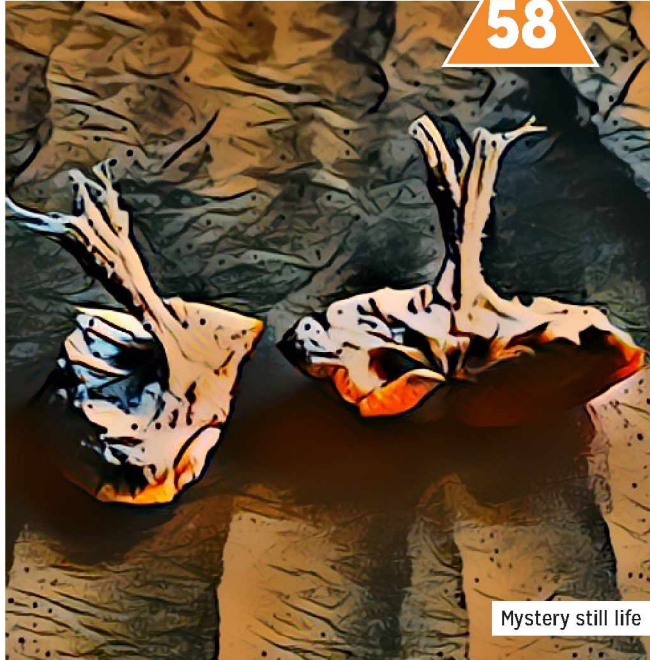


Madison foursquare

58



Mystery still life

WHAT'S NEW

Zeno's Bathroom

[JG] I'm sorry to have strung out the story of our bathroom remodel through so many months and so many issues of *Madison Foursquare*. If I had known it would take so long to finish, I would have saved up the details, edited out the many, many boring bits, and told the story in one big binge.

Finally, the plumbing was installed; the toilet, shower and sink hardware transformed our bathroom, at last, into a *working* bathroom. The glass shower door was installed. A new GREEN granite countertop was installed on the vanity. The final coat of paint was applied. Nevertheless, the last, few, tiny steps of our bathroom remodel proceeded in slow motion, and every small step taken toward the finish line spawned two more steps. Thus, I've christened our bathroom, "Zeno's Bathroom."

The box contained a chrome toilet flush handle rather than the brushed nickel toilet flush handle we'd ordered. "We'll come back in a day or two with the right one."

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

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This is *Madison Foursquare* #58. *Madison Foursquare* was created using a Mac Pro with InDesign, Illustrator and Photoshop, all CC 2021, and printed on a Ricoh Aficio CL7200 color printer. All contents ©2021 by Scott Custis [SC] & Jeanne Gomoll [JG] August 2021 for *Turbo-Charged Party Animal* #422.

Just one towel bar could be found in the stack of delivered hardware. "We will order the second towel bar and come back to install it as soon as it arrives."

The wood trim along the floor tiles, around the window and door were all beautifully installed, except for the piece over the top of the door where the wood trim ran out. "I'll stain and finish some more trim and come back next week to install that missing piece."

We thought the painting was complete but it turned out that they missed a few spots and need to return to finish them. "We'll come back—"

On the assumption that Zeno's paradox will not actually play itself out into infinity in the real world since there are some tasks that are impossible to divide into two parts, I hesitantly predict that our bathroom will in fact be done by the end of the week, by the August *Turbo* deadline. It is so close to being complete that we have included some photos in this issue [See next page]. If our bathroom is *not* finished by the September *Turbo* deadline, I plan to lie and say nothing to you about further travails. As far as you are concerned, the story ends here.

