

Madison FOURSQUARE

32

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

Scott@unionstreetdesign.com

Jeanne@unionstreetdesign.com

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Scott Custis [SC] and Jeanne Gomoll [JG]

June 2019 for *Turbo-Charged Party Animal* #396.

Covers

[SC] Wow, Steve, awesome covers! The fractal design on the front was beautiful.

[JG] Feathery, alien ferns. Ooo. Nice.

Greg Rihn

[SC] Having been hit-or-miss superhero movie goers over the years, we have seen some of the Marvel movies in the saga, concluding with *Avengers: Endgame*, but not all. Still, trailers and reviews seemed good enough to convince us to see the final two movies but we elected to not see them a year apart. Once *Endgame* appeared at local theaters, we sat down to finally watch the first part, *Avengers: Infinity War*, at home. Seeing them each for the first time just a few nights apart was great improvement in my opinion over waiting a year for part 2. *Endgame* was long, but enjoyable. The plot had some problems as you and others pointed out, but the actors mostly delivered on their roles and the action and special effects were effective. I don't think the films said anything particularly new or interesting about the genre so I doubt I will watch them again, but I was entertained.

[JG] I liked *Endgame* too. Not surprisingly, the large amount of time spent developing the characters over the years allowed the writers of this last film to develop honestly-earned pathos. I only wish this lesson might be extended to individual, big budget movies which rely entirely too much, in my opinion, on special effects.

The Graphic Artists Guild of America, of which I am a member, also supported the zombie website rule. I don't know if it ever was passed or not. I would prefer getting permission to use the material from the Láadan website. Diane is trying to contact Suzette's daughter.

If Carl Brandon material interests you, David Langford is reprinting more of Terry Carr's fannish writing, in *Fandom Harvest II, The Incomplete Terry Carr* as a free pdf. <https://taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?x=FanHarvest2> Dave has plans to reprint more of Terry's (and Carl's) writing; in fact he's using the bibliography that Terry provided for my *Carl Brandon* book to help him find some of the more obscure pieces.

Georgie Schnobrich

[SC] Your questions about publishing the classics today would certainly make an interesting panel discussion. Keeping in mind that I'm not a writer, even I had a couple reactions to your piece. I think writers like Austen, Elliot and the Brontë sisters would be published and successful today. I think they were all talented, of course, but their powerful imaginations, great skill at observation and description and sheer drive to create would surely have been as strong today as then. I think the greatest threat to their success as writers today would not be the complexity of the modern publishing business, but the vast alternative options they would have today for their talents that were not open to them in their own time. Would they have chosen to write if they could have been scientists, political figures, professors, successful business women or so many other things instead? You should organize this panel, Georgie, invite Miller and let us all know where and when to show up.

[JG] My theory about how Austen and Elliot and the Brontë sisters learned to write was that they all wrote lots and lots of letters to friends and family—and of course did a lot of reading, as you mention.

I miss seeing/hearing you at WisCon programs. Actually, I should say I miss WisCon panels. For the last couple years I've mostly just attended readings and worked on Tiptree stuff. Monthly book discussions may be taking the place, for me, of group literary discussions at conventions. Just a thought ... It might be a cool idea to do an annual meeting of the book discussion groups. Two book discussion groups, one in Madison and one in Milwaukee choose the same book one month and arrange to meet someplace in between the two cities. A sort of cross-pollination of discussion groups.

After having said, quite definitely, that I did not want to see another version of *The Taming of the Shrew*, it turns out that I am sort of interested in seeing another version of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Next week (June 26) the Royal Shakespeare Theater's **gender-swap** version will be shown at one of our local movie theaters, New Vision Fitchburg 18. I think that idea has the potential to highlight and blast the essential flaws of the story. I like your idea that the sexism in the story might be born of Shakespeare's anger at a specific woman. Anyway, this gender-swapped version might be rather fun to see. I will let you know.

Lisa Freitag

[SC] I think your Roxanne Gay questions would make waves at WisCon. What a tempting idea. You are a troublemaker in the best sense.

[JG] You see reflections of your WisCon episode in other books, other stories. I also had the same experience after the blowup that led to my resignation from WisCon. What am I saying, I continue to discover painful parallels to this day.

