

Madison foursquare

44

Foursquare

[JG] I should have mentioned that the image of the roses on our first page in the last issue was a manipulated image based on a photo taken by Lucy Huntzinger of a bouquet of flowers from her garden. Also that the image of our house on the first page of *Foursquare* #42 was a manipulated image based on a Google Maps photo; thus the old white car in the driveway.

Cmts Turbo #407 Cover

[SC] I picked up our apa first thing Sunday morning last month. It took me a minute to figure out what was going on with the cover, but the result for me was a big smile. Thanks for brightening the start of my day, **Jim** and **Ruth**.

Gregory G.H. Rihn

[JG] Yeah, we are also sad about missing the APT season. Are you and Georgie going to watch any of APT's streaming reading series? They will be available starting at 7 pm, Friday nights performed and recorded live. APT's Core Acting Company, alongside some other great APT actors, will be reading a selection of plays via Zoom. The readings will be streamed live and recorded by PBS Wisconsin. Play readings will be posted on Fridays at 7:00 PM CT on their website, <<https://pbswisconsin.org>> and free to view, with all



Walking in the arboretum

This issue with a slightly enlarged type size, *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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Scott Custis [SC] and Jeanne Gomoll [JG]

June 2020 for *Turbo-Charged Party Animal* #408.

six plays available July 17 through July 26. Direct links will be available on the PBS Wisconsin website the day of the readings. Perhaps we could organize a post-show discussion on Zoom for one of the shows for the APT patrons among us? (**Jim**, **Diane**, **Jae**, anyone else?)

June 12 Chekove One Acts

June 19 Shakespeare's *As You Like It*

June 26 Shaw's *Arms and the Man*

July 3 Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*

July 10 Brown's *Are You Now Or Have You Ever Benn*

By the time the June *Turbo* deadline happens, the first two productions, the Chekov and *As You Like It*, will already have aired. We will probably see the Shakespeare

and the Shaw; I generally avoid Chekhov (now more than ever) because it seems like his plays are mostly about people trapped in their own homes, bored out of their minds, being bitchy toward one another. Much too on point for the current time. Post-*Turbo* deadline, the last three plays will stream. I am very happy to know that the plays will be available for more than just Friday at 7, because there are a few other special shows on offer on Friday nights in the next month: Jon Stewart's live streamed show, *Irresistible* on June 26 and *Hamilton* on July 3. I am hopeful that both *Irresistible* and *Hamilton* will be available for more than just one day and time. The final APT production will air on July 10: *An Improbable Fiction*, by James De Vita. I am really looking forward to that one. That's the one I suggest we might want to



get together for a post-show Zoom discussion. Here's a summary of the play from APT's website:

A world-premiere reading of James DeVita's new play, told largely in Shakespeare's own words. It's plague time, and Shakespeare's characters are out of sorts (and out of work). Several of our favorites reunite at The Boar's Head Tavern to celebrate life, and ruminate on the state of the world. (Featuring: Brian Mani (Falstaff), Sarah Day (Mistress Quickly). Also featuring Tracy Michelle Arnold, Nate Burger, Gavin Lawrence, Melisa Pereyra.)

[SC] RE: the Wisconsin Supreme Court decision and Trumpian state Republicans, do you think the legislature could craft a law to fix the court's decision on emergency powers for a future governor? Not that the current legislature will do anything like that, but could they restore this power for a future Republican governor if they wanted to?

Pretty harrowing Devil's Lake story. I have never heard a rattlesnake rattle in the wild, only at zoos or fairs, but it is surely one of the most instantly recognizable danger sounds there is.

Georgie Schnobrich

[JG] I love the idea of speculating about what the world will be like in the post-Covid-19 world. Most of us who attended Corflu in March indulged in a lot of speculating, but even though that was after we all

knew that things were going to change, it was—as someone said in this apa (**Jae, Hope**)—really, still the BeforeTime. Even now, from the perspective of those of us who survive and look back several years in the future, THIS will probably seem closer to BeforeTime than to whatever comes next. In any case you inspired me to do some extrapolation of my own.

Your speculation that group-living/retirement brochures might feature closed-off, protected personal areas rather than cozy group photos, made me think about other marketing images: For instance, college marketing materials aimed at stay-at-home students—emphasizing exclusive online access to big-name scholars. More than just granting a degree, perhaps colleges will tempt graduates with prestigious certifications whose achievement might guarantee employment. Mentor programs might be offered to students with experts and professionals from all over the world: In their Junior year, a student might submit preferences (or bids?) for mentors of their choice. Different schools might offer social access to their students (at the most expensive levels) to connect them with elites in government or industry or entertainment, depending on the student's field. (After all, colleges will need *some* way to continue to attract big donations from wealthy alumni.) I expect that many colleges will find a way to create a number of service levels to its students: coach to first class to private jet levels. That way, they will be able to accommodate all income levels, but since the students won't physically share classroom or dorm space together, it won't feel as ... undemocratic as it will actually be.

