

Madison Foursquare

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This issue of *Madison Foursquare* is brought to you by Scott Custis and Jeanne Gomoll (layout/design and occasional contributor), who live at 2825 Union Street, Madison, WI 53704. Scott@unionstreetdesign.com
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My plan for this issue was to catch up on comments on all the past issues of Turbo that I missed responding to, but time ran short. I expect to have comments on #364 and #365 next month. I expect that Turbo #365 will have some heartfelt pieces in response to the unfortunate event on November 8. I do not have a lot to add to expressions of sadness or rage at the election outcome other than to say that I share your pain.

What was particularly jarring to me about the election was the element of surprise. We had been following the polls closely. I was confident we would prevail. Jeanne and I showed up at Hope and Karl's election party expecting a rare (in Wisconsin) evening of good election news. Even as the early returns came in more disappointing than expected, I assured Jeanne that it would all turn out okay. But the bad news kept coming. Eventually it was clear that we were going to lose and folks, in shock, streamed out of the party to come to grips with the disaster privately at home.

To be honest, for those of us here in Wisconsin, it's nothing particularly new. We have already been living for six years with right-wing Republicans in control of our entire state government from the Wisconsin Supreme Court and Governor's office down to the lower house of the Legislature. I'm used to feeling like a mere spectator in the politics of my own state, unable to do much more than join along with the occasional march downtown and show up to vote in elections. Now it will be the same story on the national level for everyone. My advice to those of you who have not experienced this before, protesting can feel good. March around, do some shouting, carry a sign, it might make you feel a little better. Take care of yourselves. We are headed into dark waters.

Comments on #361 Ruth & Jim Nichols

Very lovely cover.

Walter Freitag

Congratulations on both your weight loss/exercise plan progress and your volunteer work for PennEnvironment.

Greg Rihn

It's things you guys find and go to, like the British Car Field Day, that surprise and delight me. I had no idea such a thing happened in Wisconsin.

We also enjoyed American Players Theater's *An Ideal Husband* by Wilde, but this year has been a really strong one for APT. As much as I enjoyed it, I don't think either Jeanne or I would end up putting *An Ideal Husband* in our top two or three plays of the APT season. What a great year.

Georgie Schnobrich

I was unaware of the new WisCon program practice of permitting audience response only during the last 1/3 of the panel time, and limited to questions only, no comments. I think your analysis of this practice was spot on.

Jim Hudson & Diane Martin

Great photos and helpful information about the planet walk system. We also ran into Keith in the restaurant at WisCon and passed along our best wishes to Rose.

Steve Johnson

Some good gripes this issue. I was led to believe that retirement would be more hassle-free than you make it sound.

Marilyn Holt

I hope you are recovering steadily from surgery.

I liked your comments on the interns who come your way to help out on the farm. What an interesting system. I can see how you would appreciate the help, but isn't it a hassle to meet, orientate and train new people all the time? I'm also impressed by how much you want to help them if you can.

Julie Zachman

Yes, I played foursquare in grade school. It was one of the very few playground games that I was actually fairly good at. I see foursquare boxes on playgrounds now and then (last time was in Kansas City on the Barney Allis plaza.) I often smile when I see them. It's nice to know that kids still play that game, but I have to admit that I don't even remember the rules.

Andy Hooper

Thank you for the compliment. Hopefully this month I will get back on track again for comments.

I have always been mildly interested in supper clubs, we had a few clubs near my hometown in Iowa and we went to them very traditionally for the occasional family special event outing. I had no idea when I moved to Wisconsin that supper clubs were such a big thing here. A couple of years ago I bought a fun book on supper clubs (*The Supper Club Book* by Dave Hoekstra) that sort of rekindled my interest. I may look for another book or two on the subject, but I don't necessarily have a passion to visit a lot of them for dinner. My experiences of the quality of food and service at supper clubs has varied a lot.

Clay Colwell

I enjoyed your rugby adventures very much. Best of luck to you as you stretch out 2 more years of playing before finally retiring.

Comments on #362

Steve Johnson

Really excellent reproduction quality in your zine of your impressive work, and the photos of Darlene in the act of creation, this month.

