

Madison FOURSQUARE



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Bike Accident

[SC] It was stupid.

I started biking this season earlier than I had in the last couple years. I aimed to go on a ride around Madison bike paths at least once a week. During our rainy late spring and early summer, I was sometimes lucky to get out even that often. I was working on going on gradually longer rides and using higher gears.

I don't have fancy bike clothes. Just old green shorts and some old t-shirts. My bike is a fairly ordinary, road-style Bianchi Boardwalk that I bought at the now defunct Yellow Jersey on State St. many years ago thinking that I might eventually start biking to work, but never did. It's in excellent condition largely because I rarely rode it when I was still working. I took it up again after I retired in 2017.

I have had some great rides this year, discovering Madison's extensive bike path system and seeing the city from some new angles and, often, riding on drop-dead beautiful days. I finally worked my way out to the fringes of town. A couple weeks ago, I took a ride out the city's Southwest Bike Path to where it basically ends well south of the beltline, beyond Verona Road and Allied Drive to a point where it intersects with the State Military Ridge Trail, the Badger State Trail, the State Capital Trail and the city's Cannonball bike path. There is even a little roundabout with a road sign in the middle pointing out each trail. I came back home along the Cannonball trail that day because I needed a permit to use the state trail system. The next week I bought a permit and planned my first trip on a state trail. I decided to ride on the State Capital trail which runs east-west starting in Monona and running south at the beltline to Lake Farm County Park then it turns west through the fields, meadows, patches of timber and wetlands



of the Nine Springs E-way to meet up at the previously mentioned trail intersection, about 10 miles. Add on to that riding across town to the start of the trail and returning across town at the end it would be close to a 25 mile ride. It would be my longest ride yet so I started at 8AM even though that meant negotiating some commuter bike path traffic on my way across town to the start of the trail.

I had no idea what State Trails were like. Judging from our state roads and highways, the state bike trail could be in rough condition. They could possibly not even be paved, or badly broken up. I knew I was a bit spoiled riding on city streets and paved bike paths all the time, but I figured the bike and I were up to whatever, as long as it did not require a mountain bike.

It was a beautiful morning, though I knew it was supposed to turn hot by afternoon. Once on the State Trail, I was dazzled. The trail itself was in excellent shape, all smooth, paved asphalt with center line. It looked like it had either just been finished or very recently re-paved. And the ride was outstanding. Almost all out in the country winding through fields and woods and only occasionally crossing roads. Bike traffic was light. I found my new favorite ride. I zoomed down it.

Less than halfway down the trail I came to a road crossing. A two lane road divided running under a bridge that carried multilane Hwy 14 traffic. There were no cars, so I crossed the first lane and stopped on the median. A large city truck rumbled up in the second lane, stopped and he politely waved me across. This is the stupid part. Having stopped in high gear, I stood on the bike to get started, and quickly gained speed crossing out of his way but did not notice that the bike path on the other side took an immediate sharp left turn. I was going way too fast already. I chose not to jam on the brakes, but to slow and attempt to ride it out, but as soon as my front tire left the trail I pitched violently to

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]

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the right and landed shoulder first in the gravel and grass. I had a helmet on, so my head was fine, even my glasses were okay. A passing cyclist insisted I stand up before he moved on. Though I felt something was wrong with my shoulder, I was not in a lot of pain so I concluded that I hadn't broken anything. I waved him off after I got back up. The bike had survived rather well. One brake was broken along with one reflector, but the front wheel was not bent, only the fender was slightly bent. At this point, I may have been a bit dazed and confused. I decided I should ride to a place where I could call Jeanne to pick me up where she could get to me, and if I had to, I could lock up the bike if we could not get it into the car. I had passed one or two such places already, but instead of going back I chose to continue down the trail. I started riding not realizing that I was heading into the most wilderness-like part of the ride. I rode for a couple miles, much more slowly, all the time my right shoulder growing more painful. I eventually realized that I was going to have to stop soon. The trail started running along side a quiet street. I followed it as far as I could to a T intersection with street signs. This would have to do. I got off and called Jeanne. She is very good with GPS, she would find me. I parked my bike off the trail and stood under the street sign. Across the intersection were some residential homes. After standing under the sign for a while a young woman with a baby in her arms came across to ask me if I was okay and did I need anything. I admitted that I'd had an accident and injured my shoulder, but my partner was coming to get me and that I would be okay. She went back home. A few minutes later she came back, still carrying the baby, and handed me an ice pack and explained that she was a nurse. That ice pack was my new best friend all the way to the hospital. Lots of bikers came by me on the trail and, especially after I got the ice pack, asked me how I was. I love being reminded there are a lot of good people in the world. When Jeanne found me, we were confronted with what to do with the bike. We don't keep our bike rack on the car all the time because it's a pain in the ass unless we absolutely must transport bikes. We could take off the front tire and stick the bike in the trunk, but I did not think either Jeanne or I, and possibly not both of us together, could manage that. Along comes a couple on a two-person bike. They stopped, the guy instantly jumped off, and helped us get it into our trunk. Like I said before about good people.

