reading before the next discussion, which will be on military science fiction and cover these books as well as Laumer's "Bolo" series and others.

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