



Bronze statue of a master former that stands on the roof in Grohmann Museum's sculpture garden

[JG] Welcome to the once-more-full-color *Madison Foursquare*. Our printer is still not quite fixed. Final repairs, next week, should eliminate the smudges you see on these pages. I originally bought our printer – a Ricoh Aficio CL 7200 PS – more than ten years ago from Graphite, an authorized Apple service company, which had previously used it for more than a year. So the printer is maybe eleven or twelve years old, too old to be able to AirPrint, sadly, but this is the first time I've ever had to get it serviced. I think that's a pretty extraordinary record. Ricoh isn't making the printer anymore and no longer sells parts or toner. I've managed to accumulate a large stash of supplies purchased via eBay but it wasn't easy to find someone who was willing to work on the printer without a service contract. They wouldn't come over until I'd secured the parts necessary for repair. But Chris, the repair guy, said the printer was worth repairing, that it is a good machine, so I'm crossing my fingers that this round of repairs works.



Covers

[SC] Nice job with the covers, Jeanne B! Clever idea.

[JG] Makes me think about other art forms or surfaces that have interesting backsides and would make good *Turbo* covers.

Elizabeth Matson

[SC] Very nice piece on your trip to Canada. Congratulations on your (and your mom's) successful storytelling performances. It sounded like a wonderful trip. Your photos are terrific.

I confess that I smiled when I read about tea refills from your clueless waitress. I drink my coffee black, but for years when Jeanne and I went out to breakfast I had to carefully accept any offer of cream for my coffee because they'd never offer it to Jeanne, who always drank tea. If I slipped up and said "no" to cream, I could expect to receive a kick in the shin under the table. I've long suggested she give up tea and learn to drink coffee instead. You will no doubt be shocked to learn that I've made no progress on that matter so far. I'm still hopeful.

I love your book reviews, too.

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Madison
four square

84

[JG] Your photo of your feet wiggling in Sheboygan Beach's sand sent me back to my family's frequent vacations to Kohler-Andrea State Park beach, which must not be very far from Sheboygan beach. I loved to run into the waves and walk out to the first or second sandbar, where we kids would stand in knee-deep water and then get bowled over by waves, sometimes over our heads. ("Again, again, let's do it again!") That whole lakeshore area is beautiful.

I'm sorry to hear that your yurt isn't fulfilling your need for a home away from home. It sounds like it sort of needs more regular tending than you are able to give it. Will you be able to convince a feral cat to take up residence as the yurt's building super? Do feral cats reply to want ads?

I love Lorraine Roy's quilt squares and your newest National Parks hats. And I will have to check out *Nettle & Bone!* Thanks for the recommendations.

Lisa Freitag

[SC] Fan fiction! *Turbo* #447 had a lot of talk about *Good Omens*, so your timing was perfect. Well done. My guess is that these two characters were fun to write.

[JG] I enjoyed the story, thanks! I'd like to read more of Crowley's and Aziraphale's adventures in the U.S. Maybe a tour through an art museum where they would gossip about the artists they, of course, knew personally back in the day. Or maybe an adventure at an SF convention.

Jeanne Bowman

[SC] Wow! Playing Barbie at your house is a lot more...um...wild, physically active and murderous than I thought playing with Barbie normally involved. Until now I thought it was all date play and tea parties. I think a squad of G.I. Joes would fear to tread into Far Away from Anywhere National Forest. Yikes!

[JG] Is there a crocheted-hat pattern for Far Away from Anywhere National Forest?

Did you hear about the women in a neighborhood in South Jordan, Utah (UTAH!), who were inspired by the *Barbie* movie to dress up their houses in different themes for Halloween this year? They decorated one house as the classic Dream House, of course, but other houses were converted into Barbie Graveyard, Weird Barbie, Haunted Barbie, Disco Barbie, Pool Barbie, Beach Barbie, and Barbie Barn – turning their neighborhood into "Barbieland." The neighbors put up neon signs that



read, "You guys ever think about dying?" and "RIP the patriarchy" tombstones. There is even a Ken's Mojo Dojo Casa House, with cowboy decor and a real horse. An undecorated home with a sign that reads "Real World This Way," will alert trick-or-treaters that they are about to exit Barbieland. The thing I most like about this story is that Barbieland was conceived almost totally as a DIY project. There aren't expensive Barbie-house-decor packages for sale at Walmart (yet). I think the South Jordan folks must have had a lot of fun.

Hmmm, I am flattered to discover that phrase, "Real world Jeanne Gomoll levels of play," suggests that my behavior might be used to measure degrees of destructive kid activity. "...Little girls want to commit arson." Whew. I didn't realize I wasn't alone in this kid ambition! Good idea about the new fire extinguisher.

Carrie Root

[SC] I sympathize with your struggle in Seattle between saving trees and building housing. Here in Madison the need for more housing is making a lot of folks crazy. Recent changes in zoning rules about how many unrelated people can live in a single-family home have lots of people terrified that the house next door is going to fill up with a gang of college students who will play loud music at all hours and drunkenly pee on their neighbors' hostas. Our trees are more threatened by the emerald ash borer than bulldozers, at least.

[JG] I find that reading Gabaldon's *Outlander* books intermingled with the TV series works just fine for me. Unsurprisingly, the TV series omits a huge amount of detail, not to mention side plots and whole characters. But the director must be a huge fan of Gabaldon's work, or perhaps the author is actually on set a fair amount, advising, because there are hints dropped in dialog and background detail, that nod to missing plot lines. Sort of like scripted contractions that mark the missing story bits. Since the novels are fresh in my mind, my imagination fills in the missing storylines in the TV series. I expect that I have already convinced myself that I actually saw some of those missing scenes.