In fact, I bet that all changes in the post-Covid-19 world will come in several flavors depending on people's class and income level.

I think all our lives will change profoundly, but differently according to our access to individual resources. I am intrigued by the new phenomenon of "isolation pods," or "Covid bubbles"—i.e., groups of people who band together after self-isolating for a specific period of time, and then pledge to follow the same social distancing rules toward outsiders. I read about a nursing home that has successfully protected its tenants by creating a Covid bubble for them that is shared by all members of the staff. Everyone who works at the nursing home lives together in nearby housing and isolates themselves from the outside world. Drastic measures, but it works. The longer we go without a vaccine or treatment to the virus, the more attractive such arrangements will get—because they will allow members to share childcare duties,

reduce living costs, combat loneliness, and enlarge their social circle within isolation. But once this idea gets institutionalized (after a year or more?), it might mutate according to class level. I imagine wealthy folks (say the top 20%) building or reinforcing existing gated communities with regular virus testing, limited access to outsiders, and all services contracted by a gatekeeper. Middle class types might emulate those gated communities, but with less stringent isolation and less elaborate services; I imagine that some Covid bubbles might achieve more cachet than others and symbolize and enforce social status in the same way that a degree from an ivy league school does now. Parents would want to help their kids get into the right schools so they could start on a profitable career AND join the right sort of Covid bubble. Maybe there would be a “rush” season for applicants when some Covid bubbles had openings: excitement! gossip! anxiety! On the other hand, the story might be very different for struggling working people, who might feel fortunate to band together with residents of the same floor on an apartment building or with nearby neighbors.

You suggested that hand-washing sinks might be installed right inside the door. But I’m thinking that maybe UV Light Sanitizer stations might be more likely, especially if they turn out to work well (I haven’t heard of any studies yet)—no plumbing work necessary. According to our furnace and AC guy, Mack, (he inspected our air conditioner recently), lots of folks are already having UV lights installed just inside their doors, where shoes, hands and parcels can be sterilized. There are plenty of ads selling portable UV sterilizers. In fact, if a dose of UV light actually does a good job of killing the virus, I can imagine portapotties and public restrooms being fitted with UV machines: every time someone leaves the toilet cubical, the toilet not only flushes but the space gets flooded with high doses of UV light. Toilet stalls would have to be built with floor-to-ceiling walls and doors, but again, *if it works, if it actually kills the virus in water droplets*, this could be a game-changer for outdoor events where people want to stay a while and not worry about running home to use their own rest room, or for roadside convenience stores that rely on travelers making pit stops during their travels. Who knows, maybe UV sanitizers would become standard equipment in all restrooms in public and commercial buildings and maybe even private homes.

It will be interesting to see what changes occur in modes of transportation. I bet that if car manufacturers built self-driving, partitioned vans (each partition with



its own separate air circulation system) and if an Uber- or Lyft-like company ran fleets of them in urban areas, they would become quite popular with people afraid of crowds in busses and subways. It’s harder to envision workable systems for airplanes, though I wouldn’t be surprised if very long distance air travel became too expensive except for the wealthy and corporate customers. Air travel might end up limited to the wealthy. (All seats would be first class, maybe with seat partitions and robotic stewards.) I think sleeping cars on trains have already gotten more popular and I would bet that trains might see a bit of a revival in the post-Covid world, especially if they figure out a way to economically use train space safely.

I am skeptical about your guess/hope that the surviving, possibly immune population, post-Covid-19, will be valued more than the larger BeforeTime population. My skepticism alarm goes off here, in the same way it did when “futurists” during the 1960s predicted that labor-saving automation inventions would save so much time that our workweeks would shrink to 2-3 days and we’d have to figure out how to use a surplus of leisure time. Right. I think that industry will speed up their adoption of automation in order to make up for fewer workers. I also think that corporations will figure out a way to insure that various populations—immigrant, prison, economically strapped—will do necessary labor as cheaply as



possible. Unions are going to have a hard time in the future, especially if the job force in so many industries gets permanently scattered into at-home workspaces. It will be much harder to organize workers who don't congregate in big factories or office complexes. And with weaker unions—not to mention the huge advantage that big corporations will have gained during these next couple years while small businesses are failing all around us—individual workers are going to have a hard time leveraging or even getting their true value recognized.

Scott and I got our masks from Etsy, mostly. After gloomily surveying the kinds of masks I could make without sewing, and deciding not to go that route, we bought two masks from a woman offering them for \$2 each through our NextDoor list. Then, Scott discovered that he has the kinds of ears that don't really work with behind-the-ear elastic straps and I wanted a couple extra masks, so I looked on Etsy, and *voilà* there was a vast selection, really quite amazing. The behind-the-ear elastic strap works for me, but Scott is using the kind with two long ribbons that tie behind his head and neck. He likes them, not only because of the ear thing, but because it accommodates his beard. All our masks have accordion folds, so they accommodate nose and chin pretty well. Neither of us likes the fact that our glasses steam up so easily. And I would eventually like to find some masks that include some kind of filter in order to feel safer than I do wearing simple fabric masks.