Re Mallory's lost camera, you might enjoy reading Dan Simmons' novel, *The Abominable*. Set in the year after Mallory's disappearance on Everest—featuring characters who choose to climb the mountain using alpine climbing techniques—it's one of the best climbing books I've ever read. Scott and I really liked it and frequently recommend it to climbing-book aficionados.

Steven Johnson

[SC] I want to applaud your willingness to discuss the fate of the apa and what you and Darlene are getting from your participation. I think the resounding silence from most quarters that greeted Hope's announcement about leaving as OE means that no one locally is excited about taking over. That may mean the OE may become an out-of-town member (Hooper?) for the first time. That will mean change for contributors in Madison. Jeanne and I have been enjoying our stay since returning to *Turbo* and if management moves to Seattle, we plan to continue contributing.

I was also intrigued by your comment to Cathy where you described putting an animated version of your Orbital Mechanics research on YouTube. I might like to see that also, so keep us posted.

Catie Pfeifer

[SC] Congratulations on your success with Meera's issues and good luck with the job search.

Jim and Ruth Nichols

[SC] I always enjoy your travel writing. In my experience when it comes to travelling, grumpy is okay. In fact, it is to be expected and maybe even indulged. Without the grumpy bits, the good parts of a trip would seem less special and precious. Thanks for taking us along.

You make me miss train travel. I grew up travelling on the train and I love it. We need to do it again sometime soon because we have done enough flying this year to suit me for a good long time. Your stay in Santa Fe sounded lovely, especially the food. Very nice pictures, too.

[JG] You took some good pictures, in spite of the rain. In fact I rather liked the raindrop-spotted window view photo.

F. J. Bergmann

[SC] We also enjoyed Jordan Peele's movies a lot. We have lately been watching his take on *Twilight Zone*. In any anthology show like that, the quality of the stories are a little uneven, but I have been liking them overall. I love how his political and social viewpoint is so central to all his work.

Congratulations on the 2nd Place in the Writers of the Future fiction contest as well as publication of "Surgery for Dummies."

[JG] We have also been disappointed by movie offerings these past couple months, but then we ARE treading in the doldrums season of very bad movies. I've always heard the explanation for the generally low quality of films that open in the Spring as having something to do with the award season: e.g., that movies opening so early in the year will be forgotten by award voters. That seems like a rather silly theory to me, however, since it seems pretty clear that movie producers are way more interested in profits than statues. Why give up on several months of income by dumping movies that are unlikely to pull in audiences? Whatever the reason is, I am grateful that trailers for more interesting movies are starting to appear.

Andy Hooper

[SC] Thanks for taking us along on your entertaining visit to Harlan and Brooklyn. I would have loved the long walks you went on as well as the wonderful food options. And nice weather. New York City is an area, like Seattle, that I have not spent enough time in when the weather was good for being outside on an extended hike. Your walk around Prospect Park attracted me the most of your adventures. Do you think Harlan has become a lifelong Brooklynite?

As I mentioned to Steve, Jeanne and I would be fine with you becoming the next OE.

Recently I was back home to Iowa on an unpleasant errand. When we cleaned out my father's farm after he died, there was so much stuff to go through for my brother, my sister and myself, that we were in serious danger of burnout. Eventually when we came across desk drawers full of stuff, or boxes of papers in closets we just tossed them in some plastic bins and shoved them into the rafters in the garage to sort through at some later point. The garage was the best building left on the farm and my brother Jon ended up owning the whole property after buying Bonnie and me sold out. My sister, as Executor, managed to settle the whole estate except for those 10 plastic bins in the garage. They sat up there for the last 11 years. At least some of the bins contained pictures and scrapbooks.

After all this time, we finally agreed to go through those bins together. The most sensitive stuff were the pictures, but we really did not know what we were going to find. It was a difficult couple of days, but in the end we got through it.

As I write this I have two large boxes sitting next to me of mostly loose pictures and photo albums. I have agreed to make physical copies of some of the pictures for my sister, scanned copies of quite a few more for myself and return all the originals to my brother who cannot bear to part with anything, even if he, too, prefers digital versions. I thought of you a bit as we were going through those old pictures and trying to piece together who these people were and how they fit into our family tree. I don't know how far I will get into all this, but your success in doing online research and articles here in *Turbo* have inspired me to see what I can find out at least as far as I want to pursue it.