After that it was just a matter of going to the emergency room, getting x-rayed and finding out I had fractured my collarbone (right clavicle). They gave me a sling, some meds and sent us on our way with a follow up appointment to Ortho. Jeanne had a smart idea of getting the bike out of the trunk by dropping it off at the bike shop on our way home and have them help us. Jeff at Revolution bikes on Atwood Avenue took a look at me in my sling and said that although the bike did not need a lot of repair, he would take a couple weeks to get back to me that it was done. More nice people. Where do they all come from?

So now I'm on the sidelines. Six to eight weeks for the bone to heal unless something goes wrong. Possibly as long as three months to be back to 100%. I hope to be biking again at least by fall. I desperately want to take the State Capital trail again, a little slower this time. I don't think there is a very profound moral to this story. I like to ride fast, that is true, but I'm usually more careful than this. Maybe I needed a stupid accident to remind me to not take my safety, and my luck at skirting trouble, for granted. I know this experience has left me with a new perspective.

[JG] Scott says it was a "stupid accident" but the emergency ward doctor laughed and said "oh no, we have a much higher threshold of 'stupid' here. You weren't even drunk."

Comments on Turbo #396

Cover-Andy Hooper/Bill Rotsler

[JG] Rotsler had a really lovely, clean style. I have always admired it a lot. What surprised me about your inside-cover essay was the info that he wrote Tom Swift books under the name Victor Applegate. I read a large number of those books during my pre-teen years and wonder if any of them were by Bill. I checked Wikipedia, but Rotsler is not listed as one of the authors who wrote under the Applegate pseudonym.

[SC] Great covers and essay on Bill Rostler, Andy.

Jim Hudson + Diane Martin

[JG] Looking forward to your party next year!

[SC] I am excited by the news that you are willing to take over as OE of the apa, Jim. I officially support such a move.

I appreciate your suggestion of a Lexus-type SUV option. On our first trip to APT this year, Barb Gilligan suggested we look at a Prius. I almost rejected that idea out of hand, but we ended up renting one for a weekend trip to IA and found that we liked it more than we expected. Hard to argue with 50 miles to the gallon (especially impressive if you've been driving an old Lincoln Continental for many years) and they're much less utilitarian than they used to be. Not sure yet what we will do, but the options seem to be expanding.

Greg Rihn

[JG] I don't think *All Is True* has been shown in Madison yet. At least I hope not. I definitely want to see that movie.

Thanks for the review of *Carl Brandon*!

[SC] The theater experience of the year so far for me was APT's production of George Bernard Shaw's *The Man of Destiny*. It was a ninety minute verbal sparring match over ideas, motives and actions between a young Napoleon Bonparte and a mysterious young woman. It was fast and furious and I loved it.

We also went to the funny, but leisurely paced Jim Jarmusch

zombie movie *The Dead Don't Die*. It had a fabulous cast and lots of humorous and sometimes snarky comments to make, but it moved along like molasses.

Georgie Schnobrich

[JG] I remember that when we were little and spent hours and hours outside, my brothers and I tanned to a very dark brown, definitely darker than the skin of many people of color. I remember remarking on it to myself in a sort of unconcerned way. But at the time we lived in an all-white suburb (no people of color as far as I knew at the time), and I doubt that, in context, anyone mistook us for anything other than Caucasian. I suspect that CONTEXT may explain a lot when some of the cues of whiteness are disguised.

I like "Dark Season"!

[SC] I was struck by your observation about Lisa, that she was possibly speaking the language of reason to people who were hearing with the language of emotion. That's an interesting concept.

Jae Adams

[JG] Interesting tales of medicine and exercise set in a world in which you don't know whether or not any of the professionals who give you advice are actually basing their advice on true information about you. Results may or may not be the effect of advice taken. Your reality may or may not be interesting or useful to them. Actually, I would find this sort of scary, but you seem to be amused by the whole deal.

