

Madison FOURSQUARE

24

This issue of *Madison Foursquare* is brought to you by Scott Custis and Jeanne Gomoll, who live at 2825 Union Street, Madison, WI 53704.

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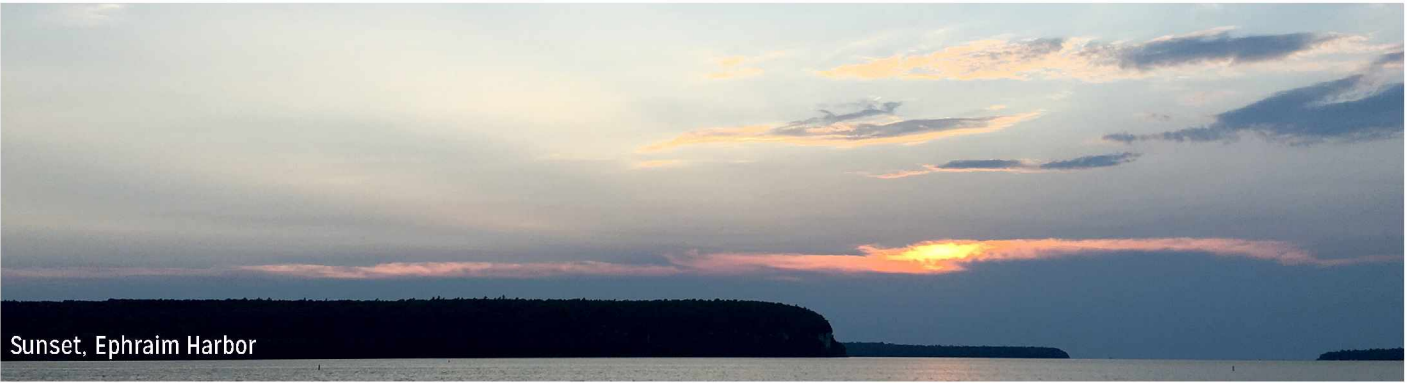
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Scott Custis [SC] and Jeanne Gomoll [JG]

August 2018 for *Turbo-Charged Party Animal* #386.



Sunset, Ephraim Harbor

Trip to Door County, Monday August 6-Saturday August 11

[JG] **Monday**—Lunch with Jeanne’s brother Dan and his wife, Kelley in Fish Creek at Julie’s Park Café, which was nice, mostly for the conversation but which did not live up to the hype we’d heard about the food. After unloading our stuff at the cabin in Egg Harbor (owned by Scott’s cousins) and picking up a few groceries, we drove north to Ephraim to hear a Concert in the Park. This summer Door County has scheduled “Concerts in the Parks,” rotating among the towns, with each town taking a turn on a different day of the week. Although the schedule advertised a two-person group (“David and Lynn”) there were three musicians performing in Ephraim—a wonderful fiddler (Lynn), a guitarist (David), and base player (?) who presented a wildly eclectic list of music. It was mostly a lot of fun and the site of what is most certainly the most patriotic photo I’ve ever taken: flag AND Coke sign. As it turned out, music became one of the themes of our trip. After the 2-hour Ephraim concert, we returned to the cabin for pesto pasta and corn on the cob, brought from home. We listened to *Up with Chris Hayes* and *The Rachel Maddow Show* podcasts to keep up with events. It’s an obsession. What can I say?

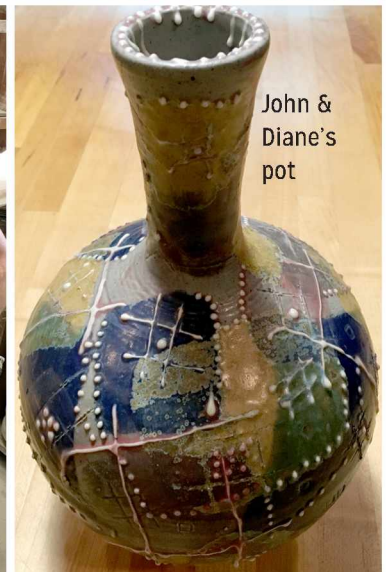
Tuesday—Granola and yogurt for breakfast at home, followed by two art excursions: first to see a pottery demo at the Ellison Bay Pottery, owned by potters, John Dietrich and Diane McNeil. John presented an inspiring 2-hour demo, throwing and slip-glazing several pots. Jeanne had never heard of a couple of his techniques and wished she could try them out right there and



Lynn & David



John Dietrich demo



John & Diane’s pot

then. We loved the stories John told as he threw the pots. We were so impressed that we decided to purchase a pot made by John and Diane together. Afterwards, we stopped in Ephraim for an ice cream cone at Wilson’s: Jeanne waits all year for a taste of her favorite ice cream: Coconut Joy. Then, still in the mood for looking at art,