Thanks as always for the great Entropy Department pieces. Harlan Ellison is always an entertaining subject whether it's his writing or someone writing about him. And *The Kong Papers*, what to say? I have to admit that it drew a couple laughs out of me.

[JG] Goodness, a first-person, present-day travelogue from Andy Hooper. That's a rarity. Thanks for taking us along on your trip to New York!

You were the last person to speak at Vonda's memorial, and I was happy with your suggestion: that everyone whose career had been touched by Vonda stand up. I think that was what you said. In any case, it was a wonder to see how many of the assembled crowd stood up. And it was good seeing you and Carrie in Seattle. I am so glad we got to spend some time with you and see your great house!

I've finished correcting typos for now; *Remembering Vonda* will be available by the time you receive this apa: <https://tinyurl.com/RememberingVonda>. All proceeds will go to Clarion West (not a lot, because I priced it as inexpensively as possible). In another few weeks I will make a free pdf available, with color photos. (The printed book necessarily has only b&w photos on the inside pages.) I am very glad to have worked on the book. It made me feel better, connected to Vonda's community, and was a way to help from a distance. Thinking further, I am realizing a sort of morbid thing (or maybe not so morbid) about myself: I frequently deal with the death of someone close to me by making art. After my sister's death, I scanned and cleaned up Julie's doodles from her notebooks and made placards to give to guests that attended her memorial gathering. I worked with a painter on a portrait of my dad after he died. I illustrated recipe cards with some of my mom's recipes to give to folks who attended her funeral. I made a painting of Scott's dad that we gave to the family. This all started years ago when I did a card with a Tolkien icon and poem for my brother Rick, rather than accept one of the funeral parlor's standard prayer cards. I did another sort of non-prayer card after Laura Spiess died. Well, they say everyone deals with grief in a different way. It appears that mine is to make art.

Geriatric Safe Space at WisCon! I love it.

Janus received a couple Harlan Ellison LoCs that were very like the one you reprinted. Now I wonder what party

Harlan was attending when he wrote to us. Another cause to wonder—just how many cartoons did Rotsler draw in his lifetime? Thanks for sharing *The Kong Papers*, comic stream of consciousness.

Walter Freitag

[SC] Thanks for the write ups on *The Magicians* and the *Dark Phoenix* saga. I remember liking Grossman's original novel. We read it for our book discussion group and what I remember is that I was alone in liking and defending it. So the book group did not go on with the subsequent books. I intended to myself, and maybe still will, but got sidetracked by other things in the meantime. We recorded episodes of the series initially, but eventually decided other things were more of a priority for us so we never started watching it and let it go after awhile. After your endorsement, maybe now I will return to it. As for *Phoenix*, I was a fan of the *X-Men* comics as a kid, but the early movies did not really grab us, so we have not been drawn in very much to the rest of the movies (we liked the movie *Logan* a lot, however). Your discussion of the broken story of *Phoenix Saga* was very interesting. Let us know how the movie turned out for you.

[JG] I loved your commentary and speculations about the meta-Phoenix story. I have lost track of the X-Men saga; we haven't seen an episode for a long time and are unlikely to return to the series. But I am looking forward to hearing what *you* think about the new one. Your ideas have made me a bit nervous about the future of Captain Marvel, whose first film I really liked. But certainly if it follows the Phoenix model, the possibilities for progression down a bad path loom.

Patrick Ijima-Washburn

[SC] What a delightful trip! And Selina ("That would be me.") rocks. Very wise of you to prepare questions in advance of Matsumoto's talk just in case, only to end up getting a chance to interview him. How cool was that and how cool to ask questions he probably doesn't get all the time? I'm sure he appreciated it.

[JG] What a cool story of your surprise interview with Matsumoto. Wow.

What's New – Scott

[SC] WisCon did not suck so much this year. To the best of my knowledge, there were no big blowups and no one was kicked out. We may still find out that someone did get banned, but if so it was a much lower profile incident than last year. I realize that may not be saying much, but there were some good things.