I'm very glad to hear that you are getting back to drawing! I would love to see your new work if you want to share it.

Marilyn Holt

[SC] "Life goes on..." is exactly right. It's good to know you and **Cliff** are getting on okay and staying safe. The warmer weather here is nice for getting out for our (almost) daily walks, and I'm enjoying working around the yard more than I have in a very long time. My occasional forays out into "the rest of the world" are sometimes puzzling and surreal. Last month I took our new Kia in for its very first checkup since we bought it. I planned to wait in the waiting area, which was just to the side of the dealership area, a big high-ceiling open space with cars on display. It was not a constrained space at all, but when I walked in almost all the other waiting customers were wearing masks like me and had spaced themselves out. What I noticed as I sat there for an hour and a half was that absolutely none of the dealer staff had masks or gloves. Not the sales and service staff running around all over and greeting customers, nor the phone clerks and cashiers stationed at desks. I only dealt with one service manager and got close to no one else, so I think my risk was slight but it was a little unnerving after receiving a pile of heartfelt emails from Kia about how seriously they were taking the health crisis!

Carrie Root

[JG] We also tend to take our walks on sidewalks in quiet neighborhoods. I am quite enjoying seeing streets, homes, gardens and yard decor I've never seen before. But both of us are a bit flummoxed about the missing sidewalks in Madison. I have always known that sidewalks are a big issue for some homeowners, especially for those who originally purchased homes in towns that don't build sidewalks, when those towns are absorbed by an expanding city that does build sidewalks per the American Disability Act. Sidewalks require construction, maintenance and repair, all of which are billed to the homeowner. Blooming Grove, which does not require sidewalks, may once have been a cohesive town, but, by the time I moved here in the 1970s, it already resembled an archipelago of very tiny, misshapen lots scattered within the eastern part of the City of Madison's borders. Even today, parts of Blooming Grove continue to evaporate as the city claims them one by one. Former Blooming Grove no-sidewalk streets got grandfathered in... until the streets need major repairs. As major street repair occurs, sidewalk construction accompanies it, so gradually the old Blooming Grove streets are

being lined with sidewalks, much to the displeasure of some homeowners and the delight of people who use wheelchairs or otherwise depend upon accessible pedestrian routes. But there are a fair number of streets, actually *segments* of streets, on which a lawn extends from house to curb, making it look as if the sidewalk for the space of one or two houses has simply sunk beneath or been devoured by the grass. So sometimes when Scott and I settle on a neighborhood to explore with our daily walk, we discover new stretches of disappeared sidewalks.

I hope you are enjoying *Killing Eve*. Every season so far has been directed by a different woman and I have been utterly fascinated by it.

Re “You Could Die:” When Scott and I went to Hawaii with Kafryn Lieder and Craig Katz in 2018, Craig kept muttering that there should be a sign that said, “Hawaii is trying to kill you.” I collected some photos I had taken in Hawaii and made a calendar out of them to give Kafryn and Craig as a gift. One of the photos included a certain sign.



I’ve made a few pizza crusts, but mostly I’ve avoided baking bread or rolls. There are such excellent bakeries in town that we want to support (in addition to our favorite restaurants) that I have rationalized buying from them, rather than selfishly (cough, cough) baking my own. I’ve been baking more dessert things though.

Andy Hooper

[JG] Sorry, I tried but I had to give up on reading to the end of “A Shining Vandal on a Hill.” I admire your enthusiasm and amazing research, and I take to heart



that it is actually All My Fault for having started you on the path of thinking you could write about anything at all that interests you, but I must say uncle here....

I loved loved loved Randy’s “Potflu: The Feast of Calabashes.” Thanks so much for that.