Your several references to the San Diego Zoo reminded me of the first time I heard about that Zoo. I still haven't visited it, but I heard about it as a kid when the Milwaukee Museum announced some renovations as being inspired by San Diego's Zoo – with visitors being allotted a much smaller amount of space than the animals, so that most animals could be viewed in something that better approximated natural habitat rather than cages.

Andy Hooper

[SC] Kudos once again on an absorbing Horror Host piece on the life and career of Donald J. Melvoin (Count Zappula). I was once again struck by how alone (except for his dog) and sad his final days appeared to be in the context of such a public life.

Jeanne and I tuned into *The Walking Dead* and *Fear of The Walking Dead* for many seasons before finally letting go of the franchise. These series had no interest in evolving the arc story of what was really happening and why in the zombie apocalypse world, they just wanted to do the comic book routine of playing the same basic story over and over while periodically shaking up the cast. We finally had to just walk away from it (so to speak). We're going to ignore Daryl Dixon's peculiar adventures in France. They will likely devote one whole season just to tell the story of how the hell he got over there.

Jeanne and I have been noticing, this year especially, how many horror movies are being released to theaters (and streaming) by the studios. It's not just a seasonal increase, it seems like a constant stream of them. Are they cheap to make or is this in response to a heightened demand due to the tense and uncertain times we're living in?

[JG] I liked your suggestion to re-name my play. I ditched my boring title and replaced it with "Am I the A**hole?" with a subtitle: "A Pandemic Tale in Four Acts with an Update." Reddit forums don't allow the word Asshole, so people write "A**hole," or "A-hole," or "AITA." Thanks for the idea!

You asked how you might see Apple+'s *Foundation*. I think you can get a short-term free subscription. A monthly subscription is just \$6.99 per month after a free seven-day trial. You could see a lot in a single month. If you try out Apple+ please try to watch *For All Mankind* too!

I have been working with Joe Siclari and Edie Stern during the last year. They now have copies of all WisCon publications. (Mark Olson is still scanning those pubs.) They've got pdfs of all issues of *Janus* and *Aurora*. I also sent them pdfs of all issues of my perzine, *Whimsey*, and pdfs of all my (and Scott's) apazines that were created electronically. And finally, Joe is working through the seven three-ring binders that contain my other apazines, most of which exist only on paper. Joe is scanning them, one binder at a time. He's currently in the middle of scanning *Obsessions*, my apazine for *A Women's Apa*. So, I've been patting myself on the back for being organized enough to have been able to lay my hands on pubs that I worked on through the past 50 years.

Not so proud now. Joe asked me whether I had copies of *Cube*.

I could tell Joe that *Cube* made its first appearance in October 1982 as SF3's newsletter, perhaps because the group missed the appearance of a regularly published zine. (*Janus* and *Aurora* hadn't come out in several years at this point, though we did manage to put out a finale issue, #26, in 1990.) I edited *Cube* through September 1985 issue number 14, and then Spike took over editorial duties for 29 amazingly regular issues. You eventually edited numbers 45 and 46 of *Cube*, and after a 16-month hiatus, [Steve Swartz](#) took over its publication in May 1992, turning it briefly into a large-scale fannish genzine. In 1993 *Cube* was still under Swartz' editorial control, but returned to an ensmallled newszine format. I don't remember how many issues he put out. I have no copies of any issues of *Cube*. I don't know anyone who kept copies. [Diane](#) says she had copies, pre-flood, but they're gone now. Don't even remember when the last issue of *Cube* was published. How embarrassing! Why did I not think about keeping copies of SF3's only newszine?

Greg Rihn

[SC] Your piece on job hunting was illuminating, if a bit chilling. In some ways it almost sounds easier than the old days. Best of luck to you in your search.

I was most intrigued by your description of *Richard II*, which I have never seen. Any thoughts on why it's rarely performed? We passed on going to *The Merry Wives of Windsor* this year because it was not that long ago we saw an excellent production at APT with Brian Mani as Falstaff and we just weren't ready to see a new version yet. Thanks for your review of this year's production.

We are going to only six of their shows this year. My favorite so far (we still have to see *Proof* in November) was the boxing play, *The Royale*. It was fabulous!

Regarding your comment to [Steve S](#) about "legal tender," so you agree that businesses can legally refuse cash unless there is a law specifically requiring them to accept it? Except, of course, for the risky strategy of arguing that a debt must be forgiven if they refuse to accept payment in cash. Please don't suggest that theory to Trump.

[JG] Thanks for explaining the gold and silver theory of right-wing wackos. I never knew what they were talking about, but your explanation was more interesting than I expected!

Georgie Schnobrich

[SC] I loved your summer poem.

What fun we had with you and [Greg](#) and [Elizabeth](#) at the Lost Arts Festival at the Grohmann Museum! I think we would have loved the museum even



without the festival. We're thinking of going back to spend more time gazing at the paintings and sculptures. You guys were great hosts, too. The Monday after our visit to the museum we drove down to my hometown in Iowa for a lunch gathering. Jeanne and I found ourselves talking about the festival and showing off pictures.

[JG] Re your comment to [Pat](#) about how people employed in the service industry frequently get treated as servants and inferior persons ... got me musing about how I frequently read/hear stories about so-called "Karens" who mistakenly identify a random person as a clerk, often ignoring that person's protestations that they "don't work here." In these stories, the protagonist is outraged that they have been identified and treated as an inferior person, subject to the demands of the entitled "Karen." Sometimes the story will include a comment to the effect that *no one* should be treated as inferior servants no matter if they work in the service industry or not. But mostly the stories go into detail how blind the "Karen" was to obvious clues that the person was not an employee, and thus not subject to rude customer demands. On the other hand, there seem to be relatively few stories in this popular "Karen" genre that involve bad treatment of people actually employed as clerks. Logically there should be far more stories told from employees' points of view, but more often, the thing that sparks people's outrage is that they themselves were unfairly mis-identified as a servant-clerk.