I decided early on to keep a low profile. I stuck to attending almost exclusively Tiptree-related program items and spaces. I had a busy day on Thursday moving all the Tiptree stuff from our house to the Concourse. I then took a bus across town to attend a retirement party for an old colleague of mine. It was my first visit to the shiny new office building at Hill Farms that houses DOT and, now, about seven other state agencies as well. I got back downtown in time to help Jeanne, Pat Murphy and other volunteers with the sorting and organizing of Tiptree stuff for the Gathering and Auction. Jeanne and I decided to skip the Room of Own's Own readings this year. The walk was a bit long and we were running late enough that available seats seemed unlikely. Then we went to a Tiptree dinner for the award winner, her mother and the translator of her winning story along with jurors and motherboard members to Cento. It was a very nice dinner group. I had been looking forward to this dinner for several weeks, I was hungry and I planned to order freely, but thinking back on it today I have no memory of what I had.

I helped set up the Gathering on Friday, which was well attended and had a lot of interesting stuff to look at and bid on in preparation for the subsequent Auction, as well as Direct Sale items that would be available for purchase later. I occasionally drifted over to observe activity at the Clothing Swap. The Swap has been a part of the Gathering since it was first introduced. It was always a very popular space. I never gave the logistics of it much thought. But prior to the start of the con, I paged through some WisCon information online and was surprised to discover a rather detailed set of rules regarding the Clothing Swap. Rules would seem to be necessary to an event like this, but sometimes the rules illustrate a bit about the evolution of an event. I decided I was glad I had never been involved with the Swap. Some items that were not eligible for inclusion in the Swap included used bras and underwear (!) and they specifically refused to accept bags of wet clothing (ick). I figure those rules were added as they gained experience running the Swap.

The Gathering was a busy event this year because it was only 2½ hours long, and included the crowning of the Tiptree winner with the tiara AND WisCon's "Opening

Ceremonies." That last bit consisted of one of the WisCon chairs making a couple announcements followed by the Tiptree winner crowning. So, apparently, no one on the Concom had time or energy or cared to organize an actual opening ceremonies event for the convention. I interpret that as a signal that the Concom was short of volunteers. They made many appeals for help over the weekend, as usual, but I also noticed a lot of people were doing multiple jobs and seemed to me to be working a lot of hours.

Although I did not attend many panels, I showed up at most of the main events and spent some time in the Dealers Room and Art Show. The feeling I had was convention attendance was about the same size as last year, if a bit smaller. I don't think they sold out of dessert function tickets and the ballroom for dessert and speeches was not full. There seemed to be plenty of room everywhere. The con does not broadcast its attendance numbers like we once did, so it's hard to tell if the convention is shrinking but I'm pretty sure it's not growing.

The Tiptree Bakesale was running concurrently with the Gathering, but ended at 5PM. I managed to slip up there to score some of Jeanne's Swedish Pastry for both of us during the Gathering and the room looked busy and well supplied with goodies when I was there. We had a nice extended dinner in the hotel restaurant, Circ, with Tiptree Board member Jeff Smith, his wife, Anne, and their friends from Baltimore, Robert and Barbara, who were attending WisCon for the first time after hearing about it from Jeff and Anne for many years.

We skipped breakfast Saturday morning so Jeanne could be at the hotel by 10 am for an on-camera interview for a documentary film about James Tiptree Jr., directed by Roxanne Samer. Quite a few Tiptree-Award related people

were being interviewed at WisCon for this film project, including Jeff Smith, who knew Tiptree and became her literary executor. After the interview, Jeanne and I slipped out for lunch at Madison Sourdough Bakery and Cafe then back in time to see GoH Charlie Jane Anders' reading. We had recently read her novel *All the Birds in the Sky* for our book discussion group and really liked it, so we were looking forward to her reading and speech. She is quite a character. A tall and very out trans woman with neon pink hair, bright clothes and a bold personality, she is a standout in any room. At 4PM we saw Tiptree Winner Gabriela Damian Miravete read her whole award winning short story, "They Will Dream in the Garden," which I found both poetic and dreamlike. Having had a late lunch, we shared a quick supper with



Tiptree winner, Gabriela Damián Miravete, being crowned with the Tiptree tiara by Margaret McBride, who chaired the 2018 jury.

the crew of folks who needed to get back to the con early in order to move auction stuff to the ballroom.

