

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
Jeanne@unionstreetdesign.com

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Jeanne & Scott go to the Women's March

Saturday, January 21. We had a plan. We were going to get up early, do a bit of shopping, stop at home and grab some lunch then take a bus down to join the marchers as they gathered in the UW Library Mall at the base of State Street. We would meet up with Kathi Nash outside the University Bookstore at the edge of the Library Mall. We knew a lot of people might be going, but how big was this really likely to get?

We had been to some big labor rallies following the passage of Act 10 back in 2011. They were all located up on the spacious State Capital Square at the top of State Street. The Women's March was gathering at the much smaller Library Mall on campus to then march up State Street to the Capital Square. After lunch we sauntered down our street to catch a bus that would get us to the march shortly before it was scheduled to begin. Our first clue that the march might be quite large was how crowded the bus was that morning. We were lucky to get on, we stood the whole trip and we boarded at about the last stop the bus was able to pick anyone up from because the bus had gotten so packed. The driver was pumped, she bragged that she would get us to an excellent spot for the march to let us out and she did get us most of the way down State Street. We could already see that the end of State Street, at the Lake St intersection, was blocked with people. The Library Mall beyond must have been packed tight. We walked down

State Street and into the crowd thinking we might be able to squeeze our way through as far as the bookstore to meet Kathi, but not long after we started through the crowd, the people filled in behind us. Very soon after that, we were packed in so tight that we could no longer move forward or back. We got as far as the sidewalk in front of Walgreen's at the corner of State and Lake and that is where we stood for about 45 minutes. Lots of people were jockeying around us trying to make some progress one way or another, but there was little they could do. Even going around the corner and down Lake St away from the crowd did not seem to work. People were pouring in from all directions.

People who scrambled partway up light poles would tell us there was a sea of people up State as far as they could see. Eventually the little band that was supposed to lead the march started playing. Everyone cheered. The little band moved through the crowd in the street and everyone felt that as soon as they got to the front of the crowd, the march would begin and the jam up would be relieved. What we found out later was that the little band ended up slowly making its way all the way up State Street to the Square because there was no "front of the crowd", the street was all solid crowd. So it took a while for movement to finally reach us. We did walk up State Street, which was great fun. Lots of great signs everywhere. We never connected up with Kathi. You might wonder why we

didn't just call her and the reason was that there was so much phone and internet traffic going on that there were big delays getting data back and forth. So we walked and chanted and waved and yelled abuse at Trump and the Republicans. It was fun. Madison drew between 75,000 and 100,000 people. I'm told we had the biggest per capita march crowd in the country. My very favorite sign of the day was not at our march, but was sent to us from Jeanne's niece, Sara, who attended the march in Minneapolis. That handwritten sign read, "I'm not usually much of a sign guy, but Geez!"



Jeanne and Scott go to Hamilton

For Jeanne's birthday, I bought us tickets to finally see *Hamilton* in Chicago. Jeanne and I went online as soon as they became available and we scrambled to get seats. We finally got seats to a matinee show on Sunday,



February 5. We have had some issues in the past trying to get to shows in Chicago in the winter, so we took no chances. We made hotel reservations for Saturday night and I took Monday off in case we had difficulty getting back home. Our last trip to Chicago, in May for Corflu, had been beautiful weather but insane traffic

and construction. It did not take much prompting for us to think about trying to get to Chicago another way. We decided to try something new to us. We took the train. Amtrak's Hiawatha route runs from Milwaukee to Chicago Union Station several times a day. Our hotel was not far from Union Station and the theater was only about two blocks from our hotel, so this seemed worth trying.

We decided to take the 11:05 train out of Milwaukee. We drove out to Milwaukee in fairly comfortable traffic, it being a Saturday. Parking was available right next to the Milwaukee train station. It cost \$12.00 to park for both Saturday and Sunday. The station was comfortable with food and beverages available. When it came time to board we all lined up. Seats were not assigned, so there was a bit of a scramble to get on the train and get seats together, but it turned out to not be a problem. And the train actually started pulling out of the station at ... 11:05! The ride took 90 minutes. It was comfortable and stress free. The ride back was just as smooth.