Yes, I think you and I are on the same wavelength when it comes to writers who employ their characters in a metaphorical industry (like baker or cartographer) and get fundamental information wrong. With you, I also cheer when the writer grounds their character's behavior on real life experience or on a lot of careful research. I cheered a few weeks ago when Scott and I went to Forward Theater's play, *The Garbologists*.



This off-beat buddy comedy pairs essential workers from two different worlds in the shared cab of a New York City garbage truck. Danny's a white, blue-collar mansplainer hiding a heart of gold. Marlowe's a Black, Ivy League-educated newbie learning the ropes from her old-school partner. When they're thrown together to pick up what the world has discarded, they discover there's more that binds them than taking out the trash. The playwright did a ton of research, and so did the actors, who went on ride-alongs with Madison sanitation workers.

Pat Hario

[SC] You brought up a lot of great questions about *Good Omens*. I will be interested in the responses you get. In my own case, I thought season 2 was not as strong as the first season. The overall story arc was not as compelling to me and I missed Pratchett's zanier sense of humor. But then I found out that Season 2 was the second part of a three-part series, which makes a lot more sense. From that standpoint Season 2 had the same challenges the second part of any trilogy always has, so I'm inclined to cut it some slack. I'm looking forward to the 3rd installment, though I still miss Pratchett's touch.

Regarding your comment to me, I also struggle with the idea that "young people" are increasingly living without cars. I remember how determined I was at age 15 to get my driver's license and a car so I could have a social life in a small Midwestern town. I thought driving meant freedom. But nowadays when I run into 20+-year-olds who still don't drive, I have to sympathize. It's scary out there. Roadways are more complicated, there is a lot more traffic and assholes are everywhere. I don't blame them for not wanting to drive.

Nice photos and, yes, the kittens are very cute. So what if they poop?

[JG] Immediately after we finished watching season two of *Good Omens*, I agreed with Scott that the first season had offered a more compelling story. Nevertheless, I have found myself thinking about the plot, ideas, and characters' relationships in season two, far more often than I ever thought about the first season. Sort of reminds me of how mentally chewy *The Good Place* was. I too am very eager to see "what happens" in season three. It will be some time before that comes to us though, and I expect that I will be

happy to review the first two seasons to refresh my memory.

I have read some of Chekhov's plays and I did once see *The Cherry Orchard*, but basically that experience convinced me to avoid Chekhov from then on. I dislike the atmosphere of depressed boredom.

Jim Hudson & Diane Martin

[SC] Thank you for the updates and congratulations on the anniversary. 20 years already? This month we will be celebrating 39 years from when we met at an ICON in Coralville, IA. Maybe we should consider L'Etoile too.

I struggled with APT's *Mala*. At first, I thought I just wasn't in the mood for it, but later I realized that I was psychologically backing away from it. The central character's struggle with her mother falling into dementia was just too hard to watch. I was also distracted by the lone actor circling around the treacherous set and the thought that so many people in the audience (including some of our own companions) had likely dealt with many of these same issues, and how hard they must have found watching the show, too. I was so repelled by it that I don't even remember the last 15 or 20 minutes of the play.

Regarding *Turbo* privacy, I have always assumed that anything I write about here could end up anywhere. That said, I have no problem with a privacy policy. Maybe each contributor should publish a statement as to what they want to see done with old issues of their zines. Then ask all members to agree to honor each other's requests as a condition of membership.

Lovely photos again, but your portraits with the nice smiles really stood out for me.

[JG] Since I'm in the process of publishing many hundreds of pages-worth of autobiographical writing, I certainly accept the idea that anything I publish in an apazine or on-line will be potentially accessible by anyone in the world. (In fact, for me, that's part of the reason I publish.) But I do not write and share information that I want to remain private. How does the saying go? A secret shared by more than one person is no longer a secret? On the other hand, I am willing to observe the boundaries that friends establish for themselves. For instance, I do not publish photographs of my friend Spike on-line. She is OK with her photo appearing in print but not on-line. OK. And

I pledge to destroy individual *Turbo* zines, or return them to their makers, before passing an apa on, if the authors request it. So ... I am OK with any sharing restrictions requested and I promise to do my best to act in accordance.

As Scott and I walked out of APT's Touchstone Theater after seeing *Mala*, I asked Scott what he thought about the play. He told me he had not enjoyed it, and seemed braced to argue with me, as he assumed that I had liked it. I told him that I agreed with his assessment, which seemed to surprise him. I think he and I had somewhat different reasons for not liking the play, though we did share anxious feelings about the solo actress jumping across precarious, tumbled, shard-like surfaces and props as she made circuits around the set while wearing heeled-boots. I kept expecting her to trip and fall. I failed to connect with the play partially because my experience of caring for a dying mother was very different than the one portrayed in the play. My relationship with my own mother was always adversarial and by the time of her death, our lives were barely entangled, much less co-dependent. But more than that, the play seemed to have a thin, barely apparent plot; it was all emotion and pain. My mind drifted and never became engaged with the character. Scott and I both thought the actress was excellent, but that wasn't enough to make us glad to have seen this play.

Movies and series we've seen this past month:

Deadloch (Netflix). We only watched the first two episodes of this murder mystery series based in Tasmania. The premise that a large number of lesbians moved into a small community and how it changed the place, was definitely attractive. But the several over-the-top characters grated unbearably for both Scott and me.

True Detectives (Max). We're finished the first season of this series recently and since each season features a new cast, we're going to come back later to watch the next two seasons. It was intense, violent, and really well acted (Matthew McConaughey and Woody Harrelson).

Full Circle (Max) An investigation into a botched kidnapping uncovers long-held secrets connecting multiple characters and cultures in present-day New York City. Noirish series, well acted, compelling.