A crack crew of Tiptree volunteers set up the Auction. Jeanne decided to station herself at a table near the checkout to help with making out bid sheets or provide other assistance. I took a seat in the audience and did my part to help the convention cover the minimum on the portable bar in the hallway. Turnout was good and Sumana Harihareswara did an awesome job as auctioneer. Traditionally, WisCon does not schedule anything to follow the auction in the same room. Back when Ellen Klages was auctioneer, none of us had any idea when the auction would end. Sumana has been far more focused on keeping the auction limited, but this year she made “the mistake” of telling the WisCon Concom that the auction would be over by 9:30PM, so the convention scheduled a dance to follow in the same room at 10:30PM. That put a lot of pressure on us to finish up, give people time to checkout and pick up their stuff and the rest of us to pack up and move out. Fortunately, Sumana finished right on schedule and we were able to get everything cleared out by 9:30PM! Later we stopped in to the Carl Brandon Society Party on the 6th floor. It was full of people busy making fancy headwear for the floop dance. Jeanne’s Carl Brandon books were doing a good business there. (All proceeds for the book are going the Carl Brandon Society.)

Sunday we had breakfast at home and sauntered over to the hotel in time to check in for our single hotel-night stay. At 4PM we attended the Vonda N. McIntyre memorial panel which went very well. Dinner was again in the hotel restaurant, Circ, this time with Pat Murphy, Diane Silver and some young friends of theirs. This year the convention tried to avoid the long lines for the Dessert Salon/GoH Speeches by issuing numbers. People would be admitted to pick up their desserts based on their number. I was initially amused to see a line form up anyway to pick up numbers prior to time they were available, but once they started issuing them, the line disappeared very quickly. So far as I know they did not have any issues with the dessert function this year (the concom banned someone last year after a confrontation with someone in the line.)

The speeches were very good. The guests this year were Charlie Jane Anders who gave a high energy, but moving speech about her life and career. G. Willow Wilson also talked about her struggle to make it in the comics world. The Tiptree gang was as entertaining as ever. The song this year, written by Sumana, was set to the tune of *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*. Pat was worried that the tune with new lyrics might be too complicated for the audience to follow, but what we actually experienced was, in my opinion, one of the most beautiful and moving Tiptree songs we have ever done as the whole huge room sang along perfectly. With no practice run-through at all! At the end, the convention chairs thanked their staff and made a point of saying that many people were working multiple jobs as they read the

names and jobs. After they gave gifts to the con chairs, the President of SF3 got up to announce the GoHs for 2020. She had to make the announcement because, as of the night of the speeches, no one had yet volunteered to chair WisCon 44. Guests next year will be Yoon Ha Lee and Rebecca Roanhorse. And she confirmed they have signed a hotel contract for next year.

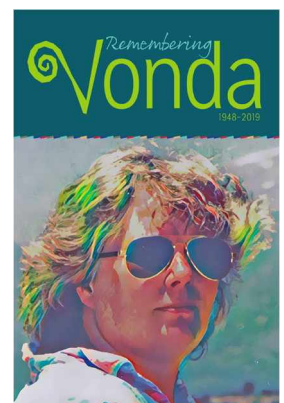
Several years before Jeanne left the Concom and the SF³ Board, she pushed through a rule that we would not invite guests to WisCon, or sign a hotel contract, unless someone had committed to being the next convention chair(s). Evidently, they have discarded that rule. Judging by the shortage of volunteers, WisCon appears to me to be running through and burning out their volunteer pool. Having alienated so many people so cavalierly the last few years, perhaps they will end up learning the hard way how much the convention relies on being able to attract and retain committed volunteers.

What’s New – Jeanne

[JG] Scott and I divvied up the “what’s new” stories. Scott wrote up WisCon and I am writing about Vonda N. McIntyre’s memorial gathering in Seattle, June 9, 2019.