Entrance to Edgewood Orchard Galleries Sculpture Garden



Stone & metal bunny



Rebecca Kircead art



Peninsula Players Theater "lobby"

we visited the very wonderful Edgewood Orchard Galleries with its remarkable sculpture garden and a gallery displaying paintings by a new favorite artist of Jeanne's, Rebecca Kincaid, who works with oil and wax. (<https://www.rebeccakincaid.com/paintings-1/>) Her work is very impressionistic, yet somehow suggestive of extreme detail and specific movement. Go look! Since we had tickets for the musical, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, at the Peninsula Players theater at 8PM, we went out for an early dinner at Chop in Sister Bay (at Jeanne's brother Dan's recommendation) and discovered that we had arrived in time to take advantage of "the Early-Bird Special" menu. Excellent steaks, a really good price, but we felt a bit weird playing out such a clichéd scenario—retired folks going for the Early-Bird specials, y'know. *The Drowsy Chaperone*, a Tony-Award winning musical, turned out to be a lot of fun. The play was funny, the voices were great, and we always enjoy the lakeside setting of this theater where you can watch the sun set over the lake and then go in to a mostly open-air theater (with ceiling panels that can be closed when it's raining or cold). Once home, we listened to *Up with Chris Hayes* and *The Rachel Maddow Show* podcasts.

Wednesday—the day for MAKING art. But first we drove up to Al Johnson's in Sister Bay; it's one of our annual pilgrimages—for Swedish Pancakes from either Al's or the Viking Grille in Ellison Bay. Then we headed to the Hands-On Studio, which is such a great place to PLAY! You can glaze (pre-made) ceramic pieces, make mosaic frames or other objects, create metal sculptures, paint, or do a fused glass project. They charge \$5 for admission plus the cost of any materials you use. What a fun day! Scott and I made a fused glass sculpture. We finished up by late afternoon and drove up to Sister Bay for Wednesday's Concert in the Park, which wasn't nearly as enjoyable as Monday's had been: mostly Johnny Cash (and similar) songs with rather mediocre singers. We left early and returned to the cabin and ate the rest of the pesto pasta salad and more corn on the cob and, of course, caught up with the news by listening to *Up with Chris Hayes* and *The Rachel Maddow Show* podcasts.

Thursday—We ate granola and yogurt at the cabin for breakfast and then drove up to Peninsula State Park for a day of swimming and hiking. A truly lovely day. Actually we had marvelous weather the whole time in spite of the baleful predictions made by our weather apps. The only rain we got was a big storm one night while we slept. Jeanne prevailed on Scott without much difficulty to indulge in just one more ice cream cone at Miller's, followed by a wonderful Concert in the Park in Egg Harbor—this time, featuring an excellent jazz quartet, The Birch Creek Jazz Ambassadors. We set up our chairs at the top of the terraced park that looked west out onto the lake and watched the sun set as the music and breezes washed over us. Hmmm. Unfortunately, by the time the concert was over, the restaurant we'd chosen for dinner that night had closed, but we had a very good meal at Casey's BBQ & Smokehouse in Egg Harbor. Once home, of course, we listened to *Up with Chris Hayes* and *The Rachel Maddow Show* podcasts.

Friday—After our last breakfast at the cabin we spent most of the day in Baileys Harbor, reading and hanging out at the Door County Brewing Co. Taproom and the Bearded Heart Coffee Shop. We also picked up some whitefish, both fresh and smoked, at Baileys Harbor Fish Company to take home with us. Then we had dinner at one of our favorite Door County restaurants, the Harbor Fish Market and Grille. We'd missed our chance for a fish boil dinner Thursday night, so instead, we splurged on a lobster boil. Yum! Then, we had a decision to make (actually the decision was made much earlier in the day...). There was a surfeit of possible activities for Friday and one them was "Five Nights Under a Dark Sky," hosted by the Door Peninsula Astronomical Society (with many telescopes) at Newport State Park, which the International Dark Sky Association has designated as Wisconsin's first "Dark Sky" park. But thunderstorms were forecasted for the night, and even if it didn't rain (which it did not), it was absolutely going to be too overcast for viewing stars through telescope lenses. So, instead, we made reservations for an alternative activity: the Annual Nordic Fiddle Fest. The show sounded interesting but, in fact, it turned out to be the highlight of our whole trip. What amazing, gorgeous, transporting music! Celtic fiddler Hanneke Cassel and Norwegian multi-instrumentalist Vidar Skrede performed in the Björklunden Lodge (which was really hard to find! Happily Scott decided to scout out the location earlier in the day). There were only 120 seats available. We are soooo glad we reserved ahead because there would have



Fused glass art
by JG & SC

been no seats available had we waited; the show was sold out. We are still blown away by the music. Once home, we listened to *Up with Chris Hayes* and *The Rachel Maddow Show* podcasts.