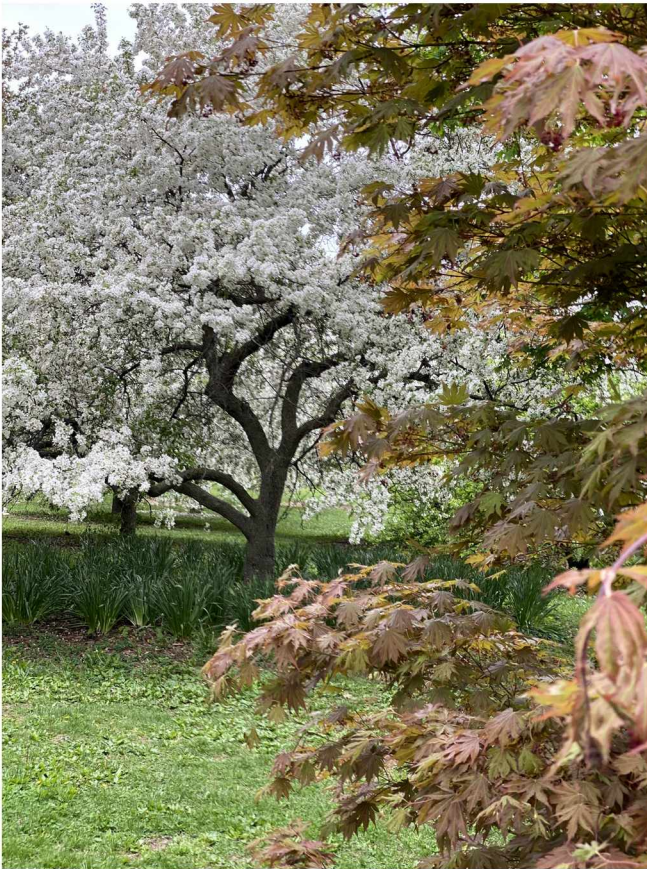
[SC] I read your whole Vandal piece and rather liked it. It may have helped that for the last month and a half I have been immersed in late 17th century history as I work my way through Neil Stephenson’s awesome *Baroque Cycle* trilogy (and looking forward to beginning the last volume after I finish my apa comments.) Your Vandal article was a deep dive into a period of history I knew very little about, so I was hooked. Though I won’t be joining you on a miniature game battlefield, I appreciate the impressive research you did for this.

Lisa Freitag

[JG] You and Greg have been much on my mind since hearing how Dreamhaven so narrowly missed utter destruction. We were so sorry to hear that Uncle Hugo’s had burned down. I have searched out and read with some relief as much as I could find out about how things are going for you (and for Terry Garey and Denny Lien, Eleanor Arnason, and David Emerson, and other Minneapolis friends), but I will be glad to read your account when you are able to share it with us. I am glad, however, that so far it sounds like you and the store survived and that so many of your friends stepped up to help clean and repair the damage.

“Masks, sanitizer, remdesivir, and vaccines are all forms of magical thinking.” Indeed.

What a harrowing account of your stomachache, possibly a heart attack, and the practical financial calculations that you considered before deciding



to refuse the CT Angiogram. You are right, this so-called choice of health vs pocketbook should not be something that anyone should have to make. Damn.

[SC] It may sound like a weak rationalization, but health care has been a very hot political topic ever since Obamacare was first passed. Arguably it was health care concerns that returned the House of Representatives to Democratic control in 2018. The Democratic party has been forced to further evolve toward better health care options since then. Maybe we can actually look forward to change for the better in the near future.

Jeannie Bergmann

[JG] You've never heard of cat-wrapping? It all started when **Diane Martin** was doing some sewing in her living room around 1974. I was a witness. She took a piece of discarded fabric and wrapped it several times around the torso of her cat, UW. "Oh look," she said, "a cat mummy." Then she set UW on the arm of her chair. UW looked a bit scared, very uncertain, and then promptly fell over sideways onto the floor. He fell onto his side, not onto his feet like cats are famous for doing. It was very surprising. Then Diane wrapped her other cat. (Sorry, I don't recall its name.) To this day, I am surprised that she also set that cat upon

the arm of her chair rather than on the floor. That cat also fell over sideways from the arm of the chair and landed on its side, not its feet. Its expression was ... embarrassed. After that I began traveling with a long scarf, even in the midst of summer, so I could wrap any cats I met. It was an experiment, you understand. Purely for scientific enlightenment. My favorite cat to wrap belonged to my brother Dan. This cat fell over, as usual, but then dragged himself over to a wall, completely unable to walk normally. When he got to the wall, he sort of propped himself up against it and leaned on it as he moved forward. "Yeah, I always walk like this." Once, Jon Singer and I did a cat-wrapping demo at Minicon; Jon played the cat, crouching on top of a table on the stage. I wrapped him. He fell over. Several cats eventually took pissy revenge upon me, so I stopped doing that. And eventually someone came up with a sort of scientific explanation for the falling-down phenomenon, i.e., that involves their balancing mechanism located in their torsos. I forget what exactly that was....

You mentioned the South Korean series, *Kingdom*. I recommend the South Korean movie, *Train to Busan*. It's a very tightly written, good zombie movie that mostly takes place on one train.

People, including you, keep talking about digitizing the *Pong* video that **Hope** and I did. That isn't actually a high priority for me. But I guess with several of you looking for ways to do it, I should look through my stuff and make sure I still have the videotape....