The Morning Show (Apple+) OK, so it's a soap opera. It's fun. It also puts interesting plot spins on big news issues of the last year. For instance, there's an Elon Musk character who is in the rocket ship business and

tries to buy a TV network and we see the newsroom spring into action when the Supreme Court's Roe decision is leaked.

A Haunting in Venice (Theater) Entertaining.

The Burial (Theater, and soon: Prime) We got free tickets to this one and were glad to see this story based on a real court case involving burial insurance and how the industry burdens the poor, especially blacks. It's way more interesting and entertaining than that description though. Jamie Fox, Tommy Lee Jones, and Junee Smolett are excellent.

Andrea Connell

[SC] Welcome! I think you've got this *Turbo* thing well in hand, Andrea. Great first zine. I want to make one clarification right away, though. It should be "very little nudity" not "slightly less..." That's a feature, not a bug.

I did not know you were retired from law, I thought you were still doing it. Also, it's been "Jeanne and Scott's" book group only very recently. It started out as Gerald Schoenherr and (our very own) **Elizabeth Matson's** group, then it became Parrish Johnston's group (when you joined) then it became Becky Johnson and Jeanne's group and now Jeanne and me. Since Jeanne and I are not in the publishing or book selling businesses, we've decided to crowdsource book selection. After all these years the book group is still a work in progress.

Your book review was unlike anyone else's. That's also a feature, not a bug. It's always been okay with me that our tastes have not perfectly aligned (*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* rocks, of course). Right now, for example I've just started something called *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity* by David Graeber and David Wengrow. It's a bit light on SF, plot and characters and, so far, no Talking Princess Cats, but I'm still kinda caught by it. More later if I ever finish it.

I've got to hand it to *Dungeon Crawler Carl*. It sounds awesome and, as everyone knows, you can't mess with a Pet Velociraptor and an Octo-Shark.

[JG] I loved how you came to your understanding of fanzines!

Hope Kiefer & Karl Hailman

[SC] Nice piece on the Perseid meteor shower, Karl. I smiled ruefully at your keeping careful notes that were then lost. I hear you. I think it's unfair to have

the foresight at our age to take notes when we want to remember something, and yet still be able to lose the notes. How does that make sense? Getting old sucks.

Regarding your comment to me, I checked out “Madison Yards” while biking and the Whole Foods appears to be ready to go. The other projects look finished, too, and quite expensive. Still plenty of room for more development, so stay tuned. That parking garage on the corner of Sheboygan and Segoe is interesting. It’s almost completely enclosed and looks like a giant windowless bunker. It’s hideous. Do you suppose they will, at least, paint some murals on the blank concrete sides?

[JG] I waited too long to schedule our COVID vaccine boosters. I talked to a nurse at GHC this afternoon (10/16/23) and she told me that there is a national shortage of the vaccine. I had heard about Walgreens drug stores running out but I was surprised that it has also affected health coops. The nurse told me that there was a manufacturing error that drastically affected the number of vaccines available and that none of the health coops are getting enough supply. But GHC has partnered with Cosco and Hy-Vee (which are apparently much better supplied with the vaccine). The nurse advised us to get our shots at one of those two places. Otherwise, we will have to wait till mid-November, and even then, we might have to wait longer. I hope you guys are able to get your shots before heading out for your east coast wedding.

Jim & Ruth Nichols

[SC] I’m sorry for your mom’s passing, Jim. At least you got to spend some quality time with her before the end.

I have ridden through the Atwood Ave project on my bike a few times and I’ve been impressed with how extensive the changes are. It’s going to be quite different from what it was and I wonder if the volume of traffic will actually be reduced near your place.

I really liked “The Flambeau Loves the Shore.” Nice photos, too.

[JG] I’m sorry to hear that your mom died, Jim. I sympathize with her about wanting to dispense with a funeral. I don’t like them either, but I’m unlikely to put a stipulation into my will to forbid one since I won’t be around to care.

Luke McGuff

[SC] Your zine was not “blathery” at all, but I thought your plan to tell OE [Jim](#) how many pages you were submitting before writing them was bold. Fortunately, Jim is far too wily to let anyone risk goofing up his business pages. If you’d fallen short, I’ll bet his Table of Contents would have still been correct.

Reading your zine was like traveling along on your adventures with a knowledgeable, laid-back and upbeat companion. A pleasure, in other words. I’m glad that you’ve decided, after a year here, that you’re happy you moved. I hope Julie feels the same. I also hope you will be able to transition into a work position that is less onerous.

One thing that stood out to me about your piece on your notebooks is that it looks from the photo that each notebook has its own pen. Do you select pens to match the mission of each notebook? I suspect that you are always secretly on the lookout for attractive pens. Jeanne is a notorious pen thief, so I’m already watchful with my latest favorite pen.

BTW, I noticed right away, in your comment to Jeanne and I, that you carefully responded to each of us in our respective typefaces. Noted and appreciated.

[JG] Yes, thanks for that Luke!

I’m so glad to hear that you are glad that you moved to Madison.

I’d like to see pictures of Joe’s murals sometime!

I haven’t read *The Bird King*. But I suspect that I am ignorant enough about fifteenth-century map-making that my reaction would not be as contentious as it was with the characters’ modern occupations in *The Cartographers* since I was intimately familiar with their methods from personal experience.

We are also sorry you weren’t able to join us for our garage-warming. The garage will wait, however, if you want to tour it someday.

Your paragraphs about imminent climate collapse and other societal disasters followed immediately after the paragraph in which you noted yours and Julie’s 8-year anniversary. I thought at first the phrase, “we’re facing a pretty serious collapse,” meant that you and Julie were in trouble, but I was glad to correct my misunderstanding a few words later. “They’re not breaking up! He’s just going on about the apocalypse.