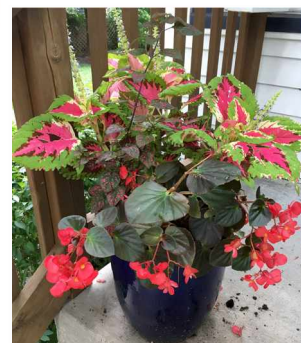
Saturday—During the week we'd spent some time acquainting ourselves with roads that run through the interior of Door County peninsula as a strategy to avoid the very crowded shoreline state highways 42 and 57. We normally go up to Door County during the Fall, when traffic is much lighter than summertime in-season levels. But here we were, in the middle of August, very much in-season. The strategy worked. We found new and much faster ways to get around using the less well-traveled roads. One side-benefit of this was that we discovered some places we'd never noticed before, like the Edgewood Orchard Galleries that we visited on Tuesday, the Stone's Throw winery, the causeway over Kangaroo Lake, and also a little breakfast and lunch place called the Door County Bakery, where on Saturday morning, we enjoyed our favorite breakfast of the week. But it was time to think about going home, since we had tickets to an APT play the next day in Spring Green. So we threw in a load of laundry at the cabin before breakfast and then stopped off at the Sister Bay Art Festival, which was disappointing considering the vast number of artists who work in the area. Finally, we turned our car southward toward home.

During the drive home we finished listening to an excellent audiobook, *Lincoln in the Bardo* by George Saunders. It's a spellbinding novel, perfectly made for the audiobook production—dozens of voices, all different actors.

Comments on #384

Cover

[JG] Since a couple folks asked questions about my flower cover, here you go: it was made from a photo of one of the pots of flowers that sits on our front porch. The picture was taken from above, looking directly down at the plants; and then I applied some filters in Photoshop to get two different versions of the same image for the front and back covers.



Lisa Freitag

[SC] I thought your essay on winning vs. living was very well done. You asked an interesting question from the perspective of a cancer patient trying to decide the best course of action. Likewise having never personally faced such a choice with a potentially fatal outcome, I'm not sure I can say with complete confidence what I would choose in such a situation but I would like to think that I

would choose the option that gave me the best quality of life even if it means the end comes sooner. Who knows what we would do when our backs are against the wall, but interesting to think about.

[JG] Interesting thoughts on dying vs. winning, in anime and cancer treatment. [side note: why are those my only two choices?] I think this sort of philosophical dilemma is most often considered from an outside point of view, i.e., about a fictional character or hypothetical situation, and unlikely to be of much use in preparing anyone for a real life decision which needs to be considered at the moment. Not so, amazing hair, which is always desirable.

Greg Rihn

[SC] I think, of your many adventures this month, I was most drawn to the Milwaukee Art Museum exhibits on Goya and the photographs of Watkins, Bennett and Muybridge. It sounds like a fine show, well described as usual.

We skipped *Ocean's Eight* and *Solo* as the general reviews we saw did not sell us. We did go to see *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* mostly because, when given a choice of summer movie blockbusters between crashing superheros and rampaging dinosaurs, the dinosaurs usually win with us. *Fallen World* was pretty dumb fun, but the beasts were great to look at and wonderful at mayhem. It seemed to be somewhat better than the last *Jurassic* movie. Just a few days ago we saw Spike Lee's *Blackkklansman*, which we both liked a lot and I highly recommend.

[JG] Interesting and useful reviews, as always. Thank you for your compliment on my Space Babe coloring book!

Re your comment to Andy: if I actually asked if *FAPA* stood for Funny Animal Apa, I believe that I likely meant it as a joke. I've known about *FAPA* for a very long time.

Georgie Schnobrich

[SC] Your Tiptree cake was beautiful as always. Due to logistics issues this year, I was unable to be in the right place at the right time to get a piece, but I'm sure it was as delicious as always, too.

[JG] You did a brilliant job on the cake, Georgie! It's amusing that the U.S. version of Bergin's *Who Runs the World?—The XY*—has cover artwork inspired by the same idea you treated in your cake.



Speaking of batty old women—Did you hear about the grandmother, Dede Phillips, of Georgia, who strangled a rabid bobcat with her bare hands, and did it in complete silence because she didn't want to awaken her granddaughter? She broke some of her fingers and received many gashes, but did the deed. A fund-raiser helped her out with some money to help pay for her rabies shots. Oh, and by the way, the bobcat attacked her while she was putting a bumper sticker on her truck that read: "Women who behave rarely make history." I hope nobody calls Dede a fool (re *Geriatrica*)!

Walter Freitag

[JG] Interesting essay. Thanks, Walter. I was thinking about intersectionality while reading it because it seems to me that the issue in your story was that members of two very different groups were attempting to fuse the groups into one, and the two groups' goals/values did not match up. Alliances between groups works when many or most of the goals/values of each group compliments one another. For instance, a feminist group and an LGBT+ group have a lot in common and many actions they can do together would benefit both groups. I don't see that as a likely outcome for an atheist group and a social justice group. Certainly there are lots of people who are sympathetic and even active in both groups, but the goals/values of those groups are more tangential than overlapping.

Intersectionality is a useful concept that helps us remember that a black lesbian, for instance, has had to deal with racism *and* sexism *and* homophobia in her life. The concept is less useful as a guide to making alliances between groups and certainly not when attempting to reconcile their strategies.