The decision to travel to Seattle was made soon after Vonda’s death on April 1, though we didn’t know at that time when the memorial gathering would actually be scheduled. No one did; it took a while before Jane Hawkins, Kate Schaefer and the rest of Vonda’s posse came up with a plan for the what, when, where, and menu of the thing. Well, to be fair, the menu was decided early: Jane was determined to serve “more sushi than anyone has ever seen in one place.” Vonda loved sushi. And chocolate. There was lots of both, but indeed Jane managed to arrange for more sushi than I’ve ever seen in one place. But that’s getting ahead of the story.

I secretly hoped that the memorial might not happen until later in June, in which case I could conceivably finish the book, *Remembering Vonda*, before the event and could have a case of the books delivered and distributed to attendees at the memorial. But the date chosen was June 9, only a couple weeks after WisCon. The submission deadline for the book was May 11 and Stephanie Smith needed two weeks to edit and organize the articles. Quite reasonable. She offered to send the final text to me the Friday of WisCon, but I told her to keep it for the weekend; that there was no way I would get to layout before WisCon was over. I managed to put together a first draft just two days after the con was over and then sent off a series of pdfs to a crew of wonderful proofreaders, whose wonderfulness did not, unfortunately, extend to



performing the miracle of overnight proofing. So, I decided to have several copies of the “Uncorrected Proof” edition printed and shipped via next-day FedEx, to Jane Hawkins’ address in Seattle. Turns out that FedEx goofed and delivered the box to the right street-number address, but the wrong street—several blocks away from Jane’s house. Nevertheless, a miracle did happen, and the lady who received the box in error, walked over to Jane’s house and completed the delivery in person. Jane plans to give the lady something delicious in thanks. Anyway, three books made it to Seattle on time for Vonda’s memorial gathering and were ooo’d and aaah’d at by all. All members of Vonda’s posse will be getting a copy for free, a largess funded by money left by Vonda to Jane with instructions to do some really fun and extravagant things for her community ... which further explains the ambient sushi situation at the memorial.

As soon as the date and venue was set for the memorial, I started googling the name of the auditorium so I could find and book a room at a nearby hotel. The last thing I wanted was to burden Jane or any of the posse members who had basically tasked themselves with the job of putting on a small con in a month’s time, all while still mourning the death of their dear friend. I figured I could do this without help, or more importantly, without inspiring any of them to add Scott and I to their “To Do” lists. So: the venue was “The Mountaineers Goodman Auditorium,” which did not actually turn up on my google search. What DID turn up was “The Mountaineering Club” which was hosting something called “The Mountaineers” that weekend. And look at the map! I think it’s right across the street from that hotel we loved, The Decca, when it hosted Potlatch years ago! Now, the hotel is called Graduate Seattle. Whatever! Perfect! We said. And I booked us a room for the weekend of the memorial. A few days later, Suzle Tompkins, who has been the master hotel liaison for almost every west coast con I’ve ever attended, sent out hotel recommendations and directions to The Mountaineers, which—you guessed it—was NOT across the street from our hotel. After a bit more digging, which I certainly should have done before booking the room, I discovered that the newly named hotel had also newly named its rooftop bar ... “The Mountaineering Club.” As it turned out, no Seattle fans were even aware of this change, though they all regretted the loss of one of the most beautiful, well-appointed con suites ever and were fascinated to hear what had become of it. Ah well, we ended up keeping our reservation at Graduate Seattle, and were able to provide a warning to others about making this particular mistake. It turned out to be a fine place to stay. The hotel is still nice, though not as deco-y, and definitely more collegial. But we got rides from friends or, more often, made use of our new Uber-summoning skills (and also learned that, really, we should be using Lyft).

The flight to Seattle wasn’t bad, since we were able to negotiate with other passengers to trade seats when we discovered that ours weren’t adjacent. But unfortunately,

our suitcases went astray when bad weather caused our Madison-Denver flight to arrive late. We just managed (by seconds) to make our connecting flight to Seattle by hooking a ride on an airport trolley (Ah, the magic of the cane. At least there are some advantages to bum knees). WE made the connection, but our luggage did not. This necessitated much standing in line at the airport in order to fill out necessary paperwork, and then gobbled the next morning and early afternoon, which we spent communicating and waiting for United personnel to finally deliver our bags to the hotel. Happily, Scott did not have to go clothes shopping as he did the last time this happened during our trip to England and France in 2014. After that, things went smoothly.