Comments

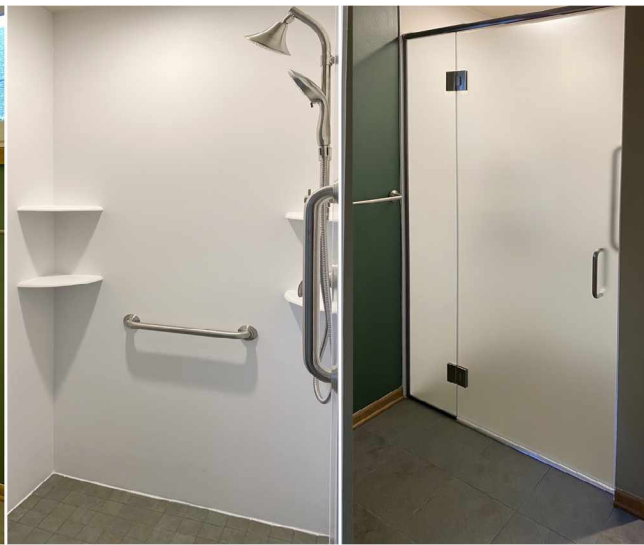
Covers—Jeannie Bergmann

[SC] I thought your Photoshopped sea anemone covers were beautiful! Great colors!

[JG] Having just finished Andy Weir's *Project Hail Mary*, I couldn't help but mentally re-title your cover *Taumoeba Devours Astrophage*. Very cool.

Walter Freitag

[SC] Here in Wisconsin, we have been in a drought for much of the summer. It's been alternately dry and humid and periodically hot to the mid-nineties, but, like you, we are not complaining much. When you look at the extremes experienced by people elsewhere



in the country (particularly in the South and the entire American West) it seems churlish to bitch about some hot weather and not quite as much rain as we'd like. After all, my grass is still mostly green and not on fire. In the context of the long-term catastrophe that is climate change, we know much worse is probably coming.

Thanks especially for the bee hive update (I love "High King Margo the Destroyer" and the "Mos Eisley Spaceport"). When do you hope to harvest your first honey?

[JG] Your fictional Lab Leak Hypothesis reminded me of Jon Stewart's screed on Colbert's *The Late Show* a month or so ago. He, and others, are reasonably scornful of China's denials that the Wuhan Institute of Virology had nothing to do with the creation of Covid. I don't know what I think about the issue; there doesn't seem to be nearly enough information available.

Elizabeth Matson

[SC] Thanks once again for the yurt update accompanied by the lovely pictures. They appear to have done a very nice job with your driveway, and if they finished it more than you expected, I'd say you will likely appreciate it if you decide to drive up for a visit during the winter or early spring mud season. I was also impressed with the yurt platform. I think we are all looking forward to pictures of the installed dwelling.

Thanks also for the interesting discussion of the JMK Art Museum in Sheboygan, as well as the tip on where to find good restaurants. I like gathering suggestions for things to see around the state in case we find ourselves in the neighborhood someday. In return I'd recommend that you someday explore the Hamilton

Wood Type & Printing Museum in Two Rivers (along the lake a little north of Manitowoc) on some future visit.

[JG] Will you bring Nick the Greyhound with you when you spend moon-cycle weekends in your yurt? I imagine that he will love the place.

I was surprised to see the photo of the yurt platform. I had been assuming that the platform would be a poured concrete slab, as if for a small house with no basement. Does a wooden platform provide better insulation?

Scott and I were actually talking about s'mores after we read recipes published in *The Washington Post* for artisanal, home-made marshmallows....

I'm sorry to say that we missed your streamed storytelling event again. But I love hearing about them and hope we will be able to attend one in person one of these days.

Carrie Root

[SC] It was great fun visiting with you and **Andy** during your trip back to Wisconsin. We had quite an adventure that day. We managed to score some good seating on the Memorial Union Terrace on a normally crowded Saturday afternoon thanks to an overcast sky and rain earlier in the day. Then you got to see a big, flashy Midwestern thunderstorm while enduring a long wait for our dinner table for twelve at the restaurant. At least no one got wet. All things considered, I think it worked out pretty well. I hope you had a pleasantly uneventful trip home. I owe you a beer.

Your magazine reading sounded very interesting, particularly the tree articles. I have seen pieces



[Clockwise from top left] 1) Slate floor blends to smaller slate shower tiles (zero threshold); 2) Closed, hidden medicine cabinet door; 3) Open but empty medicine cabinet; 4) Slate floor tile; 5) Granite vanity countertop (It's green!)



Bathroom remodel detail

elsewhere that refer to new research into how trees interact with each other and communicate. Fascinating, if true.