I don't think that people who seek to build alliances between various causes and identity politics should advocate that all progressive groups, for instance, adopt the same priorities. I completely agree with you that "A system that privileges subjective experiences over all other considerations is simply not compatible with atheism." But.

I am an atheist. At the same time I see great value in what is going on in the #MeToo movement, with (mostly) women demanding that they be heard and that the experiences they report be listened to with respect. Our society's machinery of justice and tort definition has this enormous blind spot with regard to sexual harassment. I hope and expect that laws and corporate rules will change so that a victim will have other and better options than to take their cases to a public forum in the future. But right now, women are not being unreasonable for believing they have few options *other than* making their charges public.

I see great value for the Black Lives Matter movement and groups advocating for gun control, etc. ... and for WisCon. But please note: these groups do NOT have as one of their primary tenants, the idea that all voices should be heard, despite the fact that many of these groups members do hold that value. For example, a person who experiences racism

every single day of their lives, needs and deserves the opportunity to create a space with others who experience daily racism, and to use that space to support one another and build skills and strategies for combatting racism.

What I am saying here is that I think the main point of your essay is not quite *on point* to the discussion of what happened to Lisa at WisCon.

Nevertheless, I DO think there are huge, destructive problems in how WisCon has been operating. More on this later, in my comments to Lisa. But I don't think I believe the issue is that WisCon has somehow abandoned its advocacy of freewheeling debate. I don't think freewheeling debate was ever the primary goal/value of most of the people who work on and attend WisCon. It certainly wasn't centermost in my mind in 1977 when I helped to found WisCon. I wanted WisCon to be a place for feminists and their allies to consider ideas about feminist SF.

Clifford R. Wind

[SC] An interesting self-observation about what prompts you to cry. I don't think I have thought much about it. I believe I have left behind in my childhood crying over pain, frustration or anger but I can still tear up readily from sadness or joy. It's something I have grown less embarrassed about as I get older and realized that hiding it doesn't accomplish much.

Nice photos.

[JG] I also cry for non-sad reasons and often, during movies. But I am weirded out that I cry during movies with religious themes [see above, "I am an atheist."] – like during the movie, *Carousel*, when the ghost of Billy Bigelow sings *You'll Never Walk Alone* to his still-living daughter, Louise, who is graduating from high school, to give her hope in the future. Kindly, spiritually motivated people helping someone through a tragedy, or sharing the little they have with someone even less fortunate—that sort of thing will draw tears from me every time.

Nice photos! A couple of them would make excellent backgrounds images for a poster.

Kim and Kathi Nash

[SC] Sorry to have missed your July 4th party. At least it was a beautiful day everywhere. We were lounging on a pontoon boat in the middle of Lac La belle much of the afternoon, in a pretty lazy state of mind.

[JG] Glad to hear that you finally have the correct diagnosis for your diabetes, Kim! I see from Facebook that you've put the Beloit house on sale: Good luck! I hope it sells quickly.

Jim Hudson and Diane Martin

[SC] I'm sold on the Lake Express Ferry after we took it one time. It's pricy but comfortable and absolutely worth avoiding the long drive around Chicago. Makes Michigan's attractions much more attractive.

I'm glad you guys enjoyed what you got to see of Stephen Fry's *Mythos*. And I don't mind telling you I'm a bit jealous, but maybe there will come another chance for us to see a version of it broadcast somewhere, somehow.

[JG] "...a pattern of house stuff happening when we're away." I know what you mean. For many years, my computer always seemed to sense when I was about to go on vacation and frequently broke down in small or large ways just before I left the house. Now that Scott's retired and I am edging slowly into the crustacean zone too, the house and car have synched with my computer's anxiety and seem to be trying to sabotage our trips. Plumbing leaks, serious car issues, all happening just before we leave town. Bummer.

The first time Scott and I visited Niagara-on-the-Lake, the owner of our B&B told us some of the backstory for all the flowers decorating the town. A multi-millionaire apparently bankrolled the building of some giant greenhouses in which the town flowers are grown. Thus, right at the beginning of theater season in late spring, zillions of flowers in sidewalk planters and hanging pots are set up all over town. Walking down the main drag really offers quite a spectacular view.

Cathy Gilligan

[SC] Responding to your question to me, what impresses me are folks who, either alone or not, choose to take in rescue dogs as opposed to ordinary dogs. Elizabeth's greyhound is also a rescue dog that came to her as an adult dog with some emotional/behavioral issues in addition to his physical challenges. I think Nick is doing very well, but he could have been much more of a handful for a single, working person. Jeanne's late sister Julie chose to take in some rescue dogs that had some occasionally dramatic problems, too. Caring for dogs like that can be a lot of work.

Steven Vincent Johnson

[JG] I see that Lisa has written an account of her banning in *Turbo* #385. I think I will respond directly to her later in this zine. I appreciate your account, though, especially your summary of the wrap-up panel. I found it horrifically ironic that "John" and committee members expressed concern that those who reported themselves harmed by Lisa's comments might never return to WisCon ... but ignored the near certainty that someone treated by the committee as Lisa was, will also never return to the convention. The image in my mind that afternoon at WisCon, and ever since, is of a human Jenga game, in which individuals are banned or who

decide to quit attending slowly destabilizes the tower, until it comes tumbling down.

