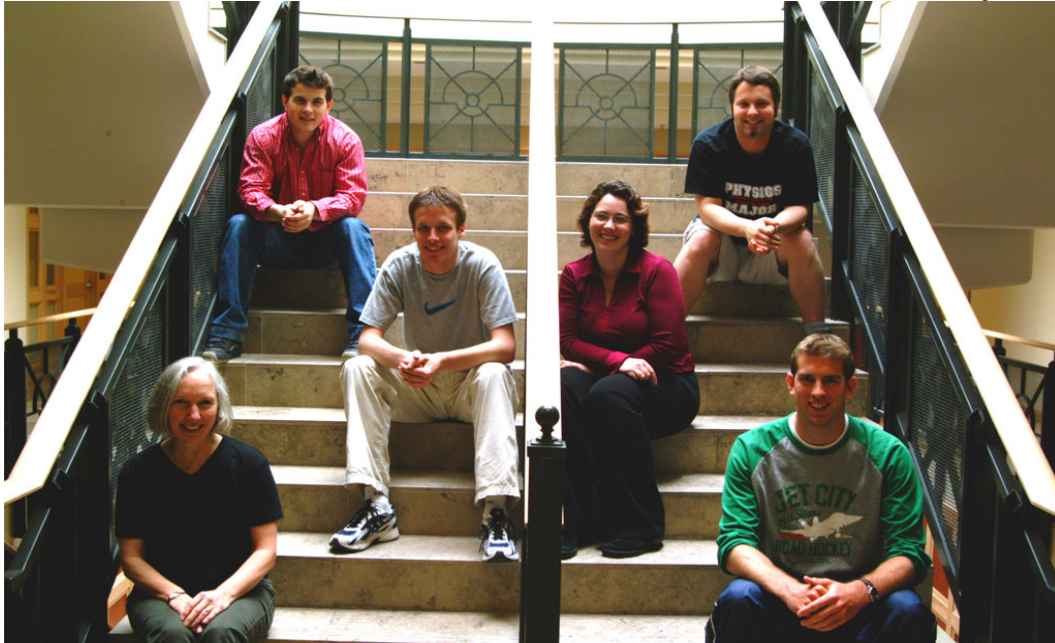


TamarisWorld – The Darkest Matter in the Galaxy



Bonnie Q, Pitbull, Macky, Ranger, Optimus Greg and Atilla the Hon.

Communicated Anonymously:

They're a group of fabulous HQP's – all involved in mathematical modeling of soft matter (biofilms, bacterial surfaces, gels) and building computer code to run simulations on our 350-node supercomputer (HPClab) to find out what the models predict. Techniques used are Monte Carlo, aka Monty Python, simulation and various forms of Molecular Dynamics. Recently they've got into Dissipative Particle Dynamics – a great way to model aqueous systems on scales ranging from nanometers to beyond multi-microns.

And, an interview with them might have gone something like this....

The blonde woman with the Albergo-pale hair and the disarming pink-patterned gingham frock regarded me – her ruthlessly-blue gaze laser-lancing into my brain until I felt it liquifying, evaporating. "I'm bonnieQ," her quiet, southern-Ontario drawl, her provocative gaze, dared me to contradict her. "I run this show. *He*," she jerked her head at a man lounging in a chair - black matrix glasses hiding his eyes - gazing at a screen showing Oz versus Windies, "he signs stuff, make speeches – front man - know what I mean?" She turned to my guide. "Show him around, Pitbull," her smile turned cruel. "Introduce him to the Kiddies."

The Kiddies - a shiver ran up and down my spine. You don't snork with the Kiddies – you don't mention the name. And here I was, daring to set foot in their lair – TamarisWorld – The Darkest Matter in the Galaxy.

Pitbull regarded me through his black glasses. "Welcome to TamarisWorld – The Darkest Matter in the Galaxy. I boss this tank," he gestured at bonnieQ, "for *her*. Come meet the guys." He waved his hand casually. "Macky", and the 19-year-old kid gave me a coldly-dismissive look, sizing me up, instantly recognizing that in codeware hyperspace I counted for substantially less than nothing. Pitbull's hand moved on, "Optimus Greg," and I was startled as the zombie eyes gazed bleakly at me before returning to his monitor. Pitbull was still talking. "Ranger", he gestured at a cheerfully-psychotic young man with mad eyes – an assassin. Pitbull indicated a comely young woman. "Atilla the Hon", and she spoke, her voice quiet, terror-inducing. "Hi kid. Does your mother know you're out?" Pitbull looked at me disdainfully. "And who are *you*?" "Oh... sorry. I-I'm from AFMnet," my smile was sick, nervous, insecure, insincere. "I'm here to write about... you... *all* of you," and Atilla the Hon sneered. "Better be careful what you write about me kid, or I'll tell your mom."

Oh, well... they're not *really* like that – not *completely* - not *officially*.... are they? Let's try again – maybe *this* sounds better – more serious, like... more reassuringly *boring*.

Dave Mackenzie. 5th year Honours Physics and Computer Science (StFXU). Hardware, codeware expert. Understands the physics of soft matter (membranes, polymers, gels). He's modelling Hydrogel Project 5 – molecules diffusing through a maltodextrin-gelatin-genipin mix, and is beginning a *really* difficult project – FloThro: modelling the growth of biofilms in flowing water. Speaks F90, C, C++, Java, Python and a host of others both in sequential and parallel (MPI).

Adam MacDonald. 3rd year Engineering (UNB). Brilliant code writer – solves almost any codeware problem within 24 hours. Parallelization expert. He's the group animator (3D Max, OpenGL) – all the glitzy movies are his. He's driving Hydrogel Project 6: coding a model to explain what happens on a nanoscale at the interface between a maltodextrin-gelatin-genipin phase. And, make a movie of it. Speaks everything except F90.

Brad Poirier and Ron MacEachern. 2st year Honours Physics (StFXU). They're running the Albert George Wickham Memorial problem – given an aqueous mix of stirred or shaken charged particles of different sizes, how do they settle out? Up to now, only Albert George Wickham, hanged for murder, knows. The answer requires a knowledge of physics, modelling and computer simulation. Speaks C.

Lori McNally. Electrical engineer (UNB) and code writer. She's driving Jerry-and-the-Couettes - the rotating surface problem: given a hydrogel or an aqueous suspension of particles in a cylindrical drum with a rotating inner cylinder and a stationary outer one, what's the details of the flow on all relevant length- and time-scales. Speaks F90.

Bonnie Quinn – (BSc Mathematics, BEd UoT). Known worldwide only by name and reputation - the most famous unmet person in the Galaxy. She's been hidden for 20 years while the front man, Scorpio, goes around acting as if all her beautiful computer simulations are *his*. Speaks F90, C sequential AND parallel (MPI). Knows almost everything – computer simulates *everything* - is on all the papers. She's running Biofilms – attachment, growth, dynamics, structures – relates it all to ATR-FTIR and microrheology. She's also running Bacterial Surfaces and CAPS. Den mother to the Kiddies – teaches them computer simulation – tells them what to do – wipes their snotty noses - sympathizes when their girl/boy friends dump. Scorpio says he'll personally delete anyone who tries to pirate her.

And... here's what they look like. L to R: Brad, Adam, Bonnie, Dave, Lori, Ron.