That's OK then!" First time I was ever relieved about climate disaster. Congratulations!

Why are you dead set against reading a John Scalzi book? He isn't one of my favorite writers, but it sounds like you have significant issues with him.

Steven Vincent Johnson

[SC] Trump seems to have the entire Republican party tied up in knots (witness the deadlock in the House of Representatives). I have to believe they are reaching some sort of breaking point with the MAGA crazies. Unfortunately, "moderates" are not known for the boldness required to negotiate directly with Democrats, so it's likely they will persist in hiding behind the drapes or under the tables until Trump is finally silenced somehow by someone else.

[JG] The best conversations, for me, are orchestrated by participants who ask questions of one another and follow up on each other's comments, rather than speechify at one another. I hope your conversations with Darlene's friend's husband improve or that you manage to find a way to avoid them.

Walter Freitag

[SC] I appreciate your first two life lessons, but I embrace the third, I'm old and cranky and the world has passed me by. I once enjoyed roller coasters, but I haven't been on one in probably 30 years or more. To ride one now, I'd have to start small and work my way up, which I'm not very inclined to do. I did not start out that way. The very first roller coaster I ever rode was the wooden Cyclone on Coney Island, NY. I was in college and visiting NYC in the late 70s with two college buddies. I would never have climbed onto the Cyclone by myself, but when they both casually decided to take a ride, I felt I had no choice but to join them. It was terrifying, but I also liked it. After that, I sought out roller coasters for years whenever I visited fairs or amusement parks. The wooden coasters have an added feature that they make groaning and snapping sounds and almost seem to move a little as you are doing the high-speed turns. Very exciting. But not attractive to me anymore.

[JG] I loved that when you were a kid, you thought the passengers in the front seat of a roller coaster were responsible for steering. Maybe I will draw a cartoon someday in which a novice conductor gets pranked by his crew, who install a steering wheel in locomotive's driver compartment.

Steve Swartz

[SC] Jeanne and I read aloud the first paragraph of your zine and laughed for five minutes. Here in *Turbo* we seem to be 0 – 3 for bathroom remodels. Delays and problems remodeling bathrooms must be universal. At least Jeanne and I and **Pat** have the excuse that we shared the same general contractor. Naturally we hope your project's progress improves and, of course, all our best to Allison.

Regarding reading, Jeanne has been gradually dispensing with traditional books since she doesn't read them anymore (preferring ebooks and audio books because of eyesight issues), but I still read them, so I selected a shelf of books she was ready to let go from her "to-read" book case. I expect I will read most of them. It's an eclectic bunch accumulated over many years. I'm a slow reader, but over time you may notice an even odder assortment of titles finished by me than usual.

Regarding your comment to me on *Little, Big*, let's try writing about it in the apa. I'm a slow reader and I'd like to study your comments, perhaps re-read parts you've written about. Also, I'm not very verbal on Zoom and I'm going to be in more of a headspace to listen rather than ramble on. Plus, others in the apa who have read it can weigh in, too. I propose we write about Book One for the January issue of *Turbo*, #451. Unless that is too soon?

Regarding the decline of cash, today I went into our credit union branch on an errand and decided to cash in a pile of pennies (extras that accumulate in my pocket in the course of using cash) that I'd been tossing into a jar since before I retired. I should tell you that our credit union outlets don't have teller windows anymore. To talk to a teller you need to pick up a phone attached to one of the ATMs to talk to them via video. There is still a receptionist in the lobby, however. When I entered, there were no other customers, so the receptionist was very helpful. He helped me with my main errand and then directed me to the cash machine for my pennies. I dumped in the pennies and the machine ate them and pooped out a receipt. The receptionist offered to redeem the receipt with cash or transfer the amount into one of my accounts. The amount was \$11.53. I asked for cash before he realized he did not have 53 cents in his drawer. So he gave me \$11.00 and debited my checking account for 53 cents. He didn't have 53 cents IN A BANK! I think the reason for this may be

that he doesn't do much with cash anymore. He can do things with your accounts, but if cash is involved, you should grab a phone and talk to a teller. As you say, so it goes.

I especially liked the Gillie & Marc sculpture photos this month.

[JG] Let me know if you would like a sign like the one we have in our bathroom. By the way, what special feature are you having added to your bathroom to spur sales?



In case **Jim** and **Diane** don't answer your question about the APT play, *Once Upon a Bridge*, here's an answer. I loved this play. It was one of my favorites (in addition to *The Royale*) of the season. After so many months, I am still thinking about it. The playwright, Sonya Kelly, imagined rich backstories (both before and after the accident on a London bridge) for each of the three characters: The Bus Driver, The Man, and The Woman.

Kelly portrays The Man as a cynical financial whiz who is practical in justifying his greed and adept at defending his privilege. A Machiavellian go-getter, he has dreams of wealth, power and status – complete with a home in a posh neighborhood, a beautiful wife and a family. He is on his way to a crucial meeting in the city and impatient with people who stand in his way – quite literally that morning, when he pushes aside a woman blocking his path.

The Bus Driver, whose quick reflexes averted disaster, is an immigrant with a family to support. He drives a London double-decker bus, enduring casual racism and overt contempt daily, from both his manager and his passengers. There is also a pointed expectation that while he remains largely invisible as a service worker, he must overperform at his job simply to be tolerated. Ominously, he tells us that he must be the eyes for people who don't pay attention to their surroundings as he drives.

The third character, The Woman, who is pushed in front of the bus, embodies characters as diverse as a small child, her Irish grandmother, several staid members of a high-power law firm, and herself: a self-assured

Irish law student who hides her "leprechaun" accent in order to fit in better with her classmates at Cambridge. Positioned as a firecracker from the beginning, with both family and national scores to settle with the English establishment, she is smart, witty, careful and canny. She has worked hard. At the moment she is pushed to the ground, she is excited and striding confidently toward a job interview that could change her life. And instead, she is the target of a random act of violence that changes her life in a very different way.

