

Madison Foursquare

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This issue of *Madison Foursquare* is brought to you by Scott Custis and Jeanne Gomoll (layout/design and occasional contributor), who live at 2825 Union Street, Madison, WI 53704. Scott@unionstreetdesign.com
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It has been a busier Fall than I expected. We took a trip to Colorado in October for a cousin's wedding. We hosted the Gomoll clan for an early Thanksgiving in November, as well as a trip to my family in Iowa for a post-Thanksgiving gathering. Then in early December we took a week and flew out to Eugene and Portland for the James Tiptree, Jr. symposium. (Pix on back page.) Plus other stuff.

No work rants from me this month, you will be relieved to see. Work has settled back into, more or less, a routine. I am both looking forward to the end of 2015, and dreading election-year 2016. 2015 has been a pretty good year for us in the sense that we remodeled our kitchen, had an enjoyable WisCon and travelled to Potlatch, Door County, Colorado, and Oregon. We saw some excellent theater, a fair number of movies and read some good books. Still, I'm looking forward to moving on to 2016, which may turn out to be my last year before retiring. Here's hoping the planets align nicely to allow a smooth departure. If the economy completely tanks, or Scott Walker and his pals launch an attack on the State pension system, who knows what will happen? – *Scott*

A few comments on issue 353

Susan Hastings

Nice covers. I recognized everyone except the "old lady" holding the platter.

Lisa Freitag

Excellent piece on NerdCon, and on being awesome.

Marilyn Holt

We have also been getting unseasonably warm and wet weather here. Temperatures during the day often hit the 30's and even 40's and we have gotten a lot of rain. Very weird for us. As I write this on the eve of the APA deadline, though, we might finally be in for a real winter storm tomorrow.

Interesting recipes, looks like the Gravy one was partly cut off.

Julie Zachman

YCT Steve Johnson

I laughed out loud at your comment "Even Ford never expected women to buy their Probe." That had never occurred to me before.

YCT me

Looking back on my work travels last Fall as an "opportunity for personal growth" is excellent advice and certainly not a bad thing. Thanks.

Tracy Benton

Congratulations on finishing the kitchen. It's a feeling of relief I'm familiar with.

How was Teslacon 6?

I have been to the "exotic" Appleton Radisson several times. It's a larger and older, but not unpleasant, hotel in the very center of town. It has a lot of program space since it's also a convention center. When I'm there its hard to keep myself from thinking about how well it would work as a convention hotel. Like so many smaller cities, Appleton is experiencing rapid growth out on the edges, particularly along the Hwy 41 freeway, but the downtown is struggling. There are some empty storefronts, and a few too many bars, but you can still find a few okay places to eat. I have stayed in swankier places on work trips but I like the Appleton Radisson well enough when I have to go on the road. At least I can get out of the hotel and walk around downtown. Better than being trapped someplace where I need a car to get away for awhile.

Jim and Diane

Jim, thanks so much for sharing your coming out story. Told in your patented upbeat "everything's fine" style, your experiment in California sounded like much less of a big deal than I suspect it actually was. I appreciate your trusting us here in Turbo with this news, and I want to express my support for you as you figure out what feels right for you going forward.

Diane, I think it's great that you chose to comment on Jim's news in this same issue from your perspective. It is interesting that you have also experienced a change. As Jim experiments with Jamie in other cities, you worry about him and take on a role as possible protector. That has to be a bit stressful. What a great partner he has in you.

Steven Vincent Johnson

Retirement is a subject I find myself thinking about a lot these days, as I hope to be joining you in a year or so. Like you, I am not worried that I will feel bored or useless in retirement. I liked your long list of possible activities.

Right wing cranks like Michele Bachmann are certainly annoying, but I'm not feeling like Social Security is in imminent danger of going away or being privatized. It is tiring to listen to her selfish and shallow arguments, however.

Good luck on your new theory, but it's all Greek to me.

Jim Frenkel

Good to see both you and Steve Johnson worked up about politics this month. We live in sadly bitter and partisan times. It's exhausting. Everyone has to figure out how to deal with it all in a way that won't leave us walking around angry and ranting all the time. These days, I feel especially powerless with the entire Wisconsin State government and nearly the entire Federal government in the hands of ultra-conservatives. All I can really do is just stand by, watch, turn up to vote again next time and hope for better results.

I had no idea your family was from Hungary. What an interesting family history.