Jane Hawkins picked us up and took us to lunch. She came prepared with a list of possible restaurant options, but I pretty much stopped listening when she said “dim sum,” the first item on her list. I love dim sum and there is no Madison restaurant that serves classic dim sum with wheeled carts that stop at each table for customers to choose small plates. In fact, I’ve only ever experienced dim sum like this in large cities. So we did that. Yum.

It was wonderful to catch up. Jane and I have been great friends since 1976 or thereabouts, from the time she and a car-load of Seattleites drove to Madison for WisCon 2 and knocked on my apartment door at 3 in the morning. We’ve visited one another, worked on conventions together, introduced one another to networks of friends that remain among my closest friends to this day. Jane Hawkins, Debbie Notkin, Donya White and I discovered that we were all born in the year 1951, and decided in 2001 to throw a big, joint, 50th birthday celebration that we called “Cronecon.” We rented a loft in San Francisco, cooked and baked up a storm (I personally baked 24 different pies) and invited all our closest friends to join us for a weekend-long party: people could stay for the whole thing or drop in for a single meal. Things got a little complicated, especially for East Coast friends who ended up missing the party, because it happened a week after 9/11. But it was a great experience, and in fact the four of us are talking about celebrating again, in a smaller way, in 2021, when we will all turn 70.

Jane is an amazing woman, who has discovered a formidable and rare skill in herself—that she is willing and quite able to care for loved ones who are dying. In fact she has done this work many times—for Luke McGuff’s mother, for Ole Kvern’s father, her own mother, and several others, I think, for whom I do not have names. Most recently, of course, she did this loving work for Vonda McIntyre. Right after Vonda was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, Jane told her, “my life is yours,” and meant it, quite literally. She was there with Vonda for the nearly three months after diagnosis until she died on April 1. Vonda and Jane were friends for many years before they purchased a house together in the late 70s, not long after I met Jane, as a matter of fact. Vonda lived upstairs; Jane lived downstairs. They hosted Vangaard and Clarion West parties, and Vonda’s guest room hosted dozens

if not hundreds of visiting fans and authors. After Jane bought the house next door, Vonda opened the downstairs space for use as Clarion West storage. From my point of view the two of them have always been part of each other's lives, and together built a network of friends that built a really remarkable community together.

(Side note: I almost joined that community in 1979. Jane and I had been visiting back and forth and wishing the distance was not so great between Madison and Seattle, when Vonda stepped in. She told me there was a job for me: typesetting a marine supplies catalog for her sister Carolyn. But, that very same week I was offered another job, as graphic designer for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, which felt like it was my dream job. I'd had no formal training in art, just a lot of amateur experience, laying out fanzines, illustrating fanzines, plus a degree in Geography and some familiarity with cartography. I decided to stay in Madison. Roads not taken.)

Joining Jane in the work of caring for Vonda was the group of friends who began calling themselves "Vonda's posse," and took care of all the details of life that needed to be done in order to give Vonda the space and time to accomplish what she most wanted to do before she died. Some of the things she wanted to accomplish were fun—like buying up a massive number of Girl Scout cookies when she heard that a conservative columnist had called for a boycott against the Girl Scouts because Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez had once been a Girl Scout. Vonda bought up the total inventory of several Girl Scout sales tables and donated them to a food bank. One of the things on Vonda's list was very serious. Vonda wanted to finish her novel, *The Curve of the World*. That she was able to do this is such a good thing and we are all so happy she managed it. It probably would not have happened without that posse because Vonda took her responsibilities very seriously and as executor of her sister's estate (her sister who had died just months before of the very same cancer that was attacking Vonda), she probably would have spent her last months doing that. But friends took this responsibility from her arming themselves with the potent question: "What would Carolyn have wanted you to do?"