Andy Hooper

[SC] You have once again succeeded in pulling me in to an article on a subject I thought I had very little interest in, fantasy baseball. How do you do that? I did not realize, for example, the effect that legalized sports betting would have on fantasy sports platforms. Never having been much of a gambler, I am sometimes surprised at how big a deal gambling really is in our culture. I imagine we are just starting to see the unanticipated fallout from the Supreme's reckless decision essentially legalizing sports betting. Still, fantasy baseball sounds like fun if you have a passion for the game and the statistics. Would it be safe to assume that you have big opinions on the whole issue of statistics-based real baseball as described in Michael Lewis' *Moneyball*, and the excellent movie made from it?

I enjoyed the Fred Haskell apazine you ran, though it was a bit of a trial to read in places. It was particularly interesting to view conventions from the point of view of a dedicated musician who seemed focused on going to a con mostly to find or create a music venue from which to play music literally all night. He did not seem interested at all in the program, just in meeting up with people and playing music. Very different scene from my convention experience, which made it interesting.

[JG] I read a few excellent novels about baseball for some college lit classes, and tend to follow journalists' articles about the politics and economics of baseball, and I loved Ellen Klages' recent novel, *Out of Left Field*, and of course your writing about baseball is always interesting. Yet I have never been tempted to attend a game. Strange. Thank you for your comments about how fantasy games use data from real life but end up creating different results. I started thinking about the idea that people's actual lives might be "scored" using different criteria than real life relies upon, which (if applied) would result in very different life arcs. Come to think of it, that's what most religions whose dogmas include an afterlife suggest happens: When you die, your life is scored as if it were a fantasy game, with points allotted according to spiritual, not earthly measures. [Image: St. Peter sitting around with the archangels, playing Fantasy Humans.]

Thank you for the hint that you might be interested in helping me recycle some old fanzines. I do have a couple boxes of fanzines containing my work. I also have a couple boxes of *Januses*, *Auroras*, and some of my perzines. There is no longer a complete set of *Janus-Aurora*, except for the two bound volumes in my office. I gave the last complete (loose) set to MSU along with the Tiptree Award books. But I WOULD like to see the rest of the zines go to people who want them. We should talk when you have the time/inclination.

You know, reproducing Fred's micro-elite typestyle doesn't quite work as a nostalgic return to the days of reading his

zines for me, back when my eyesight was 20/20 and I'd never heard the terms "diplopia" and "prism" before. Just sayin'. Still it was nice to hear an old friend's voice again.

Marilyn Holt

[SC] I enjoyed your letter from the farm. You obviously love the farm life, even with the challenges and I look forward to your news when you share it in Turbo. I especially enjoyed your comments on your dogs, Rosie and Sawyer. You also choose to take in rescue dogs, do you specifically look for Great Pyrenees or was it just luck that you got them?

[JG] Your description of living on the farm with your animals was very evocative. I felt like I was strolling next to you as you pointed out the things you love about your home. Thanks.

Comments on #385

Covers—Steve Vincent Johnson

[SC] Beautiful cover again, Steve. And I liked the Chuck Lorre bit on the backcover as well. Nicely done.

[JG] Nice, Steve! On the back cover you wrote, "Striving to reach the ultimate goal of perfection isn't the end game. The act of striving, itself, is the goal already achieved." I've always thought that's what Kim Stanley Robinson's utopian novels are saying: Utopia isn't the end game. Striving for Utopia is the main thing.

Lisa Freitag

[SC] News that you had been banned from WisCon reached me Sunday afternoon of the convention in the Concourse lobby as I was waiting for our dinner group to come together. I heard about Gardner Dozois' death at the same time. Allen Baum, who had attended your panel, was trying to explain to a few of us what he witnessed. It all sounded kind of confused, but he did not feel that anything you said justified being banned. I have since read several versions of what was supposedly said at the panel, but they mostly look to me to be incomplete, confused or biased.

I am deeply sorry for any pain or embarrassment you were put through. No matter what version of events at the panel is most accurate, nothing appears to me to justify banning you from the convention. I doubt they have any idea of the many years you selflessly volunteered to be WisCon's on-call doctor over the entire weekend, and how many times you helped convention members with their issues, sometimes in the middle of the night. I know that I was present for some of those incidents when I was WisCon Chair or head of Safety, but I know you probably dealt with many, if not most of them without my even knowing about them and for years before I even became a WisCon volunteer myself.

I certainly don't blame you for deciding not to return to WisCon under these circumstances. The only reason I will continue to attend WisCon, is to support the James Tiptree, Jr. Award organization. I have been supporting them for over 25 years and as long as they feel they need to return to WisCon, I will show up to help. But I'm going to limit my involvement. I will go to WisCon, but I will avoid programming beyond the essential Tiptree events, the Gathering, the auction, the bakesale, the speeches and the art show. I will visit the dealers. I will attend very few panels, readings or parties unless they are specifically Tiptree programs. It's not that I fear being banned myself, but I have decided that I don't want to witness, or be involved in, the next WisCon blowup incident. I expect to spend much more of the weekend enjoying downtown Madison's many late Spring attractions, as well as meals and excursions with friends and hanging out in the Concourse bar.