You say that it would be interesting to imagine how it would feel looking back on the accident. I think that idea is exactly what inspired Kelly to write the play. We find out where the characters were coming from and what happened to them afterward. I have been thinking a lot about how ideas get turned into plays, as you might imagine.

What's New

[JG] Yesterday the skies were cloudy. It was impossible to catch a glimpse of the "Ring of Fire" solar eclipse. Today (as I write) the skies are beautifully clear – just a puffy cloud or two, but mostly blue sky. Just saying.

Am I the A**hole?: A Pandemic Tale in Four Acts with an Update.

[JG] That's the new title of my play, adopted after **Andy's** suggestion. In fact, I made several major changes based on people's comments during the table reading of my play. I significantly reduced the viewpoint character's narrative interludes. I dumped the entire last scene and rewrote it. I made many changes in dialog.

And I gave the villain a more complicated backstory, part of which isn't actually spelled out in the play but helped me visualize him. Did you know that in 2018-19, several dozen relatively well-off parents in the Chicago suburbs gave up guardianship of their kids so they could get financial aid? Oh yeah. Parents gave up legal guardianship of their children during their junior or senior year in high school to someone else – a friend, aunt, cousin or grandparent. The guardianship status then allowed the students to declare themselves financially independent of their families so they could qualify for federal, state and university aid. I decided that my villain's parents were part of this group. Knowing how he was raised gave me a better handle on his character and I think made his role more interesting.

I submitted my play to Forward Theater two days before the deadline. I will not hear anything until

sometime in February next year, so it's time to put it away and go back to getting my books ready for print. I decided that the first step in that process was to have an editor look over my pages, and to that end I've been talking to Allison, [Steve Swartz's](#) wife, who does freelance editing with Penguin. We're written back and forth a bit and I'm really excited about working with her, as soon as she recovers enough from foot surgery that she can comfortably work at her desk again.

Grohmann Museum Lost Arts Festival

[JG] Scott and I had such a good time visiting the Grohmann Museum Lost Arts Festival with [Georgie](#), [Greg](#), and [Elizabeth](#)! It was a beautiful day and we met at the museum which is located in the middle of the engineering campus of UW-Milwaukee. It's a small museum with a brilliant collection of paintings and sculptures. For that day only ("Lost Arts Festival"), there were also craftspeople demonstrating spinning fiber into thread, caning chairs, painting techniques, beer brewing, and toy-making, as well as several strolling musicians. The demos were great fun and I'm really

glad we were able to attend that day, but I want to go back and spend more time with the paintings and sculptures. Unlike most art museums with work organized by artists, periods, styles or nationality, the works featured at the Grohmann are chosen for their subject matter, and that subject is WORK. So, images of iron workers, painted in vastly different eras and very different style (impressionistic, realistic, abstract, it didn't matter) are hung side by side. People are central to most of the images and what I loved was how the paintings and sculpture highlighted the work process and the culture that was created by historical methods.

The Grohmann Museum building is beautiful in itself. You can see some of the statues along the top of the building. They rotate to face the street and are lit with spotlights at night. The front lobby has a gorgeous mosaic decorating its floor ("Men at Work." Ah well. Nevertheless there are plenty of portrayals of women working in the galleries.)

Recommended! Thanks again, [Georgie](#) and [Greg](#), for suggesting this outing!



From upper left, clockwise: (1) Grohmann Museum entrance mural; (2) "The Tax Collector," Pieter Brueghel the Younger, c. 1615, (3) "Barcelona Galvanizing Shop," Francesc Pausas Coll, 1941, (4) "Sturgeon Fisherman," bronze sculpture, Andrew Schumann; (5) "The Carpenter Shop of Sophy Christiansen," Maria Christine Thyman, 1899.

The Marriage Question, by Jeanne Gomoll

An appropriate article to reprint from Becoming, during the month that Scott and I celebrate our anniversary.

Pomp, circumstance, garlanded aisles, vows, incense, formal recognition, poetic language, music.

Ceremonies have frightened, bored, delighted, confused, angered, and thrilled me. At different times, of course. You might say that I have mixed feelings about ceremonies.

The turning point in my thinking about ceremony, happened during my last semester at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. I would graduate with honors in a few months and my parents made plans to travel out to Madison to attend the ceremonies. My reaction to their travel plans was to feel deeply resentful. Mom and I had pretty much avoided conversations of more than two sentences during the whole of my college career.

We could never talk for any length of time without arguing. Although I had written long, exuberant letters home during my first year at UW-Madison, all about the excitement I was feeling about my classes and the new ideas I was encountering, neither Mom or Dad ever attempted to answer those letters or to engage me in discussion about what was important to me then. I later found out that Mom had refused to read many of those letters. She announced to the rest of the family that I was purposely trying to make her feel inferior.

Dad was different: he told me frequently that he was very proud of me, but he appreciated something I didn't much value. He was proud that I was in college and getting through it, but mostly that I would soon leave it. Dad and I argued about the so-called "real world" that I avoiding by putting too much stock in the things I was learning about life and myself in what I guess Dad must have thought of as the "fake world," academe. So, as I approached graduation, and I considered what a momentous time my four and a half years in school had been for me, I didn't really want to sour the celebration of that experience with confrontations with my parents' very different view of it. I had completely paid for my own education and had in fact enrolled against the advice of my parents.

"You won't need a degree to get married," said Mom.

"You'd be better off getting a job in the real world," said Dad.