Vonda's death was tragic indeed, a huge loss to her community, and an unbelievably devastating loss to her closest friends, Jane Hawkins and Kate Schaeffer. However, it was a good death. At least I think so. She died without a lot of pain. She died surrounded with loving friends; she was able to converse with visitors up to the day before the end. Her financial situation was such that she didn't have to worry about medical bills and in fact some of the work she did in those last months was to give significant amounts of money to friends and causes (including a sushi extravaganza memorial gathering). She even kept her sense of humor. In the last couple days she slept a great deal of the time. Her breathing had become stuttered and once she woke up suddenly, raised her arms and shouted "It's ALIVE!" And ...



Scott and John D. Berry enjoying more sushi than anyone had ever seen in one place

again, she finished her novel and that was a huge thing to Vonda and to those around her. We are all eager to read her new story and so sad to know there will be no more Vonda N. McIntyre stories to come.

So all of us came to Vonda's memorial—the posse, the local Seattle fan community, Clarion West alumni and members, Book View Café members, readers (including those who knew her primarily as an author of *Star Trek* novels), fellow authors, publishers, editors, and next door neighbors. We talked about how sad it was that Vonda had lost her great friend Ursula K. Le Guin so recently and wondered what Ursula would have said if she had been with us. We told stories of how we met Vonda, of what a wonderful host Vonda was (she claimed that it was a goal of hers that her guest room be known as the very best guest room in all Seattle). So many stories of Vonda's generosity were told, surprising even those of us who knew already that Vonda tended to step in privately and offer help to struggling writers and friends. We ate sushi. We gazed in wonder at the enormous, beautiful display of Vonda's beaded sea creatures, her awards, a certain St. Vonda candle, and the vast collection of her published work. The candle, by the way, went to Jane. There were stacks of some of her novels removed from storage that were offered to attendees. I grabbed a newly reprinted copy of *The Exile Waiting*, which was the first thing of Vonda's that I ever read and, I recall, which made an enormous impression on me—enough to inspire me to write an ecstatic review in *Janus*, and to nominate Vonda to be our guest of honor at WisCon 2. I've lost track of my first copy; it's time to read it again.

Jane, the primary engineer of this wonderful gathering did good and I told her so. She is still a little caught up with the details and sees too many things that didn't go quite the way she wanted, but I know she's glad she pulled this off, even though I think she must have wished at times, to go off by herself and leave us all to deal with our grief on our own. Jane is now sadly starting to think about life after Vonda.



Vonda McIntyre at the MISCON 4 costume judging table, May 1989 in Missoula Montana. This photo came as a surprise to everyone. No one who knew Vonda well had ever seen this photo. Photo by Graham Watt who sent it to me when he heard we were publishing the tribute book. For a person so notoriously averse to having her photo taken, I found way more images of Vonda than I expected were out there.

She's planning a trip to Donya White and Allan Baum's annual Solstice party. She's talking about visiting Madison soon, though maybe not for WisCon as she was initially thinking. She's contemplating some work on her house and Vonda's house, which she has inherited, to make both of them less dependent on the power grid. And further into the future she is envisioning some social good that might be addressed with Vonda's home. So, even after death, Vonda will continue hosting and caring for people! But the next thing on the agenda for Jane is to let folks know that she will be sending out invites to a party to package and ship copies of *Remembering Vonda* to out-of-town posse members. I wish I could be there for that.

Our visit was short—Friday evening through Monday morning. We spent Saturday evening with Jane and others at Vonda's house, getting things ready for the move to The Mountaineers

auditorium on Sunday. Eileen Gunn and John Berry were there. I was glad that I had waited to publish the final version of *Remembering Vonda* before talking with John. He had a couple excellent suggestions. We met Debbie Notkin, Alan Bostick, and Nancy Jane Moore for brunch Sunday morning at an ocean-side place near the memorial site. I knew most of the folks who attended the gathering and had so many good conversations. The memorial gathering ended about 5PM, at which point some of us adjourned to a local pub where we enjoyed the beautiful weather talking around an outdoor table. (Amazingly the weather was clear, gorgeous and bug-free all weekend; we saw Mt. Ranier frequently.) Andy and Carrie were among the folks who joined us at the pub and we ended up taking a ride with them back to their house, which we'd never seen before. What a great house! We had a good, longer conversation with them, and then Ubered back to our hotel where we packed and got ready to head home the next day.

Jeanne and Scott
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