[JG] I liked your survey of “miscellaneous thoughts and magazine reading” at the beginning of your zine. The last item about the negative benefits of flood control efforts reminded me of a map I saw recently on *The National Geographic* site that showed a historical collage of paths (discovered using hyperprecise LIDAR data) taken by the Mississippi in Louisiana. They’re mesmerizing.



Left: A 1944 map by geologist Harold Fisk charts a 40-mile stretch of the Mississippi River from Friars Point to Gunnison, Mississippi. Fisk used aerial photos and maps to estimate the past and then-present channels.

Right: By comparison, a map created using lidar shows shifts over the past 75 years. Erosion and changes in flow caused the channel to widen in the middle of the image and migrate toward the south.

Excellent mailing comments, Carrie!

I also used my Daytimers for many years as both long- and short-term memory aids. But I’ve now become dependent on my electronic calendars for the same purpose, and it works far better than my old daytimes because I can search on key words back through many years.

I also avoid using a food processor for making my pie crusts. I did try it a few times, and it does work fine, but like you, I prefer the tactile method of making a pie crust with my hands...or rather a wire pastry blender. It’s not very difficult or time-consuming and much easier to clean up afterwards.

Andy Hoper

[SC] We no sooner got the apa to see the lead article in your zine was on Eleanor of Aquitaine and we quickly decided it was time to see Hepburn and O’Toole in *The Lion in Winter* again. I loved your article on Eleanor’s life up to the point she marries Henry II. What an awesome story! I look forward to the rest of her story whenever you’re ready to tell it. We enjoyed seeing the movie again, too.

I hope you are right in your comment to **Steve** that the 2020 election is “the first step in a long march back towards rational political relations.” It may be a bumpy march. Just today in *The Washington Post* we saw a story that the new census data will show, for the first time in our history, that the number of White people in the U.S. is expected to decline. All population growth in the U.S. will be from people of color. The White decline has showed up eight years earlier than expected. This news will likely throw the racists and White Nationalists currently controlling the Republican party into a frenzy as the long-term implications for retaining political power in America look bad for them. In an effort to regain and retain control of our political process, I believe they will not only resort to widespread voter suppression, but more treason and violence too.

In your comment to us, feedback in *Turbo* seems to me to be a slippery thing. I have often been surprised at what has drawn comments and what did not. My impression is it has little to do with where zines appear in the apa, how long they are or how simple or flashy



Cottonwood tree

the production is. On the other hand, I have yet to work out the magic formula that works every time.

Leave it to the Canadians to come at Horror Hosts from a different perspective. First a show with a classic Host that doesn't show movies and, later, the first movie show Host who is actually from Detroit and does not wear a costume. Oh Canada.

[JG] Thanks for your excellent history of pre-Henry Eleanor. Many years ago, I read Marion Meade's 1977 history, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: A Biography*, and loved it, but I don't remember much about the parts chronicling the Second Crusade, probably because I picked up the biography after first viewing *The Lion in Winter*, and was most interested in learning details about her later life. Actually, I've probably retained most of my information about Eleanor from the movie, not the biography, which is true, I ruefully admit, about too much of my so-called knowledge of historical events. Accurate or not, *The Lion in Winter* was a great, fabulous movie. When Scott and I streamed it, I could have recited most lines of dialog seconds before they were actually delivered by the actors, I remembered the film so clearly.

My memory of Asimov's *Foundation Trilogy* is that it was a heavy, doorstop of a tome. But that may have something to do with the epic timescale of the story that may have transformed the image of the physical book in my mind. I don't know that I want to re-read

that book in preparation for the Apple+ series, though. I've got the feeling that it will cause my estimation to decline. But...let me know what you and Carrie think. If you enjoyed it again, maybe I will re-read it before watching the series.

I LOVE Jean Shepherd's stories! Those are books I love to re-read for sure. When I write comic scenes, I think I frequently consider—how would Jean Shepherd have written this?

Flying saucer women would shake their heads with irritation at Redd Boggs' invitation. He's got more to learn than car mechanics, they might say.