[JG] I think what the WisCon concom did to you is outrageous and, in the long run, self-destructive for the convention. The essay you published in *Turbo* was a nuanced and valuable thought-experiment. I appreciate your ideas and wish that your expression of those ideas at the panel hadn't been so misunderstood. But I am most outraged that WisCon has let its fear of social media pressure overwhelm its responsibilities to its members. For me, this feels like a continuation of the same disagreement I had with young members of the concom in 2014, the one that led to my resignation. I argued then that it was wrong to throw concom members under the bus because of their failure to respond quickly enough or because they hadn't corrected their mistakes soon enough, to satisfy criticisms made by outsiders. Outside voices demanded that heads roll. And so heads were sacrificed. I couldn't be part of that and so I resigned. More recently in these last couple years, attendees' behavior has been scrutinized by the concom and actions taken in order to entirely avoid the possibility of social media criticism. In your case, WisCon apparently felt it was safer to boot you out before talking with you, than it would be to explain a delay to those outraged on Twitter. I don't believe they banned you in order to shelter individual attendees. If it were not for the perceived time-pressure applied by outside commentators, I believe that the concom would have taken more time to respond to members' complaints, time to talk to you, time to consider. Instead, I think the concom was thinking primarily about protecting itself and I think that is cowardly. I want WisCon to be better than that. I want them to do the hard thing, the right thing, and take the heat when the Twitterverse demands action now, now, now! And I want them to take responsibility for the harm they have done to you, even if the harm is now impossible to un-do. I'm so sorry you had to experience this.

Scott and I are going to write a letter to the concom in your support.

Greg Rihn

[SC] The play "Fortuna the Time Bender vs. The Schoolgirls of Doom" sounds like something we would have liked a lot, too. What a great title. Also nice to see that Robert Spenser, retired from APT, is still working from time to time. I always liked him. Nice to know that retirement from APT does not necessarily mean retirement from everything.

We have one acquaintance who refuses to go see *The Incredibles* because she's afraid of the short feature at the start. Her children are both off to college and she has heard the short will make her feel very sad. I tried to reassure her it would all be alright, but whoever warned her apparently made an impression she won't shake.

[JG] Wow. *Fortuna the Time Bender vs. The Schoolgirls of Doom* sounds great! I see that they set up a kickstarter campaign to raise funds for a cd recording. It must have been successful because I found the cd on Amazon and listened to a few of the excerpts. I am tempted.

Jim Hudson and Diane Martin

[SC] I liked your description of your trip to see Alan Cumming in Chicago. I think we would have enjoyed the show, too. Doing the occasional show in Chicago is a fine thing to do if you take the time to stay for a day or two and enjoy a few other Chicago delights while in town. Now if only we could take a train from Madison down to Chicago (or Milwaukee or Minneapolis) instead of driving, what a civilized world that would be.

Nice photos. I came across three cranes in a little lakeside park while biking around Lake Monona in July. I noticed another biker had stopped and was taking pictures of something when I slowly pulled up to her the cranes were quite close. Wouldn't you know it, I completely forgot that my iPhone was in my bike bag, so no pictures. But really, Jim, they were thiiiiiiiiis big!

[JG] The Cumming show at Ravinia sounds wonderful. I've heard about Ravinia frequently, mostly on NPR, but somehow never realized it was nearby. I'd love to attend a show there someday.

I'm glad to hear there were no puppy nominees on the Hugo ballot this year. Is that because the new rules kept them out or because the puppies have given up on winning Hugos?

Yes, "hip preservation" sounds very good. Fingers crossed that this works for Diane.

We have tickets for the Milwaukee performance of *In the Heights* too—on a different evening though. We will be going with my brother and sister-in-law on October 20. We just saw a PBS program about the making of *In the Heights*, featuring a lot of Lin-Manuel, and then coincidentally, found out about ticket availability a day later. Fate.

Steven Vincent Johnson

[JG] I'm curious—how can you control the diet of an outdoor cat? Doesn't she eat stuff outside the house?

I liked your letter to the WisCon concomm. Good work, Steve. You pushed Scott and I to decide to write one too.

Yes, the cover image was made from a photograph of one of the pots of flowers on our front porch. The picture was taken from above and I played with the image in Photoshop. And yeah, I kicked myself when I realized that I hadn't done the text reversal correctly. Next time. You and I are very lucky to have good color printers at home!

Ruth and Jim Nichols

[SC] For so long when I was working, if we decided to go somewhere for vacation we usually ended up flying because driving takes too long. Now that I'm retired, I'm looking forward to some long driving trips because I hate flying and I like to drive. Interstate driving can get old after 8 hours or so, but when time is not so much of an issue, I'd like to do more back road and two lane highway driving and try not to drive for longer than 6 or 8 hours in a day. Jeanne and I make a good team, too, as she is a terrific navigator and manager of entertainment (like audible books, podcasts, public radio, music or just reading aloud.)