Lisa Freitag

Thank you for the book suggestions, particularly *Digger* and *We Are All Completely Fine* which both sound very interesting. We read *Uprooted* for our monthly book discussion group last month. It was generally well received by the group, but it did not blow anyone away. Part of the problem may have been that the book the previous month had been Neil Stephenson's *Seveneves* which was not only an ambitious story, but it polarized the group and led to a captivating discussion. Compared with that, *Uprooted* seemed pretty sedate.

Greg Rihn

I had similar reactions to the films *Hunt for the Wilderpeople* and *Star Trek Beyond*, that you had. *Wilderpeople* was delightful, but somehow familiar. *Beyond* was fast-paced and engaging, but ultimately mostly empty calories. Thanks for the tip on *Café Society* which we missed, but maybe now we will seek it out. I also enjoyed your piece on the surprising *Buffalo Bill's Best of the Wild West Show*. How weird to find something like that in Wisconsin.

Georgie Schnobrich

I have never, ever been tempted to travel to space, the moon or Mars, but your comparison of the advantages vs. disadvantages of finishing out life on Mars or staying here on Earth was amusing. Expiring at the end would probably be awful in both places, but at least on Mars it would probably at least be interesting.

Also, I liked "Twitter for Ents."

Marilyn Holt

I hope you won't mind my sounding a bit selfish when I say that from our point of view, having you spending more time "on the couch with a laptop on my lap" may mean more big zines from you for Turbo, like this one. That would be good for us.

I looked up "prosperity doctrine" and indeed found it to be a pernicious idea, but not a new one. It's been around since at least the 1950's, the most famous (to me) proponent of the idea was Oral Roberts.

Andy Hooper

"Hooper's Original Bagatelle #2" was delightful. At once explaining what sort of fan writing you most admire, while giving us a marvelous example of personal zine writing. I can see the point you are making about your life of "luxury, comfort and self-indulgence" but I don't believe it would occur to any of us to somehow hold that against you. As much as anyone, I understand playing the hand that you are dealt in life. When people ask me about what my career plan was, I respond that I had a simple approach to career decisions that can be summed up in the phrase, "It seemed like a good idea at the time."

I also dearly loved Iain Banks' universe of the Culture, and the fantastic possibilities it all held out for ordinary people. I sometimes found myself reading along one of his novels where he drops some descriptive information about some "ordinary" feature of Culture life and I stop reading and just daydream for a bit what it would be like living an "ordinary" life in a world that worked like that. Very few science fiction novels prompt me to long for the world they are set in.

Thanks also for publishing your worldcon piece on John W. Campbell Jr. He was a famous name from the past I knew very little about. Now I appreciate him, and the times he lived in, a lot more.

Jim and Ruth Nichols

Lovely zine, and pictures. I'm always interested in condo board stories. Jeanne and I made a considered decision some years ago that we were going to forgo moving to a condo, and invest in our house instead. But as I think about our future, and look again at our old house that is full of stairs plus a yard to manage and snow to remove, I can still imagine ending up in a condo someday. Which is not necessarily a bad thing, just a necessary thing. Hence the continuing curiosity about life in a condo, with condo boards. Your dispute here sounds like the dreaded "vision" thing where the dispute centers on differing views about the aesthetic "goal" of the building. And everyone living in the building must agree on it strictly. I hope you were able to work out something satisfactory.

Jeanne and I made our annual trip to Door County in September. We were there for just a long weekend, but we still managed to do most of the things we always do (breakfast at Al Johnsons, trip on the ferry to Washington Island and Rock Island, ice cream at Wilson's in Ephraim, etc.) This year we did something new, we spent a day in Sturgeon Bay, which was a very nice town. We still found some time to sit by the lake, watch the sun set and soak up the sounds of waves and birds and boats.

Comments on #363

Greg Rihn

I liked APT's *King Lear* more than you did, I think. You made a good point about the modern dress approach being a problem with scenes involving weapons, but Jeanne and I thought the press conference at the beginning, as Lear is laying out his flawed plan to divide his kingdom, was very effective. *King Lear* is becoming my favorite Shakespeare play because the plot is so engaging, the characters are great, and you don't have to ignore so much racism and sexism as you move through the story. We saw another more traditional, but brilliant version of *King Lear* in the New Globe Theater in London in 2014. I'm sure that, depending on the production, I would be up for Lear again in a few years. We are in complete agreement about Stoppard's awesome *Arcadia*. This was the first time Jeanne and I have ever seen it and it was a truly a fabulous show. I would choose *Arcadia* and *Euridice* as my favorites of this exceptional season.