Joe Adams

[JG] I think it might be possible that you and I took the same Cultural Geography class from the same professor. (Also I lived on Brooks Street for two years. So many coincidences!) I took the class sometime in the fall of 1972 or spring of 1973. I also thought the professor was an excellent teacher and I also can't recall his name at the moment. However, at the time I was rather regretting my decision to major in Geography because it was only just then dawning on me that my career prospects did not involve canoeing down a river in a jungle to write ethnographic treatises on native populations, which is something the head of the Geography Department had done and enthralled me with his tales. Instead, it was becoming clear that if I continued into graduate school and did not opt to become a teacher, I would likely find work in a government planning agency working on such projects as determining how many gas stations were needed

in a given area of the city. Time to take a year off and think this through.... Good idea.

Your comment to **Marilyn** about a fictional boiling ocean is a subject that is currently at the top of my mind. Scott and I are reading Charlie Jane Anders' novel *The City in the Middle of the Night*. I am not nearly as enthralled with it as I was with her previous novel, *All the Birds in the Sky*, which could be read as a lyrical conversation between fantasy and science fiction. The story, however, was definitely fantasy, which was fine. I was impressed; I liked it a lot. This new book by Anders, *The City in the Middle of the Night*, reads as if it is supposed to be hard SF, but really it's as fantastical as her first novel. But certain aspects of the world building really frustrate me. The world is presented as a realistic, tidally locked planet. One side always faces the sun; the other always faces away. So the night side is super cold and dark and the day side is super hot and bright. People live in a narrow equator of dusk. According to various sources (not this book), I've read that a temperate band could be around 300 miles wide on an earth-sized planet, though the band seems considerably narrower in *The City*—wide enough for a medium-sized city, which a person could walk across in an hour or two. There is an ocean that straddles this strip: glaciers cover the northern part, water boils in the southern part, and boats sail through storms in the middle part. Oh and also, glaciers cover the whole dark side of the planet, Sigh. So many of the details did not add up: storms that blow up every once in a while. Glaciers that have ramps onto the ocean rather than cliff-like edges. Occasional rather than continuous storms. An oxygen-based atmosphere presumably sustained by flora that flourishes in the tiny amount of land in the temperate strip, in addition to weird clumps of flora seeded by natives in temperate strip volcanoes. Animals, plants, weapons, all elements in this novel, really, appear when and as needed by the plot with no attempt by the author to integrate them in a believable way to the novel's world. But lots of people apparently like this novel a great deal; I see that it was nominated for the Nebula.

Hope Kiefer and Karl Hailman

[JG] You're such a techie, Hope! You have my admiration for being able to set up the cables for Karl's office.

[SC] Back when I lived alone, I used to like working the 3 to midnight shift. At least if Karl is working from home, you are able to have dinner together in the evenings. For almost the first two years I worked for



the DOT, my hours were 4 pm to 2:30 am, which was pretty dismal shift for a couple. The good news was that it was a 4-day week and I was off every Friday, Saturday and Sunday. But the four days I worked I really did not see Jeanne much at all since I went to work before she got home, came home long after she went to bed and I was asleep when she went to work.

Karl, so the house you described was where you lived in Greenbelt? Or somewhere else? You sounded a little wistful for the rural life. Do you miss it?

Steven Vincent Johnson

[JG] Your ideas and comments in "Turn, Turn, Turn" are way, way, way above my head. But wow.

[SC] I'm afraid I'm with Jeanne regarding your work on orbital mechanics, way beyond me. Your graphics are very striking, however. I'm also impressed with your passion and focus on this project.

Walter Freitag

[JG] An excellent and fascinating treatise on knotweed. It feels like an allegory that might be applied to other invasive plants, ideas and people. I will definitely tune

in next season to see how your theories turned out in practice.

[SC] Judging by photos on the internet, we may have had some Japanese knotweed creeping into our backyard the last few years. I have been cutting them down or pulling them out when I encounter them but it has not escalated to outright war yet. Your essay contains some much appreciated wisdom on the best way to “engage” with the knotweed, as well as an interesting metaphor for applying the same rules for dealing with other intractable problems.

Jim Hudson & Diane Martin

[JG] The Låadan dictionary took more than several months as Jim guessed in your last apazine. I just checked my records and the first email I found talking about the dictionary was dated April 19, 2018. So that’s more than two years this project has been in progress!

I have been quite pleased with Apple TV+. We got a free year’s subscription with the purchase of a new Apple TV and there have been a bunch of shows that I will definitely be interested in following if they are renewed: *The Morning Show*, *For All Mankind*, *See*, *Dickinson*, and maybe *Servant*.

Oh my god, I never know what day it is! We had been doing our weekly shopping on Saturday for YEARS, but now we are doing it on Tuesday morning, and I always think it must be Saturday on Tuesday. And then there are most days when it takes me several minutes to figure out where we are in the week. Someone (**Kim Nash?**) suggested on Facebook that our pill boxes are helping us out in this. Get up in the morning, take pills in the next box; oh it must be Tuesday. Sigh.