Your story about twice getting rear-ended (great pictures, by the way) is just so frustrating and scary to me. You did nothing wrong and still got hit twice. That rattles me a bit when I think about taking long car trips, although you were not on vacation when you got hit, the risk is still there. There are just a lot of clueless and careless people driving around. I'm so glad you and Nes did not get hurt any worse than you were.

[JG] I know what you mean about driving vacations in which the driving part takes up such a large proportion of the time. As with train trips, I like to think about the journey as part of the vacation, rather than just the route to it. (However, I can't warp my mind into doing this with plane travel. Plane travel is just purgatory, nothing to do but endure.) Retirement improves things a bit, because there is less of a time crunch. But the main thing that makes road trips fun for me, is the reading aloud, or listening to books on tape (which we are just beginning to do, once in a while), and wide-ranging conversations. I really enjoy traveling with Scott.

We were in Door County around the time you were vacationing, August 6-12. We also borrowed a place to stay—an Egg Harbor house, owned by Scott's cousins. I wondered if we would see you in Door County while we were there, but no, we didn't catch site of you. Cell coverage is indeed spotty in Door County, though it used to be non-existent, so there have been improvements; this year was the best yet, with only a few places reporting the dread "no service."

We were so sorry to hear about your two car accidents! What a horrific couple of weeks! I laughed when I saw the color of your new car and your note, "They'll see it!" I definitely hope so. And I hope you recover with no lingering after-pains.

Re: Sword plants. What do you do when the sword leaves start arching away from perpendicular? Is something wrong? Is there a way to encourage the leaves to stand up straight??

Jim Nichols

[SC] Jim, two and a half more years will hopefully go by much quicker than it sounds. You are so right when you mentioned how uncertain the future is these days. We were just talking to friends who bought a new Honda a few years before they intended to because they expect Trump's tariffs will raise the cost of a new car by as much as \$7000 if they wait. I expect many people are scrambling to recalculate the future based on the erratic state of our government.

[JG] Not being able to rush to the hospital to be with Ruth must have been awful. I'm so sorry you (both) had to go through that.

Sigh Too bad about the delay of your retirement date!

Catie Pfeifer

[SC] I do not remember seeing *The Princess Bride* in a movie theater. It came out the year I moved to Madison and I cannot imagine that I would have been attracted to it as it was probably marketed at the time. I think we heard about how good it was by word of mouth and eventually saw it on video, and were blown away by it. It is a wonderful movie and a great favorite of ours, one of those movies I can sit down and begin watching again at any point. Thanks for the write up of Elwes' memoir.

[JG] Thanks for the detailed review of *As You Wish*. It brought back happy memories of a wonderful film.

Andy Hooper

[SC] *Night of the Living Dead* presented zombies as a metaphor for the helpless boiling mass of humanity that is the poor of the world, finally rising up and literally devouring the ruling classes. At least I have read that analysis. I don't think such a view works very well for *The Walking Dead* and, in the years we have been watching the show, I've been trying to figure out what the show is trying to say in some larger sense and it just comes back to me as device to perpetuate an endless comic book story line. But your take on it works well and makes a lot of sense.

A lot of mystery and conjecture in this group of Nycon attendees. I don't envy you trying to track down some of these folks who have left very little trace of themselves behind. While some of the other characters, like "Flossie"

Hardart and the woman with the fascinating family history, Mary MacGregor Jameson, were fascinating.

[JG] I enjoyed the Nyconclusion portraits, including your whimsical speculation about the personalities of these largely unknown folks. Especially: 'A woman willing to put her faith in a character named 'Elliot Millpaugh' is surely comfortable with flights of fancy, so she seems potentially fannish.' Nice. Your project seems related on a fannish level, to the current *New York Times* project of publishing obituaries for women whose importance was overlooked in the past. I imagine that the research for both your project and the *NYT* project has been similarly adventurous.

What do I think of Chris Hardwick? Let's see, my first reaction was, "Oh fuck no! Not another one!" Meaning another prominent, powerful guy who has been publically accused by a woman of inappropriate behavior toward her. And then I waited to see if other women would come forward, because when they do, that's when evidence piles up and suggests that the guy has a pattern of harassing behavior.

There have been quite a few public figures that I used to respect and was deeply disappointed to lose from the good fight or just from the list of entertainers that I enjoyed. Al Franken. Bill Cosby. Elliot Spitzer. Garrison Keillor. Of course there is a spectrum of accusations in this #MeToo movement's wall of shame—including many flavors of harassment from bad boyfriend to sexual abuse to workplace harassment to rapist, not necessarily in that order nor limited to those charges.

Since AMC has announced that they are going to reinstate Hardwick, I think it's likely that means no one else made further accusations and that his behavior falls into the less onerous part of the spectrum: possibly a very bad boyfriend. The enormous popularity of his show *Talking Dead* also probably had something to do with his reinstatement.