Our hotel was the Kimpton Gray on West Monroe Street. I think it was a pretty new hotel. It was very nice, but it



did have one peculiar feature. After checking in, we went to get on the elevator to our room on the 6th floor and had to choose from a bank of about ten elevators. The first half of them were marked as service elevators so we had to walk past those to the lifts that were for guests. The elevators themselves were old and rather small, but nicely restored. Eventually we found out that the trend in Chicago these days was to take old office buildings and convert them into hotels. This explained the rather odd arrangement of rooms on our floor and the long banks of elevators in the center of the building. The Kimpton Gray was refashioned from an old insurance company building.

The show was terrific. Jeanne and I have been listening to the music since December of 2015 and envisioning how the show might look. We also saw a couple blurry bootleg tapes of the New York show, along with the numbers the cast performed for the Tony Awards. But until I saw the live show, I really have no idea what an amazing stage performance it is. The light show throughout, and the double lazy-susan stage set up, contribute a lot, but what I really came to appreciate was how the entire show was choreographed to the second. No wasted movement or gestures, everything moved and flowed like one long dance. They were telling a complicated story and they didn't waste anything. The performers were great and the theater was full. I later overheard (an older) guy describe the atmosphere as reminding him of the excitement at a Beatles concert. It was thrilling.

Comments on # 366

Lisa Freitag

I thought your essay, "On Mattering" was brilliant.

It's too bad we did not find each other at George Martin's party in K.C. We would have been delighted to hang out with you guys for awhile.

Greg Rihn

We also liked *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*. This was the first J.K. Rowling project where we had not read the book first and had no pre-formed image of Newt Scamander. I thought Redmayne mumbled his lines too much at times.

In their comments on *Rogue One*, a number of people have commented on the appearance of characters formerly played by now deceased or much older actors using CGI or re-casting with look-alike actors. This was the one great flaw in the film that I failed to mention in my prior comments on it. When these characters show up, it took me completely out of the film and action. I was totally distracted by how the filmmakers were doing it and why. A serious negative for me, but I still feel the rest of the film worked well.

I enjoyed your trip report once again. I like how the level of detail you give us makes me feel like I'm travelling along with you and learning so much, having never been to Paris myself. Jeanne and I hope to make such an adventure someday, I can see looking back on your reports for tips and ideas.

Georgie Schnobrich

Sorry to read about the fate of your beloved Mercury Sable and the switch to a newer car. A year or so ago, Jeanne and I needed to take our 1999 Lincoln in for some touch-up body work, so we rented a car for a week. Good idea to rent a car now and then when you have owned the same older car for many years. We chose a new model Chrysler, mostly because we could get it in red (our cars for years and years have been either beige or white, we are past ready for something bolder.) We picked up the rental on our way to the body shop to drop off our car. When the rental guy drove the Chrysler up to us, he parked it next to our Lincoln. He got out of the car and took a long look at me, and our old car. Then he said to me, "Are you familiar with keyless ignition?" I shook my head "no" and he ran down the rules to us about how it worked. I drove the new car and Jeanne drove our car to the shop, which was outside Madison. Riding back home together, I complained to Jeanne that, even though the side mirrors were bigger on the new car, the view in the rearview mirror out the back window was awful. Plus, as you mentioned Georgie, fiddling with the buttons for the radio and temperature control required me to take my eyes off the road to read the menu on a computer screen. I let Jeanne mess with it on the trip back.

The next day we had to go somewhere so we jumped into the rental and I was confronted with having to back out of our driveway. As I was slowly backing out, I used my side mirror, cranked my head back and again complained bitterly about the rearview and crappy little back window. Jeanne finally touched my arm and pointed at the computer screen in the center of the dashboard in front of us that was now showing a clear rear camera picture of the area directly behind the car. It came up as soon as I shifted into Reverse. I wonder how long I would have driven around in that car before I noticed it on my own. So, it's good to rent a new car once in awhile. And it's good to have a patient co-pilot.

Marilyn Holt

I very much enjoyed your Seasons Greetings letter and photos.

Walter Freitag

I gave a little cheer when I read your piece on 2016 and you chose to single out the horror of Aleppo as your

issue with last year. Nearly every day last year, I got sucked into our national campaign vortex of madness and negativity, making it difficult to hear about anything happening anywhere else in the world. The mass killing and destruction in Aleppo was obviously far, far worse and more important than our idiotic election circus and the latest travails of the celebrity class. Thank you for pointing that out.

Congratulations on the new job.

Andy Hooper

Beautiful covers again this month, Andy. Very classy.

I hope you have been having good luck finding new homes for Stu's collectables. What an odd and interesting collection.