[SC] Nice pictures on the garden expansion.

Re: your comments on “stressed and hiding at home.” I feel much the same. Going out of the house is always stressful, it always feels like risk-taking and never gets routine. I always have to make sure I really need to go, then make a plan, make sure I put on my mask (I have to tie mine on because I can’t use the elastic-bands-over-the-ears models) and avoid distractions or changes once underway. More like going on a mission than running an errand. Always easier to just stay home. As for socializing, can’t say I’m missing it all that much except for family. My sister lives alone with her cat. My brother is taking care of his wife who is recovering from her second stroke. He is taking strict precautions to protect her. Both of them have very limited direct contact with their kids and grandkids and friends which I know is very hard for them, so I call them frequently.

Catie Pfeifer

[JG] Sometimes, while reading a book for our book discussion group, I have wished that I could stop reading. Book discussion books are more likely than other books I read to be ones that I have no preconceptions about: when I like them, it is so wonderfully delightful, but when I don’t it can be a bit of a slog to finish. However I do always finish them in order to be able to talk cogently about them at book discussion. I have only walked out of a MOVIE once, and that film was Lina Wertmuller’s *Swept Away*. The plot involves a rich, bitchy woman who gets shipwrecked on a desert island with a swarthy, sexy working class guy. Their “classes” quickly get inverted on the island; the working-class guy has all the power because he has life skills that enable them to survive; she does not. I walked out when the woman begged the guy to sodomize her. Yuch. The BOOK I remember most for not finishing was Emily Bronte’s *Wuthering Heights*. I hated the angsty, over-the-top melodrama, but my English teacher, Ms. Dean, demanded that I read it, repelling all my pleading to read something different, anything. For the one and only time in my school career, I actually read Cliff Notes in order to prepare for the test. Which I aced, by the way. Ms. Dean was triumphant. I still feel vaguely embarrassed but still determined never to go back and try again.

[SC] We read *Uprooted* for our book discussion group back in 2016. I remember being underwhelmed. However, I’m confident it was not the worst book we read that year because I actually remember parts of *Uprooted* unlike several of the other discussion books that year that I have utterly forgotten. I have to admit that I’m a tough sell on fantasy. I have all of two reactions to most fantasy, either I love it or I’m rolling my eyes at it. As for DNF advice, I’m with Jeanne. I’d probably have stopped reading several of the book discussion books each year if I hadn’t needed to finish them in order to discuss them. The good news is that the best book discussions are often about books we didn’t like. The great news is that we frequently discover something wonderful in the book group that I would never have looked twice at otherwise. In other reading I tend to choose stuff with a high confidence that I will like or love, but I would not hesitate to drop something in the first 100-150 pages if it wasn’t working for me. Life is too short and there is so much great stuff out there to read, so why waste time?

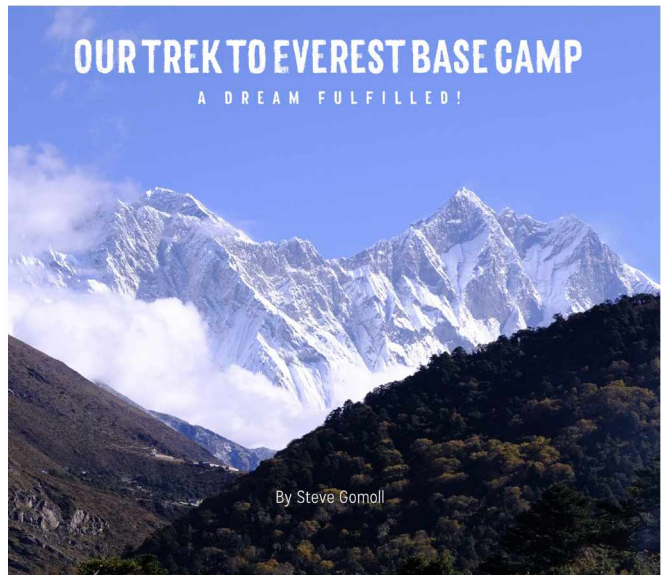
What's New?