We enjoyed *Kubo and the Two Strings* also. The stop motion animation is amazing and the plot resolution at the end was very satisfying.

I was amazed to see that Nisi Shawl wrote a steampunk novel. This is very tempting. Thanks for running the review and the interview.

Georgie Schnobrich

I appreciate the humor in your travel piece about the "...light chance of terrorism" but on your trip we hope you actually experienced no such issues, no close calls, no incidents happening in your wake. Nothing but good times.

The Walker administration is often very consistent. Walker only cares about himself and what affects him directly. In this case, he would not care any more about violence in Milwaukee than protests in Milwaukee, but the violence makes his administration look bad, so he responds to it in a way that he hopes will make him look good. It has nothing at all to do with how much pain Milwaukee (or Madison or anywhere else) might be experiencing.

I think your question about the incongruent messages our culture sends about celebrating rugged individualism and resisting blind obedience, while expecting people to be totally subservient to the cops, is a good point. It may be that only some of us (of a certain color) are supposed to get the message about resisting authority being a good thing. I agree with you that using fear as a means to motivate people to comply, is not a great plan. In my experience people who are really afraid become less predictable, not more.

Jim Hudson and Diane Martin

Thank you for the very fine trip report and pictures. It was inspiring to me since I'm looking forward to more long driving trips when I retire. Your zine was full of possibilities. Looks like you had overcast skies for Garden of the Gods in CO. It rained or drizzled a lot when we were there last year. We still managed to do some walks outside, but I'd like to see it again in sunnier weather.

Steve Johnson

Thanks for the WorldCon pictures and captions. Jeanne and I did indeed look like tourists.

Jae Leslie Adams

I enjoyed your update on Beth, Brody, Number One Son and summer visits to Duluth. That nursing school thing must be common. When I worked at Mendota Mental Health on the night shift, I had two colleagues with families who decided to do MATC's 2 year nursing program. That was also a fulltime program and the students were not supposed to be working at all while doing it. My two colleagues were good friends, however, so they went to school fulltime and worked nights fulltime and studied together on the job. Fast, but not easy.

Susan Hastings

Thanks for sharing part of your thesis with us. Rosita's story was amazing how she made a plan and stuck with it even while living under brutal economic hardships. Are all the stories you are presenting this awesome? Thanks also for the excellent photos and captions.

Cathy Gilligan

Regarding your comment to Jason, I would second a motion for you to do a reading list with recommendations in the apa.

Marilyn Holt

Thanks for the photos and please forward my congratulations to the happy couple. I think daddy John needs a t-shirt or hat that reads, "Radically Besotted."

Patrick Ijima-Washburn

I liked your story, and your explanation of this writing exercise, too. I have never tried writing fiction, this exercise might be fun.

Jim Frenkel

Pretty harrowing moving story. Glad you made it okay and are settling in.

Andy Hooper

I enjoyed your piece on Wisconsin chess history. Jeanne's niece Rachel, now a freshman at Edgewood College here in Madison, is a longtime chess player and competitor. She made it to the State H.S. chess championships. What is also interesting is that she is not a math or science wizard, she likes books and is moving toward a major in English, so she does not fit a stereotype of what a woman chess player should be like. She's just a very good young woman player. So there is some reason to believe the gender bias in Chess is changing.

YCT Kim and Kathi about pets, Jeanne and I have also never had a pet, and I never owned a pet while living on my own before meeting Jeanne, yet I had lots of pets growing up. As pets go, Jeanne and I are both partial to dogs. But we wanted to be free to come and go without the hassle of finding someone to look after a pet. One thing that always stayed with me over the years, however, was how sad my father would get whenever we lost a pet at home. Later in life, he did not want anything more to do with pets even while he was living alone, because it was too hard on him when they died. I know myself well enough to know that I would also take hard the loss of a beloved pet. There is enough human loss in my life.

– Scott Custis

A political
comment
– Jeanne Gomoll