Lisa Freitag

[JG] Maybe more important than cataloging past instances in which one has stood up for what is right despite personal cost--is to get ready to stand up in the future. I think all of us may soon have to consider taking stands against Trumpism if we haven't already. Like you, I can't think of too many times in which a stand I've taken cost me much or had a huge effect on others, but I think I care less than you do about how or whether other people might judge those actions.

I will be very interested to hear whether you get a job offer. I suspect that your thoughts and ideas on the questions glowed with obvious sincerity and you may have made a much more positive impression than you think.

Steve Johnson

[JG] Thanks for the lovely tribute to your uncle Archie.

[SC] I also appreciated your excellent zine dedicated to your late uncle.

Jeannie Bergmann

[JG] No, we have not been in contact with George, Suzette Haden Elgin's husband. But I got hold of her daughter, Rebecca Elgin, who has enthusiastically endorsed our project and given us permission to publish Suzette's work. Rebecca has also agreed to write a new introduction to the dictionary! If you like, I can give you Rebecca's contact info. I'm sure she would love to know that the SFPA has named an award after her mother.

Could it be that the older lady from your live poetry crit group was confused by the 2 column format and wondered if she should read across or down?

Thanks for the poems!

Kim + Kathi Nash

[JG] The party was much fun, as usual. Thanks for doing it every year!

[SC] Yes, thanks for the party!

Andy Hooper

[JG] Fascinating tour through Antietam, thank you.

It was great seeing you and Carrie while we visited in Seattle. We were unsure how or if we were going to fit in all the conversations we wanted to have during our short weekend stay, but are very happy with how things turned out.

I do not remember my article "Something Ineluctably Masculine." Hmm.

Nice to see Cheryl Cline's article on which zines fans tend to save. I remember reading it. Cheryl asked me afterwards if she had shamed me out of throwing out stuff and I answered, "You were trying to shame me? I thought you were complimenting me." I'm sorry to have lost contact with Cheryl. I seem to recall that she contributed fanzine reviews to *Janus*. And I visited her and Lynn one year. No one told me how much hotter Concord is, on the other side of the coastal mountains from San Francisco. I can still remember taking the BART to visit Cheryl and Lynn in Concord: the look of shock on my face when the train doors opened and the blast furnace air hit me in the face provoked a burst of laughter from my hosts. Other than that I think we had a lovely visit.

[SC] Visiting you and Carrie and your home was great fun. The length of the trip to Seattle we planned seemed sensible for the purpose, but the whole time we were there I wished we had much more time to stay. We will be back.

Carrie and I should form a support group of people who think swimming for pleasure is overrated.

One of my travel goals is to visit at least one Civil War battlefield. Your trip report was superb, thank you.

What's New - Jeanne

Reunion

My 50th High School reunion is coming up in August. Many years ago, I attended New Berlin High School's 5th reunion, but haven't gone to one since. None of the friends I hung out with in school attended the 5th and most of the "reunions" that followed were billed as "get-togethers" at a local New Berlin tavern; I assume that they mostly attracted people who never moved away from southeast Wisconsin. But the big 5-0 seems like something I should do and



High School JG

will likely enjoy. I expect that a greater proportion of my 350 classmates will be most likely to attend this one. Upon request I sent out a one-page bio (with photos included: "then," "now," and one of Scott and me) to Mike Casper, who is organizing the event and will be putting together a booklet containing the bios. He picked up immediately on my skills and asked for help fixing scans from the yearbooks and putting together pdfs containing images from our Freshman, Sophomore, Junior and Senior yearbooks. That's been fun.

I've been looking through pictures in both my old scrapbooks and yearbooks as I fix and crop images and I'm actually a little surprised. I don't often talk about my teen years, but when I do it's to recount memories of being an extremely shy girl with few friends or admirers. Turns out that my classmates may have had a different impression of me, according to notes written on the back of school photos I traded with other girls (no guys, the no-dating memory is accurate): "Brain," "sweet," "great artist," and "best swimmer." In my memory, I didn't become visible to other people until I went to college, determined to craft a whole new, confident, assertive persona. But I now think I was less invisible than I thought but really lacking in self-esteem. Interesting.