Lisa Freitag

[SC] I think that much of what you wrote about the situation with workers doing "the necessary and unpleasant work" is true. I also think about all the low-paid workers in essential retail, like grocery workers, who had to take risks on top of being brutally mistreated by customers while doing a difficult and unpleasant job for minimal pay. Why should they want to come back to working these jobs, especially now as we seem to be headed back into pandemic trouble with the Delta Variant outbreak? I think our struggle with Covid is far from over and it may bring on a significant, permanent restructuring of how most of us live. In a few years shopping for essentials, for example, may work very differently than it does today. We may all be ordering everything online for delivery or pick up because stores can't attract (or refuse to adequately pay) workers willing to interact with infected or irresponsible customers. A majority of customers may also come to see shopping in stores as too risky anyway.

[JG] Thanks for the recommendation of *Black Sun* by Rebecca Roanhorse; we've added it to the list of books to read for our book discussion group.

Greg Rihn

[SC] I liked *Rough Crossing* a lot, but I think I was in the right mood for something silly and light that allowed some of APT's best actors to really swing for the fences. It was mostly delightful. Jeanne didn't like it much, saying it was just too silly for her.

We did end up seeing *Black Widow*, and it sure was a superhero movie. I liked it more than Georgie did, but not as much as you did because it just did not bring anything new to the table. I had higher hopes for *Black*

Widow as she seemed to me to be one of the most interesting characters in the Avengers gang. But just seeing more wisecrack-loaded fight scenes alternate with a fairly unconvincing family drama just didn't do much for me. I liked all the actors well enough, particularly Florence Pugh. I have been a fan of hers since she starred in *Little Women* in 2019. I'm hoping I can get my hands on a newer mini-series version of LeCarre's *The Little Drummer Girl* that she stars in.

We have also finished season four of *Unforgotten*, and liked it a lot. We were surprised and happy to hear that season five is already being produced in spite of the Big Change at the end of the fourth season.

[JG] I'm glad you provided a little detail on *Professor T*. We've heard several people praise the series and we decided to take a look last month, but after a few episodes we decided we weren't enjoying it and didn't feel engaged with the characters. Ah well. But then YOU wrote that *Professor T* was a *new* show, an English Language adaptation of a Dutch television show. And I suddenly realized that what we had been watching and not liking very much was the Dutch show, steaming via Amazon Prime. We will try again with this new version on PBS.

Steven Vincent Johnson

[SC] Sorry to have missed you and **Darlene** at **Andy** and **Carrie's** dinner. The storm that hit us that night was much worse weather than I thought we would be dealing with. My first clue for what was coming arrived when we were sitting on the Memorial Union Terrace and they sounded the horn for boats to come in off the lake long before sundown, followed by a staff person coming out on the terrace with a bullhorn to tell us all to leave.

Catie Pfeifer

[SC] Thank you for your entertaining write-up of your visit to House on the Rock. You seem to be on a roll writing about subjects that will likely draw a flurry of responses from your fellow *Turbo* members.

I have been to House on the Rock at least three times. The last time was more than ten years ago. I have not felt a need to go back since. As a non-native to Wisconsin, I feel I have spent more than my fair share of time at House on the Rock. You are right that there are interesting exhibits and, particularly, individual pieces, but they are often interspersed with stuff that is clearly just junk. The exhausting part for me about a



visit there is not just that it's so big, but that I found I was constantly having to mentally sort out what I was looking at into things that might actually be interesting vs. things that appeared to be crap. Add to that the lack of organization, very hit-or-miss labeling of exhibits and a lot of dust and dirt everywhere, it's always a vast relief to reach the end.

Years ago, we hosted our friend Maureen Speller from England, on her first trip to Wisconsin to attend WisCon. In a moment of shared insanity, Jeanne and I chose to take Maureen to House on the Rock. When we asked her at the end what she thought, I still remember the evil gleam in Maureen's eye when she said, "Paul [Kincaid, her husband, who did not accompany her to the U.S.] will need to see this." So, the very next year at WisCon, now with poor, clueless husband Paul in tow, we all went again. I have no idea if exposure to House on the Rock has seriously damaged their view of Wisconsin and America. You'll have to ask them. At least on this last trip as we were touring the house, we read aloud the House on the Rock scene from Neil Gaiman's *American Gods*. That was fun.

