In this paper, Freeman does a pretty good job of covering the pretty remarkable progress that has been made in Social Network Visualizations. One of the first things I noticed in this paper was Freeman's mentioning of two distinct forms of display that have been used to display and visualize networks: line and points and matrices. The line and points method seemed very obvious to me, and for the most part, expected. However, I was unable to recall any memory of a visualization my way of matrix. After a quick Google search, it became very clear to me why the line and point visualizations make of the great majority: clarity. Line and point visualization, while complex, are inherently easier to read, and I am glad Freeman stuck to focusing on them.

As for the visualizations as a whole, one of the things that I found most interesting was how little things changed over the past seventy or eighty years. When I was done reading the document, I scrolled back up to the top, looking at all of the visualizations, and realized that they all looked the same. Aside from addition an additional dimension, I feel like computers have only aided us in actually producing the visualizations and not evolving them.

As far as particular visualizations that I enjoyed, the clusters of school children and sociogram of the first grade class were probably my favorites. In particular, the first grade one due to its ability to show gender and how it relates to the popularity of a student.
The Strength of Weak Ties

Mark S. Granovetter

I will be honest. I really didn't enjoy this reading. I felt it was overly wordy and I had difficulties following where Granovetter was going at certain times.

Granovetter argues in this paper the idea of strength in weak ties. In our social network, our strong ties are people very close to us. Family, and friends commonly make up our strong ties. We are more likely to communicate with them on a regular basis, and there is also a pretty good possibility that they will share strong ties amongst each other as well. This will result in groups of close, or strong ties.

Weak ties represent our acquaintances. These are people we know and communicate with, but are probably not very close to us. As a result, there is less of a chance of sharing acquaintances. However, each of your acquaintances most likely belongs to a group of people they share strong ties with. As a result, these weak ties act as bridges between groups of strong ties. This is what Granovetter means by "the strength of weak ties".

Overall, I think the idea is pretty interesting and it has its share of implications in social network visualizations. The biggest of which, to me, is to simple not overlook these weak ties. As Granovetter says in his paper, while information is shared between clumps of strong ties, if that information happens to be shared through a weak tie - it can spread it to an entirely different group of people.