Your response to us about Jeanne's niece, the chess champion, was new information for me. I always assumed that chess would be something that mainly the scientifically and mathematically oriented would be most attracted to. After all there is the stereotype of the analytical Mr. Spock playing staggeringly complex games of multi-dimensional chess on *Star Trek*, yes? How interesting that success in chess is more about visual perception and memory.

Jim Hudson & Diane Martin

I hope Diane is making progress with her medical issues. Nice cookie pictures.

Ruth Nichols

I smiled at your comment about your friend's Christmas letter where they mentioned they got a new car when their old car got totaled in an accident, then included a little picture of the new car. I agreed with you that the accident was the way more interesting part of that comment and I would have felt a bit cheated by their failure to describe it. I don't think any of us would get away with dropping a comment like that here in Turbo.

I'm hoping you are successful staying retired, it sounds like you're filling your life with healthy and useful activity. We are not all our jobs, most of us can find ways to be productive in the world outside of earning a paycheck. As I move steadily toward my own retirement, I find myself closely following the experiences of others to draw some inspiration for my post-paycheck life.

Jae Leslie Adams

So great to have you back with us. I have always loved your style, it's like no one else's.

Patrick Ijima-Washburn

Sounds to me like you are juggling a lot of plates in the air, not too surprising there is some friction with the significant other as you work things out. Hope all is going well now. I'm curious about your screenwriting efforts, any scenes you'd like to share?

Jim Frenkel

I am in agreement with your comments on the Middle East situation and the state of affairs specifically with Benjamin Netanyahu. Nicely stated.

No one would accuse me of being a true baseball fan, but I have at least attended a few games at Wrigley Field. I always enjoyed going there and those trips have left me with a soft spot for the Cubs, so I was delighted they won and are finally over this silly curse. Go Cubs.

Comments on #367

Patrick Ijima-Washburn

What fantastic cover art for 100 Robots! They are amazing.

Greg Rihn

Regarding *La La Land*, these days it seems to me when Hollywood adapts musicals to the screen, they sometimes prefer to cast actors who are not particularly gifted singers into major roles and expect they will sing well enough. I have seen this several times with deeply disappointing results, most glaringly with the Tim Burton version of *Sweeney Todd* and again when they cast Russell Crowe as Javert in *Les Miserables*, and other times. *La La Land* also suffers a little from this approach, I think. I still liked it, but stronger singers and dancers would have helped.

Steve Vincent Johnson

After the harrowing tale of your second Walkabout (considering suicide? Wow.) I found it a relief that your life seemed to turn around after you got back. Success with classes in two schools, new work and, eventually, a new social group were all wonderful changes. Thanks for sharing.



Cathy Gilligan

Another apa member on the road to retirement. Here's wishing you all the best for working it out so you can finally retire. The concept is still a bit unreal to me, but I'm trying to look past that and focus on reaching the goal feeling good about stepping away. It's the people I work with that I care the most about and I want to leave them in the best shape I can before I go. I realize that, over the years, I may have been encouraging them to depend on me too much.

Andy Hooper

Very impressive project to first research and write an individual piece on each of the professional figures who attended Nycon, but then to talk about doing the same for all the rest of the attendees. Knowing next to nothing about Nycon, this was all interesting to me and I enjoyed your tightly written, yet revealing, bios.

Regarding your comment to Georgie about newer cars and Carrie's interest in a heated steering wheel, I have a colleague at work who commutes from out of town. She gets a new car fairly regularly. She just got one this year with a heated steering wheel. She told me that I might think it a frivolous luxury, but she LOVES IT! So there.

Jim Frenkel

Once again allowing you to draw me into a comment on sports. I am no one's ideal of a football fan, but as NFL teams go, I have long supported the Packers even before I moved to Wisconsin. The reason seems obvious to me, their organizational structure. They are owned by the city of Green Bay rather than some fat cat billionaire.

The fans own the team. Why aren't all the teams owned by their fans? What other team could a serious fan support? I get that people want to stand up for their geographical communities by supporting their local team, but if the team is owned by some rich jerk who can blackmail the community for perks or threaten to leave and go elsewhere, how can you share any local pride with that? For me, supporting the Packers has nothing to do with the geographical fact that Green Bay is in Wisconsin, I'd support the Packers if they were located in Florida. It's the fact that the fans own them. They are unique.

—Scott Custis, 20 February 2017