Andy Hooper

YCT Jeanne, Jeanne and I were just talking the other day about how much we both have changed in the years since we met. Jeanne has certainly changed my mind on a range of issues in one-on-one discussions, but I have to give credit as well to WisCon panels and programs I attended that I know left me pondering and revising what I thought I believed before.

YCT Jim Frenkel, we just finished binge-watching Season 2 of *Fargo*, which was great. The Ronald Reagan stuff was funny, and brought back to me how much I once despised him, how unlikely it seemed to me that anyone would elect an actor to be President and then how bad a President I thought he was. Of course today, he seems almost Middle of the Road politically. What did you think about the science fictional element in *Fargo*?

Marketing Color

Scott enjoys shopping in malls. I tend buy more stuff on-line and in catalogs. Catalogs have many advantages over malls: no parking, a quiet, uncrowded shopping experience, and shorter check-out lines. This holiday season, Scott and I both did some on-line shopping and browsed a few catalogs. In the process we amused ourselves examining some retail strategies embedded in these printed storefronts.

We noticed that most catalogs marketing clothing to women use real live women models, while a huge number of men's clothing catalogs use no human models at all. I admire the actual-women-doing-real-work that populate *Duluth Trading Company* catalogs, but weirdly, *Duluth Trading Company* publishes other catalogs just for men that feature no models at all, just an occasional line drawing of a glove and hand, or a hat and head. Other clothing is obviously being worn—like a shirt draped over impressively muscled chest—but beyond the collar and sleeves the actual body has disappeared. Kind of spooky if you pretend that invisible men are modeling the fashions. The story might have turned out differently if H.G. Wells had considered giving his character a modeling career. I mused that perhaps retailers assume that women shop aspirationally (“I want to look like HER.”) Scott wondered if retailers assume that heterosexual men prefer not to think about looking like another guy (too gay?). Who knows. There must be focus group data about this.

And then there are the color names. It used to be that one of the standard jokes celebrating stereotyped notions of the differences between men and women featured a woman smirking that her guy recognized only the most basic colors and was easily confused by words like “fuchsia” and “chartreus.” The guys in these jokes stubbornly insist that Crayola color names should be enough. But that old joke has been overrun by the profusion of words and phrases that have replaced standard color wheel labels as marketing tools.

Maybe the art of inventing new color names for clothing exploded when retailers noticed that some guys were far more comfortable wearing a salmon-colored shirt than a pink one. The name is important; it is perceived as a signal of masculinity, femininity, class and other cultural markers. Colors now are

as integral to catalog sales pitches as the models, the photography, and the text descriptions. *J Peterman*, which publishes amazingly entertaining, mini-short stories for each featured item of clothing and accessory (women's and men's), spins stories even about some of its colors: "Colors: Red, Green, all nicely faded; they appear to have some experience of life."

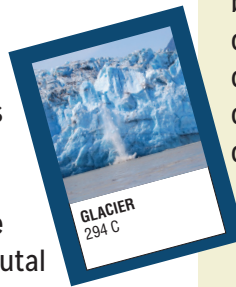
Many invented color names appear only or mostly in gender-specific clothing catalogs. Colors for women's clothing this year seem most frequently inspired by luxury foods and beverages, and by pleasant natural elements. Colors for men's clothing more often derive from simple foods and drink, and from harsh, even brutal natural elements. But there's a lot of overlap between men's and women's catalogs.

My favorite color name from a men's and a women's catalog respectively: "oil slick" (as you might imagine, this is black) and "luggage" (as you might not imagine, this is brown). There are still plenty of catalogs that use standard colors—black, blue, brown, green, red, white, etc. But here is a sampling of some of the more imaginative tags. Just a note: these are not adjectives, modifying or describing a basic color. It's not "luggage brown," or "oil slick black;" It's just "luggage," and "oil slick." Well, OK, except for "destroyed white." We had to make an exception for that one. But we leave you to guess what hues these terms (in the box on the right) actually describe. —*Jeanne*

Disclaimer (to Tracy, especially): This essay is based on musings about catalogs that arrived in our mailbox during the autumn and winter of 2015. None of our theories rely upon *any* kind of historical analysis whatsoever.

What happens if we substitute color names within a few book titles?