[JG] The morning after the first day and night of protests in Minneapolis, I watched Minnesota Governor Waltz's press conference this morning and felt a little shocked when he seemed to suggest that none of the people who were violent or doing damage were acting in response to Floyd's murder, but were outsiders using the night and the masks as opportunities to do mayhem. I thought he must be right though. On that day, at that point, the official word was that ALL of the individuals arrested that first night in Minneapolis had been out-of-towners. (The next day, that was corrected to 80%. The day after it was corrected to 20%.) But earlier, when I accepted the idea that no locals were responsible for violence, I decided that it was because there doesn't seem to be any local news anymore; it's all national. A local event attracts comment, criticism, activism and violence from all over by those who want to bend events to their own agenda. Nevertheless, even before officials corrected the record, I was taken aback when I heard Waltz because I remember so clearly the phrase "outside agitators" from the anti-Vietnam rallies and riots of the 60s and 70s. The phrase was used to invalidate the ideas and anger of those who protested the war: OUR students don't hate the cops; it's those outsiders, those communists, etc., which allowed many people in the public to ignore the ideas and the anger. The phrase "outside agitators" reminds me of the phrase, "one rotten apple" -- both phrases allow people to ignore their own complicity and point to others, outsiders, or a specific scapegoat. I was worried that even though it might have been true that outsiders were capitalizing on the opportunity to do violence in Minneapolis (and other cities) and need to be stopped, that the anger would be easier to ignore because it can be rationalized away as not having anything to do with violence against people of color. And indeed, it didn't take long before the right wing machine began injecting false accusations against so-called "Antifa" groups, blaming them as if Antifa was an organized movement and not simply a philosophy. Which led to news coverage and conversations that dwelt on the problem of private property destruction, diverting from the conversations we need to have about policing policy and disproportionate health, economic and political harm to people of color.

I wrote an earlier version of this paragraph in a note to my niece, Sara, who lives in Minneapolis. That sparked a good conversation between the two of us and she subsequently devised an image for Instagram, which she says has been shared around a bit. →

Our Trek to Everest Base Camp,

This is the book I designed for my brother Steve. It has gone to press. The photos are gorgeous, but it's a rather expensive book; Steve has purchased copies for his fellow climbing buddies and family members. It's not really meant to be a hot-seller beyond that small circle of people, though anyone can buy it "at cost." But it's still pricey. If you'd like to look at it, you can page through a full pdf on the Blurb.com site. Just click on the image of the cover: (<<https://tinyurl.com/EBC-Gomoll>>)



It can be true that
outsiders and white
supremacists are looking
to capitalize off this
moment and destroy our
city

And it can be true that
this "outside agitators"
phenomenon can and will
be used to delegitimize
valid social unrest



Láadan Dictionary

[JG] And of course, Suzette Haden Elgin's *A Third Dictionary & Grammar of Láadan* is gone to press and available for purchase. (<<https://tinyurl.com/SHEdictionary>>) **Diane Martin** and I are very pleased as to how it turned out and that it is in fact finished. Yes indeed. All profits will go to the Science Fiction Poetry Association.

Warning about Food Delivery Apps

[JG] I've read a couple articles about how much damage delivery companies are doing to our already endangered restaurants. *The Washington Post's* article, "Restaurants are barely surviving. Delivery apps will kill them" was a huge revelation to me. Delivery companies require that restaurants charge the same for food whether their customers eat at the restaurant, pick up their food at the door, or if the food is delivered by GrubHub, DoorDash, Delicious Eats, Postmates, or UberEats or whatever. That means the restaurant has to subtract the delivery fee from the amount the customer pays, which is often barely enough to cover the restaurant's costs to begin with. Profit margins for full-service restaurants are typically around 3-5%, and

delivery app fees tend to hover around 30%! On top of that, the delivery companies frequently engage in on-line fraud: posting menus for restaurants with whom they have no agreement. If a restaurant no longer offers a dish or goes out of business, there is no way to contact the delivery app in order to complain, and the restaurant's reputation is the one that suffers.

I urge us all to avoid using companies like Uber Eats, GrubHub, or Delicious Eats. When you go on line to check out a restaurant's menu, make sure you are not actually going to a delivery app's webpage. Frequently, the delivery app webpages get listed ABOVE the actual restaurant's web page. And if you can do it, go pick up your food yourself. If you are ordering from favorite restaurants partially in order to help them survive, picking up the food yourself will help them far more than going through a delivery app.

A Tree Falls in Madison

[SC] One of the few mildly exciting things to happen to us in the last month was that a tree fell down in our backyard. No trees actually grow in our backyard; they all belong to our backyard neighbor and they're mostly box elder trees—soft wood, fast-growing, and easily blown over. Over the years the box elders have grown rapidly and we have begun to feel concerned that, one day, one of them might fall and crush our garage or damage the back of our house. You may recall last year we wrote in the *apa* about our neighbor-the-arborist, Matt, who we hired to trim some tree branches that extended over our backyard lot line. We had already sent a letter to our backyard neighbor about the trees, the hazards we saw and what we were doing. We never got a response. So we didn't try to reach out to them when the tree fell.



In mid-May during a very heavy rain storm, one of the big box elder trees twisted, snapped and fell over the fence into our yard, but it miraculously missed the cable line and entirely missed our garage. It fell neatly along the lot line against the lot line fence. Once again, we reached out to our arborist neighbor, Matt, and hired him to remove the fallen tree from our yard. We didn't even think about trying to contact our backyard neighbor. But a few days later we got a call from a lawyer who manages the finances of the lady (Nancy) who currently owns the property behind us. The lawyer apologized profusely that the tree had fallen into our yard and offered to arrange to have it removed at once. We told him we had already started that process with Matt, but if they wanted to pay him we would tell Matt to send an invoice to the lawyer. That was fine. We also shared our worries about some of the other trees on our backyard neighbor's property.