[JG] The two visits to House on the Rock that Scott describes above were more than enough for me. Frankly, one visit was more than enough exposure to this temple devoted to the worship of accumulating Stuff. It was sort of funny at first, but then it just goes on and on and on... My negative recollections may be somewhat connected to the fact that I was feeling



some severe pain in my hip at the time of our visit and found the three-and-a-half-hour walk through the exhibits really difficult.

Jim Hudson & Diane Martin

[SC] Forward Theater and APT have both been a little disappointing for me this year. I have often been a bit dissatisfied (and occasionally angry with Forward) with too many of their shows. It's the fault of the plays selected, not usually the actors or production. It's been the movies that have worked better for me lately. I have already praised *In the Heights*, *A Quiet Place, Part 2*, and *Nomadland*. Recently we saw *Pig*, starring Nicholas Cage. I have been lucky to miss a lot of Cage's sillier movies and performances in recent years. *Pig* was something different. He plays a very quiet, somber character living alone in the woods and supporting himself hunting and selling truffles with his prize truffle-hunting pig. When the pig is stolen from him, he goes on a mission to recover it, which is the plot of the movie. Promoted as a "thriller," it's not particularly thrilling. It's mostly a story of loss and grief that I found rather moving. It's not a perfect movie and will not be to everyone's taste. Cage's

character spends far too much of the movie in a profoundly disheveled state that is actually not credible for some scenes, and there is one scene of overly gratuitous violence, but his performance is strong and I felt the story worked out in a satisfying ending.

I really liked Matt Damon's new movie *Stillwater*, about an Oklahoma oil well worker whose daughter is doing time in a French prison for murder. During a trip to visit her in Marseille, he comes across new information that may help her case and decides to pursue it himself despite knowing virtually nothing of the local law, culture or language. Again, it looks like an action thriller but it's not. It's a tough, thoughtful, and politically sharp, character drama.

[JG] I have also been disappointed by Forward Theater and APT productions this year. I didn't like *Cymbeline* at all. I didn't see the point of the all-women cast and really disliked the sexist story, though it was not as bad as *Taming of the Shrew*. Nevertheless, I have high hopes for APT's *A Phoenix Too Frequent*, to which we have tickets in September. I account for many of the performances' problems as being due to the pandemic, and will cross my fingers that next year will be better.

We are watching a British cop show right now, streaming on Amazon Prime, called *Line of Duty*. It's very dark, in the manner of *The Wire*. Corruption is rampant throughout all levels of law enforcement. The few good cops are punished for their integrity; high level corrupt cops seem to always get away with their behavior. The characters and acting are excellent, though, and we're already into the second season.

Jeannie Bergmann

[SC] I liked all your pieces this month, which made it a little difficult to choose a favorite. I smiled at the "Inferometer." Such a device might be handy from time to time, but as I think about some of the best choices I've made, they would not necessarily have fit my previously "inferred" criteria. "Spiel" is the piece that I enjoyed the most.

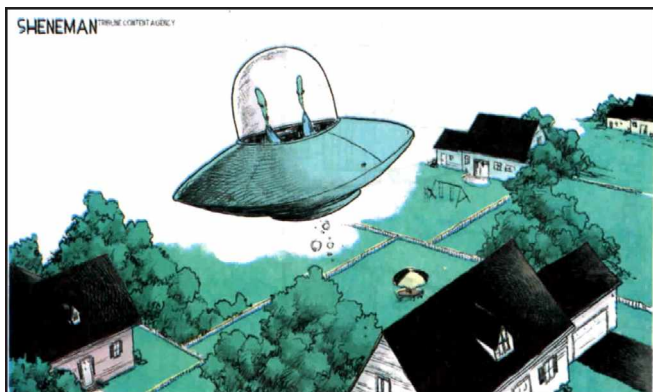
[JG] I liked "Spiel" and "Mirrors" especially for the idea of what mirrors might come to mean in a post-apocalyptic world.



[JG] Nothing "from the vault" this month, just a few more updates on life on Union Street.