I actually had a taste of how unreliable my self understanding was when I met Bridget Pozarski about 5 years after graduating from high school while I was shopping for my mom at a grocery store near my folks' house. Bridget was a fantastic artist; I loved her style and everything she

drew. In fact, one day when she was writing something on the blackboard in front of class, I noted and admired how she formed her lower-case "a." From that day onward, up to this day, I also wrote my lower-case "a" in the same way. Anyway, one day at Sentry Foods, we bumped into one another in the checkout lane and caught up with one another. We

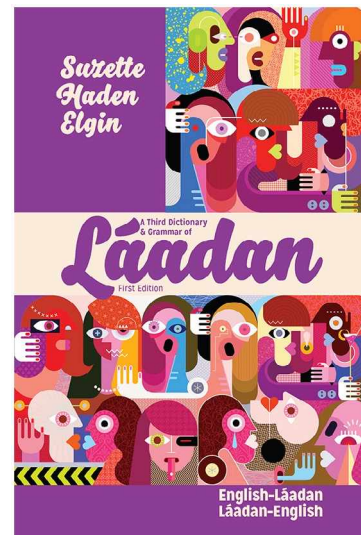


both asked one another, "Did you major in art in college?" We both said no. Talking at the same time we both said the same thing: "I decided not to major in art because I would never be as good an artist as you." And then we stared at one another with half smiles and a bit of sadness.

Nowadays, I usually enjoy interacting with new people, which is what most of my classmates will be, regardless of the fact that I supposedly knew many of them 50 years ago. I'm much less afraid of a social situation like this than I might have been years ago. And it will be interesting to see how people's lives turned out, for instance, whether Bridget found her way back to art as I did.

Láadan dictionary

Things have been moving faster with Diane Martin's and my project to publish an updated version of Suzette Haden Elgin's Dictionary and Grammar. After chasing down way too many dead ends, I finally obtained Rebecca Haden's contact information from The Feminist Press, which is reprinting Elgin's *Native Tongue* series. Rebecca is Suzette's daughter and she very enthusiastically endorsed our project and gave us permission to use Suzette's writing. In addition, Suzanna Sturgis (professional editor and former WisCon GoH) has signed on to do a thorough copy-editing and proofreading of the dictionary. Yay! I told Suzanna that I wanted to pay her fairly, but rather than cash, she suggested barter. So it looks like I will be doing a logo for a political group with which Suzanna is active, AND will lay out and design Suzanna's novel that she hopes to finish and self-publish sometime this year. (So now I know what my next book design project will be!) Rebecca will write the intro for the dictionary by mid August; then Suzanna will have her way with it; then Diane will go through it; and then in early 2020 we will go to press. It will be offered as a print-on-demand book, with all proceeds going to the Science Fiction Poetry Association, which was founded by Suzette Haden Elgin. And by the way, Jeannie Bergmann is vice-president and webmaster of the SFPA.





Taming of the Shrew

The last time we saw *The Taming of the Shrew* at American Players Theater I vowed: this is the last time. I can't take it anymore. There is no way to tell this story in a way that disguises or reinterprets or gives a positive spin to the basic story, which is one of abuse and misogyny.

If you are unfamiliar or have (mercifully) forgotten the main storyline, it is this: Petruchio visits Padua in search of a wife. His father has recently died and it's time to settle down. He hears that a woman named Kate, daughter of a wealthy merchant, Baptista, is available. Significantly Kate comes with a very large dowry/bribe. Dad Baptista is so eager to marry off his very disruptive, disrespectful daughter that he is willing to sell her to the highest bidder. Furthermore, he has vowed not to allow his younger, much more agreeable and popular daughter, Bianca, to entertain any suitors until Kate is married. Before Petruchio even meets Kate, he declares that he will tame and marry Kate. The majority of the story is the supposedly comic tale of how Kate, the shrew, is tamed, and becomes a docile, loving wife. Ta da!—"Happy ending."

I heard about the Royal Shakespeare Company's new version of *The Taming of the Shrew*: their plan was to do a gender swap: All the major male characters were swapped for female characters played by female actors. In spite of my resolution, I found myself intrigued. Might this version cast a spotlight on the essential element of abuse and cause the audience to more fully appreciate what a perverse story it is? So we bought tickets to the one and only filmed performance shown in Madison. As it turned out, the only night that it was offered was *also* the night of the first Democratic presidential candidates' debate, and maybe for this reason, Scott and I made up the entire audience. No



worries about disturbing anyone if we talked aloud during *this* performance!