I didn't feel that my parents had taken much of a role in my college education. And on top of that, I wasn't interested in joining several hundred other graduates

in a mass graduation ceremony. Since there were far too many of us to hand diplomas to individually, the class would stand as a group and be graduated *en masse*. So, I wrote a letter home about how the mass graduation ceremony didn't connect in my mind with the hugely important impact of my studies, and that I had decided not to attend. Though disappointed by my decision, my parents accepted the situation far more gracefully than I had expected. The letter had the rather astonishing effect of briefly changing my father's politics (which may be a one time-only event). He told me he felt uncomfortable at a community booster award dinner. He got over it. I didn't. They invited me to come home for a visit so they could give me my graduation present, which turned out to be a single, foam pillow, which was an odd thing in many ways, not the least because they knew and disapproved of the fact that I owned a double bed.



A ceremony that fails to connect with the essence of the thing, event, or person it celebrates, is one that—to me—tends, at worst, to invalidate or, at best, to trivialize its subject.

A mass—to a practicing Catholic—holds profound meaning and can revitalize their sense of spiritual connection to the world. I attended too many Catholic masses while secretly disavowing my religious upbringing, and grew to hate the cynical sense of participation I cultivated while listening to the sermons and joining group prayers.

On the other hand, there have been a few ceremonies (for instance, Tiptree Award ceremonies) in which I have participated wholeheartedly—sometimes joyfully, sometimes



Wedding invitation illo for my brother Steve and sister-in-law, Linda's wedding

with great pride. Tiptree Award ceremonies recognize people who might not otherwise have been honored, which perfectly fuses the meaning of the event with ceremony.

Hundreds of us linked arms in front of a medical clinic in downtown Milwaukee, defending its doors from the angry mob of anti-choice reactionaries across the street, and we sang *My Country 'Tis of Thee*. I have never thrilled to the National Anthem before a baseball game, nor responded to the orchestrated patriotism of certain war movies that employ this sort of music, with as much emotion as I did that morning when our voices rose to the phrase, “.. sweet land of liberty.”

When the ceremony fits and connects, I enjoy my participation in it. There have been weddings that I have enjoyed because I sensed that my marrying friends chose this public celebration as an important stage in their commitment to one another and a signifier of their happiness. For me, however, because of the way I think of my intimate relationships, a wedding is like a graduation for me. It clashes with the essence of the experience it seeks to celebrate.



I thought a lot about what is arguably the most significant ceremony in which many of us participate—the marriage ceremony. First of all, let me say firmly and clearly that my opinions about marriage connect to my own personal life choices and morality. I do not use my opinions as a standard upon which to judge other people’s choices. This is a matter of personal taste. When my friends choose to marry, I celebrate with them, and am glad for their happiness and the manner they choose to express their love. But I choose otherwise.

For me, the marriage ceremony contains so many bad assumptions and disagreeable connotations that I can never conceive of myself ever marrying. It is the ceremony—not the idea of making promises to a life-partner—that I reject. To me, the promises that two people make to one another when they form a life partnership lie at the core of the ceremony. In our culture, legal marriage ceremonies require the couple to stand and make their promises before a religious leader or a representative of the state, who promises in turn to act as a future arbiter and enforcer of the contract made in their presence. Since I neither believe in god nor grant any religious leader moral authority over my life, and since I abhor government’s attempt to control personal lives of individuals, it would seem damned silly of me to submit to the supervision of

either group. I think that if I wanted children, I might feel differently. Kids, I think, deserve protection by an outside, third party, when their parents fail to act responsibly. But, I do not (and have taken care that I cannot) have children. So that’s not an issue for me.

I don’t want to be held accountable to either state or church for a relationship that I think of as profoundly personal, as something between me and one person only. I don’t even feel very comfortable about the idea that a marriage is a covenant made in front of (and enforced by) one’s community. But more than that, I would rather put my trust in my partner’s promise, and hope that he similarly trusts me. Given my distrust of god and country in the matter of a life partnership, it would be truly hypocritical of me to say, “sure I promise, and just to show you how sincere I am, I will make my promise in front of a priest or a judge, both of whose power I reject.”



I love Scott Custis. He has become the most important person in my life. He is my best friend, the only person in the world that I am always glad to see, even when I feel burnt out with over-socializing. I love him selfishly for the emotional support and joy he gives to me and for the sacrifices he has made for me, and I love him unselfishly, accepting him for who he is and will always try to help him be or change as he must. I’ve enjoyed everything we’ve ever done together, from the most mundane to the most challenging. The love-making, traveling, housekeeping chores, house-hunting, parties, conversations, and companionship have all enriched my life beyond anything I ever dreamed possible. I trust him as I have never trusted any other person and have no doubts that he returns my love. With Scott, I learned that choosing monogamy did not have to mean “giving up” other lovers, but meant simply that I no longer cared to divide my energies and love. I look forward to living the rest of my life with Scott, as we help one another change and grow.

However...the essence of our relationship, the promises we have made to one another in the dark, the understanding that exists between us, the words, and the feelings—these are private. These are *ours alone*. I do not care to share them with others.

In fact, a public wedding would feel like I had invalidated the basic core of Scott’s and my relationship. Repeating a public vow dictated and enforced by the church or the state would mean to me that we in fact did *not* trust one another enough to stand by promises we had made privately. It would

mean that we felt the need for public censure, and legal or religious recourse to prop up our vows.

At worst, a wedding ceremony would invalidate the essence of Scott's and my relationship. At best, it would trivialize it, turning a symbol of commitment into a mere party for others, a ritual that does not connect with the reasons for or the work of loving another person. That won't happen.

Marriage also means that I would feel pressured to accept other people's definitions of what marriage meant. For example...



A member of *Turbo apa* asked me if I was "condemning all women who change their names when they marry," by my statement that "we make definite statements about what we think of ourselves," when adopting a husband's name at marriage...