Swimming with Heart

[JG] I had stopped swimming laps for almost two years when I finally returned to the YMCA in early June. I'd missed swimming through 2020 and most of the first half of 2021, of course, because of Covid. But I also missed four months at the end of 2019 because I injured my right knee in a fall in September and then had my *left* knee replaced in November. Although Scott and I walked almost every day, March 2020-May 2021, that didn't prevent me from losing an enormous amount of endurance capacity during the hiatus in my swimming workouts. It also turned out that my blood pressure rose to such worrisome levels that my doctor said she wanted to start me on bp medication. She gave me this news just before I'd started swimming again and I begged for a reprieve. "Give me a little time to get my blood pressure down again. I'm about to start swimming again." She reluctantly agreed. I could tell she thought I was deluding myself. After all, I turn 70 this year, I'm overweight, and both of my parents had high blood pressure. Nevertheless, she said OK, and I went back to the YMCA pool and have been swimming laps three times a week since then. I have not been able to get up to a mile yet, a distance that I used to swim easily before the pandemic, but I'm moving toward that goal. I hope to get back to a whole mile three times a week by the end of the year. In addition, Scott and I continue to walk together on days I don't swim. But the moment of truth came when I returned to the clinic and a nurse strapped the blood pressure cuff around my upper arm. My reading: 130/70, below and out of the worrisome high blood pressure range. Yay!



All I said was "Take me to your leader," and that started a 20-minute lecture about how the election was stolen and ended with the human sticking coins to their head trying to prove they'd been magnitized.

Socializing

[JG] Scott and I joined a group of current and past *Turbo* members at the Memorial Union, and later at Paisans' Restaurant when **Andy Hooper** and **Carrie Root** visited Madison in early August. And I joined a group at Culver's when Gerri Sullivan visited Madison on her epic one-month trip through the Midwest, visiting friends she'd been missing during the pandemic. It definitely felt odd joining large groups of people in an indoor dining setting. I suspect that this feeling of relative safety may very well dissipate by the Fall as Covid Delta cases multiply, and maybe an even more virulent strain of the virus appears. I just read that breakthrough Covid, even the most mild and non-symptomatic cases, have been found to sometimes lead to Long Covid. Being vaccinated may not be enough to protect ourselves. At this point, there is not enough data to know how often breakthrough cases lead to Long Covid, but I think it's probable that I will soon feel less confident about being around un-masked people indoors. It's difficult to restrain my anger at folks who chose to go unvaccinated without valid medical reasons. I am glad, though, that I got to hang out with folks this month. It was good to see not only visiting friends from far away, but close-to-home friends that may as well have lived far away during this last year.



While old, sick, and weak animals remained targets, the lions *most* enjoyed culling the herd of its sarcastic teenagers.



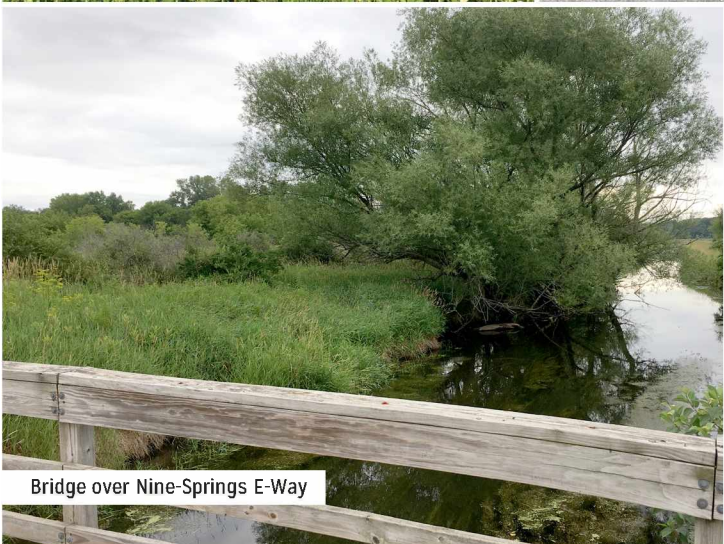
View from the trail to Baxter Park



Googly eye landscaping



Along the Cannonball Trail



Bridge over Nine-Springs E-Way



Views from the bike path

bike path through Baxter Park