So what to I think of him now? I will look at and listen to him differently than I used to, when I considered him a smart, witty, really talented interviewer and commentator. Now there will be another layer of ... hesitation, I guess. Last week, I listened very carefully to how and what he said at the beginning of the first *Talking Dead* episode of the season. He seemed very sincere. I want to sympathize with him, I do, and hope that no other shoes drop.

Jae Leslie Adams

[SC] I love reading your comments. You have a style like no one else.

[JG] Rebuilt transmission! *Déjà vu!* But I think Scott has already told that story.

We saw *Who Killed the American Car* too. Sad! USA!

Thanks for letting us know what the parking situation is at Market Square. I have been wondering about that ever since we read the strange story about the closing of the adjacent parking lot.

On the subject of clearing work spaces—I am about to embark on one of my periodic home-office reorgs. 30 years ago we moved, and so the reorg was an asteroid-hits-earth, extinction-level change. Ten years later, I cleared out technical pens, rub-on letters, and lots of other pre-computer art supplies that were hogging prime space. And about 15 years ago, I cleared out most of the prime shelving space to make room for what I most needed for my business. That's been my process: to think about what stuff I tend to spend the most time with in my office, and then to make sure that the stuff related to that work has the most accessible and useful space. And now, soon, as I prepare to retire and will no longer have to keep track of client work, I'll be re-organizing again. And throwing stuff out, which is always cathartic for me.

I don't know if CHEW published a tabloid journal. It certainly does not do so now. Now, there is an on-line newsletter and an extremely (almost irritatingly) active Facebook page. And monthly meetings with snacks featuring fascinating presentations by academics, farmers, barkeeps, cheesemakers, food writers, and the like. Meetings are scheduled on the first Wednesday of the month, 7-8:30PM, at the Goodman Center. Come on down sometime.

What's New? – Scott

[SC] Jeanne described our one real trip of the summer, to Door county which was wonderful. We have kept busy closer to home. We have stopped in at some local music festivals such as Fete de Marquette over at McPike Park and the Catfish River Music Festival in Stoughton. We sweated through a typically broiling day at Art Fair on the Square where we saw some very interesting art, but also became painfully aware of how much shade has been temporarily lost over the last few years of street repair on the Capital Square. We went to visit my family in Anamosa, IA for a weekend where we got to see the 25 foot statute of American Gothic that the city managed to attract for a limited stay. I also got to check in on my brother who is busy remodeling his late mother-



Giant American Gothic sculpture



John & Scott

in-law's house to move in. It's just a few blocks from his old house, but it will be the first move for them in 40 years, no small feat for a dedicated packrat like him. I was delighted with his new pool table in the basement where he calmly beat me in two games (first time I have shot pool in something like 20 years, so I did not feel bad about losing). Even Jeanne played a game and I think she liked it.

We have been to American Players Theater (APT) three times already. The witty *Born Yesterday* was our first play; the second was a brilliant performance of Farquhar's *The Recruiting Officer* which was funny, but also a little sad as we considered the cost his character's antics ultimately had on the people they recruited, their families and communities. We also saw a powerful performance of South African playwright Athol Fugard's *Blood Knot*. APT had gotten enmeshed in a controversy over their decision to cast a white actor in the role of a light-skinned black character. Although the play is 50 years old and it has traditionally been cast in this way, APT came under fire anyway. We had not originally chosen to see this play this year (we never see all their plays) but we got a chance to go when one of Jeanne's clients was invited to come to a special performance as a response to the controversy, to be followed by a panel discussion of the issues. Jeanne's client was given a bunch of tickets so he invited us as part of his group. The play was outstanding and we stayed for the panel discussion.



What's New? – Jeanne

[JG] I've pulled the trigger on retirement. After a discussion with my attorney, I let my customers know that I will be retired as of November 1. I've finished a round of interviews with possible buyers and have chosen someone. She and I will meet next week and work out the shape of a contract, at which time we will get lawyers involved and sign papers. In the meantime, I have transferred 25 years-worth of job archives, compressed and saved onto more than 400 cds ... onto one, very small 3TB hard drive. Whew! Nevertheless, I am currently working on Satya's mayoral campaign and will be enmeshed in a big job for another client in early September, so things haven't changed for me very much yet.



Changing the subject slightly to **depredations by the bunnies**. [See evidence below.] We used to have pretty, yellow coneflowers planted by the side of the house. They were full-grown, about 18" high when I put them in. But the bunnies found them almost immediately. Perhaps they are angry because we do not provide them with traditional bunny-food like carrots. Without pets patrolling our fenced yard, the bunnies are basically in charge. They started at the front of the coneflower plant, chowing down on the blossoms first and then the leaves, and gradually munched back towards the outside wall of the house. Before we left for Door County, the front half of the plant had been devastated; upon our return, nothing remained but stems, of use only to spiders who find them useful for anchoring their webs. Bunnies are now attempting to dig up and munch on the coneflower plant root ball. Aaaarg!

Jeanne & Scott, August 2018