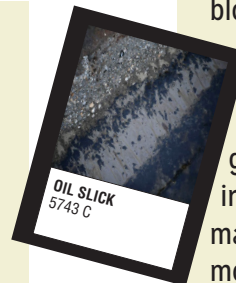
<i>Lipstick Mars</i>	<i>Spruce Eggs and Ham</i>
<i>Endless Sky Mars</i>	<i>Ann of Fatigue Gables</i>
<i>Aloe Mars</i>	<i>The Ember Tent</i>
<i>Clockwork Cantaloupe</i>	<i>The Peony Compass</i>
<i>Oil Slick Like Me</i>	<i>The Picture of Dorian</i>
<i>Luggage Girl in the Ring</i>	<i>Gunsmoke</i>
<i>The Color Eggplant</i>	<i>The Curry Wallpaper</i>
<i>The Coral Letter</i>	



Some examples

Women's clothing: aloe, apple, aubergine, bark, bay mist, beach, blush, bonfire, brandy, brick, butternut, cameo, cantaloupe, canteen, caviar charcoal, champagne, chinchilla, chocolate, cinnamon, citron, claret, cocoa, cognac, coral, cornflower, cypress, dahlia, Danube, deep peacock, deep sea, destroyed white, drift, driftwood, eggplant, elm, ember, endless sky, eucalyptus, fern, fig, forest, garnet, glacier, golden sun, honey, ink, jade, java, lemon grass, lilac, lipstick, luggage, major, malachite, merlot, mocha, moss, natural, nori, nude, nutmeg, ocean, peony, peppercorn, persimmon, petal, pewter, pistachio, plum, raisin, rich raisin, river, robin's egg, rouge, saddle, sand, sandstone, sangria, sanguine, sea, seasalt, shaded spruce, soapstone, soft moss, spearmint, stone, storm, teaberry, thyme, toast, tourmaline, truffle, vanilla, Vienna current, vine, vintage grape, vivid turo, wineberry, wisteria, wool cream

Men's clothing: acorn, arctic, autumn wheat, bison, brick metal bronze, British khaki, burn henna, cactus, camel, cayenne, cayman, cement, chestnut, chocolate, city block, coal, cobalt, cypress, dark ink, Dijon, espresso, fatigue, freestone, garnet, granite, graphite, gravel, gun smoke, gunmetal, harvest, hollyhock, iron ore, light barley, lucky, lunar, magnet, maize, merlot, midnight, morning sky, oatmeal, obsidian, oil slick, oxblood, putty, rainforest, Riviera, royal, rum raisin, rust, sage, salt, sand, slate, smokey quartz, squirrel, tin, tobacco, truffle, whiskey cardamom teakwood, wild grass, wren





JAMES TIPTREE, JR.
The Double Life of
ALICE B. SHELDON
JULIE PHILLIPS



Tiptree
Symposium
12/4-5/15



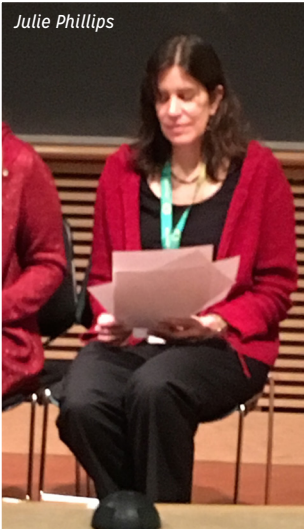
Alice Sheldon

Ursula K. Le Guin

Suzy McKee Charnas

David Gerrold

Julie Phillips



Julie Phillips



Donya White, Allan Baum, Amy Thomson



Suzy McKee Charnas, Pat Murphy, Kate Schaefer



Timmi Duchamp & Ursula K. Le Guin



Nisi Shawl & Jennifer Linnaea



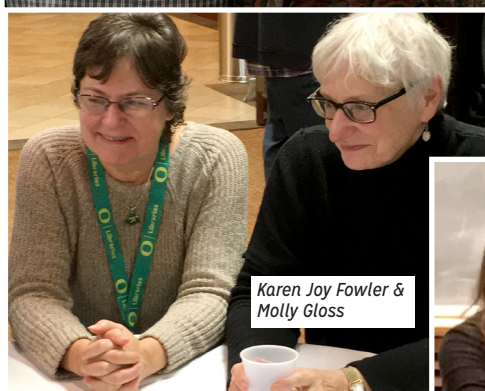
Scott & Jeanne



Grá Linnaea & Nina Kiriki Hoffman



Joan Haran & Jeanne



Karen Joy Fowler & Molly Gloss



David Gerald & Tom Becker



Ursula K. Le Guin



UO Student & Jeff Smith