It worried me a bit that my writing might have been so unclear that she interpreted my writing as a condemnation. I checked the issue from which she quoted, and no, there wasn't anything more to what I said. I meant what I said: by our decisions to keep or to change our names (whether in marriage, or for other personal reasons), we make definite statements about ourselves. We make a statement to the world about who we are and we make statements that are interpreted by society in ways we are usually powerless to guide.

In our society, it is almost always the woman who chooses either to change or not to change her name at marriage, which is a rite of passage, significant enough to be marked by the adoption of a new name. The significant point, however, is that it is the woman's rite of passage, for she is the one who traditionally changes her name, not the man. This custom suggests that marriage is not a significant rite of passage for a man: he stays the same; he simply acquires a wife. The woman morphs into his spouse. In our culture, today, a woman who chooses not to adopt her husband's name, may feel that she is thereby saying that she remains herself; that she does not view marriage as a significant change of identity for herself. Couples who choose to change both their names are perhaps trying to say that they view their marriage as a rite of passage involving a change of identity for both of them.

Of course, there may be other, personal reasons that a woman chooses to adopt her husband's family name. Not liking her birth name, liking his name, reinforcing the sense of a family unit, a professional identity. There are lots of possible reasons. But it seems reasonable to

assume that just as many men also dislike their birth names, and just as many men—if given an objective choice—who would prefer their wife's birth name to their own. But the reasons women cite for changing their names are not considered relevant criteria for most men. Men's identities are bound up with their last names, whether they like them or not. And it seems equally probable that most men consider the identities of everyone around them—men and women alike—to be bound up with their last names.

Which gets me back to the statements we make which are interpreted by those around us. This is the part of the communication process that we have very little power to influence. We may feel we're making a loving statement, but most members of our culture interpret that action using their own terms and assumptions.

In our culture, dominated by men whose personal identities are bound up with their last names, the tradition of women giving up their last names makes a significant statement about power and whose personal identity is more important. In our culture, the mere rejection of that tradition, symbolically communicates a woman's attitude about herself and power.

Hilary Rodham Clinton was a strong feminist and an extremely successful lawyer. When she married Bill Clinton, she moved from Boston to Arkansas, where her husband had just been elected as the youngest US Governor. The people of Arkansas took extreme offense that their governor had married a feminist. The fact that Hillary chose to keep her own last name actually became the biggest issue of the next election. Clinton lost the election because of his wife's choice. Subsequently, she decided that the people of Arkansas cared more about her last name than she did and she changed it to Clinton. Bill won the next election.

I condemn no one for choices they make about their own bodies or their names. We're all trying to work out our lives as best we can in an institutionally sexist culture. We can't all fight wars on all fronts. We must all choose our own battles. All I'm saying is that it's important to be aware that our choices are interpreted as statements by others, whether those interpretations are accurate or not.



In 2003 my principles were overwhelmed by practicality. On June 4, I was served notice that the State of Wisconsin would eliminate my job at the Department of Natural Resources as of the first day of August. I reached out to current DNR clients and told them that I hoped to continue to provide them with

graphic design services. I filled out paperwork to make myself into an limited liability company, and I signed up for business classes. In the midst of frantic preparation for this new stage in my life, Scott reminded me that less than two months coverage remained of my employer-provided health care benefits. Scott was well acquainted with my feelings about marriage, but he proposed anyway—so that, as his wife, I would be covered by his health care plan. Without too much hesitation, I agreed, on the condition that we kept our marriage a secret. I was determined to think of our marriage as nothing more than a strategy to take advantage of a loophole in our country's idiotic and unfair health care system.

On Thursday, June 26, I asked my co-workers Georgine Price and Linda Pohlod if they would give up their lunch breaks and do a favor for me.

“Scott and I need witnesses at our wedding this afternoon,” I said.

At 2PM that same day, Georgine, Linda, Scott and I met with Court Commissioner Karen D. Julian in a conference room in an office building at 131 W. Wilson Street, for a very short, no-nonsense wedding ceremony. I was satisfied with how the businesslike proceeding reflected its purely legal and financial meaning. Maybe I should have taken a photo or two, though. Ah well.

Afterward, Scott and I had lunch at Café Soleil, and then I returned to work for a couple hours.

We invited none of our family or friends to the wedding and made no announcement, intending for our new legal status to remain a secret. But our friend Kafryn Lieder had grown concerned after I told her that

the DNR had eliminated my position. She insisted that I do something to avoid the loss of health care coverage. She refused to let me change the subject and so I finally swore her to secrecy and told her about Scott's and my plan to marry. However Kafryn didn't understand that I meant to keep our marriage secret even *after* the ceremony. Our friends Diane Martin and Jim Hudson got the news through a mutual friend, Judith Miller, who knew Kafryn. We swore all these friends to secrecy from that point on. For a few months, I occasionally worried that I would give in to the temptation to tell the funny story of how Scott and I had gotten married during my lunch hour, but the impulse faded. Our legal relationship had no affect on our relationship that I could perceive. As the years passed, I frequently forgot that we were married. When introducing Scott, I referred to him as my partner.

Once again, I was able to pretend to become, or in this case, to pretend to forget.

In the course of writing this book, however, I decided I should describe this episode. It happened. It was significant. I needed to finally tell the story. Scott and I agreed that we would need to send a very belated, nearly 20-years-late wedding announcement to our families before my book went to print.



So now you know too. June 26th of this year was the 20th anniversary of our wedding. But we continue to celebrate the anniversary of the day we met, October 25, 1984. And using that date, Scott and I will celebrate our 39th anniversary this month.



The 1,000-Lap Challenge

[JG] One more thing. I signed up for the YMCA's 1,000-Lap Challenge, which began on October 1 and will end December 17. That means I need to swim 100 laps per week in order to make my goal. It is very do-able. I increased the number of laps I usually swam by a few, and apply stick-on stars to the big chart posted in the pool area after each swim. 250 laps down and 750 to go!