If the RSC's version of *The Taming of the Shrew* had been about the performance (in other words, if show had been a play within a play—and allowed us to witness the conversations among actors and show runners as they created this gender-swapped version of Shakespeare's play), it might have had the effect that aroused my interest. I can imagine actors feeling suddenly very uncomfortable with the lines. Instead, the effect of this play was very different than what I anticipated.

Although the actors are dressed in traditional Elizabethan costume, the play is in fact set in fantasy world: it is staged in an alternate reality in which women all over the world (not just in Padua) hold all the power. The world is a matriarchy: women control wealth; men are totally dependent on mothers and wives. Women of wealth are educated and have access to all careers; men's value lies only in the coin of their marriageability. No woman or man in this world has ever

existed in a different world in which the power structure was reversed.

“Kate” is still Kate (I think because there are just too many lines—like, “Kiss me, Kate!”—in which changing the name would have damaged Shakespeare’s poetry). But all the other gender-swapped characters have their names altered to match their gender: Pertruchio becomes Petruchia; Bianco becomes Bianca; and so on. But there was a significant aspect of the original play that was NOT changed, and this is where, for me, the gender swap, offered some really interesting insights: ***The play was performed as written.*** This may not seem significant, but I think that every other version of *The Taming of the Shrew* that I’ve ever seen has attempted to soften or spin the story of how Petruchio tames Kate so that it seems more playful than cruel. It is suggested that Kate is somehow in on the joke and does not actually lose her feisty character. Or sometimes Petruchio and Kate try to convince us that they have fallen in love at first glance and their parrying is really just a kinky kind of foreplay. But the Royal Shakespeare Theater does no softening, spinning or rationalizing. The story is what it is.

Petruchia insults and physically pummels Kate to force him to agree to the marriage. After they are wed, she literally ties Kate up in ropes and drags him from their wedding celebration before food is served. She forces Kate to ride through the night, and even after Kate’s horse is injured, insists that they push on through snow and cold on foot. Once home, Petruchia starves Kate; he is not allowed to eat for several days. Petruchia interrupts all of Kate’s attempts to sleep. Kate clothes were damaged during the arduous journey, and he has nothing to wear but a nightshirt, but Petruchia will not allow Kate any clean, warm clothes. Petruchia provides a tiny stool for Kate to sit on and verbally abuses Kate, all the while pretending that she is protecting her new husband: the food is rancid; the bed is not comfortable enough; the clothing is not stylish enough, etc. Petruchia dangles the possibility of visiting Kate’s home, for which Kate is desperate, but she then withdraws the offer when Kate contradicts her and will not agree that the sun is the moon, among other bizarre demands.

What became clear during these sequences is that Petruchia is torturing Kate. In fact the actor who plays Kate comes to resemble a concentration camp victim through the course of the abuse. His shirt is filthy; his features are gaunt and pale, he suffers from exposure, starvation, sleep deprivation and severe psychological abuse. It’s no wonder that he finally chooses to say anything his tormentor demands, that day is night, etc. That’s what victims of torture do.

I realize that even as I have squirmed uncomfortably at performances of more traditional versions of *The Taming of the Shrew*, I could nevertheless understand the source of the “comedy” of the play: the battle between the sexes as vaudeville entertainment in which the woman supposedly only pretends to want freedom and power, but whose knees melt when a manly man sweeps her off her feet. *This*

version, however, was no comedy, at least not in the main story. (Shakespeare’s subplots inspired lots of laughs in the London audience.) The main story was simply horrific.

Nevertheless, the acting was superb. The mostly female cast obviously had a great time strutting about in their Elizabethan garb, strapped with swords, and portraying the most powerful members of society. Claire Price, who played Petruchia, never lost her amused grin and swaggering attitude, but became ever more sinister as we saw how she treated Kate. Joseph Arkley, who played Kate, did a great job portraying a rebellious, smart young man who undergoes terrible abuse and is finally broken.

I can’t tell you that I recommend RSC’s production to you, but I guess Scott and I are glad that we saw the show. We spent hours talking about it. And since the night we saw the movie, my mind has been busily constructing a behind-the-scenes version of this gender-swapped version of *The Taming of the Shrew*. I’ve imagined a handsome well-known actor famous for his portrayal of Petruchio, someone who has always defended the play, who is cast as a male Kate. The conversations among the actors between scenes would be fascinating. My imagined version would end with Kate, a captive of terrorists, displaying his obedience in the final scene by reading his scripted “confession” to the cameras.

Better not end on such a desolate note.



Pie

Strawberry rhubarb pie, yum! Next pie: peach!

Jeanne and Scott
July 2019