Would he like to have Matt take a look at them and give him make a proposal to cut some of them down? Sure! We were flabbergasted at this unexpected and hugely cooperative response. The lawyer then told us that Nancy has been staying with a friend during the pandemic, and that she is shy, so we weren't likely to hear from her. We were flabbergasted again when Nancy called us the next day. She might be shy, but she Googled us and when she read about Jeanne she decided she had to telephone us. They talked like old pals. So, all is good, the tree is gone, and we are not expecting to see a bill. Nancy is letting her backyard revert to weeds, which I could not care less about so long as they finally remove some of those other trees.

Morel season!

[JG] Morels from the farmers market soak in salt water, guarded by fierce squid whisks. Later, morels sautéed in butter. Yum.



Eleven pages, that's a lot of pages. So what follows is a very short, one-page story from the vault. Till July!

—Jeanne & Scott, June 2020

From the Vault

Sense of Wonder in the Oddest Places, or Squirrels!

By Jeanne Gomoll, *Whimsey* 7, 1992

I'm no morning person, and the hours before 10^{AM} have a hallucinogenic quality to me; so I didn't find anything unusual in the behavior of the business-suited man who had stepped off the bus first and walked down the sidewalk ahead of me. He edged fearfully around a little squirrel as if he thought it was about to attack him.

It was a pretty morning. The lush green grass of the Capitol Square invited bare-footed detours and the early morning sun sent shafts of golden light through the canopy of leaves, bouncing off the brilliantly colored flower beds along the sidewalks. It was a morning that encouraged dawdling and detours. I was enjoying the beautiful scene and the cool air, still damp with dew that would soon burn off with the heat of the day, and was only half-aware of the bizarre scene ahead. I laughed and then turned my gaze into the rustling leaves of the giant oak tree above my head.

A few minutes later, I strolled past the assertive rodent. Far from being a rare sight on the Capitol Square lawns, these little rodents are so numerous that one rarely gazes out across the grass without seeing four or five of them hunting fallen nuts or running up tree trunks, cheeks full. In fact, an unnaturally high population is maintained by Capitol Square groundskeepers who feed the squirrels, possibly in order to create the appropriate urban/bucolic ambiance. One can imagine squirrels telling their squirrel relatives living a few blocks away about the cushy deal they get on the Square:

"Yeah, on weekday lunch-hours, hundreds of office workers drop crumbs all over the grass, and somebody puts out hors d'oeuvres in between. It's the luxury cruise of Madison parks!" No wonder there seem to be more squirrels emigrating to the Square every day.

In spite of their burgeoning numbers, one still expects them to act properly shy of human movement. They're supposed to scamper away when a person moves toward them and when one fails to show the proper deference, as this one did, they no longer seem entirely cute and inoffensive. Suddenly one remembers stories of rabid squirrels. I scrutinized its tail for signs of thinning fur, its mouth for foam, but it was a pudgy, healthy squirrel with shiny eyes. But its eyes bothered me. The squirrel wasn't ignoring me because it lacked



fear. In fact, it was staring at me and its muscles were visibly tense as if it were about to do something. Not only did the squirrel not flee as I approached, it took two steps toward me, still tense. I remembered a friend's sarcastic comment when someone said, "Aw, look at the cute little squirrel!" She answered, "Squirrels are nothing but big rats with furry tails." This squirrel definitely resembled a rat in drag at the moment and I gave it a wide berth, edging quickly to the far side of the sidewalk.

Suddenly the squirrel leapt onto my shoe and I felt its little claws scratch through my jeans!

The scene was probably an amusing one to anyone walking behind me: Tall, 5'9" woman walking along, visibly wary of little 10" squirrel. Suddenly, squirrel attaches itself to woman's foot and she hops around, screaming "get off me, get off me!" vigorously shaking her foot. Woman seems to punt squirrel across lawn. Squirrel flees up tree trunk. Woman flees across street.

I thought I'd fallen into some bizarre *Twilight Zone* episode, and the feeling of dread only increased as I rounded a corner and saw the bicycle racks (a metal contraption, 12 feet long, bolted into concrete) covered with an undulating carpet of squirrels. I jogged past the eerie scene, thought of Hitchcock's *The Birds*, and hurried into the office building where I work, my heart still pounding.

The elevator door opened, two women waited inside, and I joined them, turning toward the closing door. That's when it began to feel like the opening scene of a Stephen King novel.

One woman said, very seriously, to the other "Have you heard? They stopped feeding the squirrels!"