

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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Time has slipped by and I have mostly comments for you this month. Not that we have not been busy. I turned 60 in May which I was mostly thinking about in terms of my impending retirement, but Jeanne distracted me from that line of thinking by urging me to choose some cowboy boots as my birthday present while I was shopping for athletic shoes at the Shoe Barn. I have not had a pair of boots probably since I graduated from college more than 35 years ago, but I have always wanted a pair again, so I finally decided, "why not?" She also took me out to a birthday dinner at the swanky new Southern food destination, Julep, which was excellent.



Tiptree Auction at WisCon this year since Nevenah has been dealing with health issues and I helped mostly by carrying boxes and moving stuff. We had no other roles at the convention this year. Jeanne was not even on programming. For the first time in many years we elected to stay at the hotel only one night of the weekend, Sunday night. We only stayed on Sunday because I like to be able to relax at the dessert salon/GoH speeches/Tiptree Award ceremony and have a few drinks. We also wanted to be in the hotel right away Monday morning to facilitate the move out of the Tiptree stuff. Otherwise, we drove home every night. It was nice to sleep in our own bed. I attended very little programming. I spent a lot of time just hanging out downtown, which I don't get to do enough most of the year. I took a long winding walk down to scope out the state of the ongoing remodeling project at the UW Memorial Union, and another stroll around the new Edgewater development on the Mendota lakeside at the top of Langdon St. I went to Farmers Market on Saturday morning and did some reading in coffee shops and on the Square. Very relaxing. We had some nice dinners out with friends. I did run into two old hands on the Concourse hotel staff who still remember me. That was fun, but I can see the day when I will be a complete stranger to the staff and that will suit me fine, too. My time is past and I could not be happier about it. We will go again next year.

Right after that it was off to Chicago to Corflu. It was great seeing, and hanging out with, folks many of whom we have not seen in a long time. And any excuse to go to Chicago is always worth the hassle of actually getting there. [Siri recommends that we take an alternate route on I-90, due to "unexpected delay ahead." But then she fakes a laryngitis attack and disappears. -- JG]



The next weekend was wedding weekend as the leader of our book discussion group, Parrish, got married in Mineral Point on Saturday with a casual but still classy affair, while Richard S. Russell and Abigail Darwin elected to tie the knot spectacularly on Sunday. Both couples know each other, neither couple

attended the other's event, but they knew a lot of us were going to both so they conveniently scheduled on different days of the same weekend. Fortunately the weather cooperated beautifully (if a bit warmly) since both events were held outside.



Then there was WisCon 40. I'm glad we went. I had a pretty good time. Jeanne was very involved with the

A few quick comments on the long gone but not-quite-forgotten *Turbo* #357.

Turbo #357 Susan Hastings

You did a lovely job on the APA covers this month.

Andy Hooper

I enjoyed your Hospitality in 19th Century Madison article. We had gotten a little exposure to this story at our monthly C.H.E.W. (Culinary History Enthusiasts of Wisconsin) meeting in January. Local food writers Nichole Fromme and Jonmichael Rasmus came and talked a bit about the evolution of the foodie culture in Madison. They touched a bit on the long history of restaurants in the city. This was the first time I had heard about places like the legendary St. Nicholas and St. Julien

Restaurants. Fromme and Rasmus were not as focused on a comprehensive survey of what the city's hospitality scene looked like long ago, they were trying to connect the evolutionary dots to why the food scene looks the way it does today. They published a book last year on the subject, *Madison Food*.

In an article full of interesting items, I think I was most surprised at the popularity and abundance of oysters offered so freely. Even in a time of superior rail service to the Gulf, it's hard to imagine shipping oysters North in railcars chilled with ice as not being very expensive. It seems much too expensive to use them as a way to lure customers to bars in order to sell beer and whiskey. Oysters also seem so exotic for Wisconsinites. Why would something so non-local be so popular? Amazing.

Greg Rhin

Lots of interesting stuff going on with you busy folks, as usual. I enjoyed reading about it all. We should add "Tea at the Schuster Mansion" to our list of things to be sure to get around to in Milwaukee. We last had High Tea at our hotel in London following LonCon in 2014. Although our post-convention hotel was clearly going for a French feel, they served a very nice High Tea in their main lounge area on certain afternoons. Your experience sounded delicious.

Thanks also for the Geneva Steam Con report. A convention I had never heard of before.

Steve Johnson

Thanks for writing so honestly about your first walkabout experience. It's tough sometimes for a young person to figure things out when you are just starting out.

RE YCT Andy, I did not realize our houses were contemporaries, Steve. I did not think your house was that old. Your neighborhood must have been a much more wide open space back in the 1920's. I think our house was the first one in our neighborhood. A sinkhole in the driveway and an abandoned well are pretty nasty surprises. Do you suppose the previous owners knew about these things?

Julie Zachman

I loved your little introduction to your new Coonhound, Rosee.

RE YCT Kim and Kathi, you wrote, "I'm not anti-hunting, I'm anti-failure to represent the will and best interests of the people, which includes upholding ethical practices and protecting the eco system..." Eminently sensible. I could not agree with you more.

Jae Leslie Adams

Another Old People Report was very lovely. A bunch of your phrases have stayed with me, "one can love even crappy parents, but it's not easy." And "If your family is more of a drag than a support, you're Doing It Rong." I realize looking back that I was pretty lucky, but I have known plenty of people who were struggling to overcome the bad parenting they'd been put through.

Comments on issue #358

Patrick Ijima-Washburn

Fabulous cover art once again, Patrick. I have to say that I found your running updates of your family's experience of the earthquakes in Kumamoto in your zine equally amazing. Very powerful article, Patrick. Thank you for sharing it with us in Turbo.

Marilyn Holt

It comes as no surprise to a kid who grew up in Iowa farm country that the springtime finds life growing a bit hectic for you. Arguably spring is the most chaotic time for farmers with so much to do in a short window of time and yet so dependent on what the weather lets you do. Thanks for making time to share with us a little of what is going on with you, and thanks for the recipes.

Greg Rihn

We also mostly liked *Lady in the Van* but I was put off a bit by the ending, which seemed to me to cast doubt on all that had come before. It left me wondering how much of the story was real and what may have been fantasy. That was annoying. *[I liked it!—JG]* *Zootopia* is on our list of things to see that we missed in the theaters.

Thank you for the detailed Odd Con report and congratulations to you and Georgie on a successful program with lots of interesting panel titles.

Jason Burnett

Sorry to have missed you at WisCon. I hope your panels turned out well.

Jim Hudson & Diane Martin

We are still hopeful of landing tickets to a performance of *Hamilton* in Chicago this fall at a price we can afford. Just this weekend we were at Jeanne's brother Danny's house in Muskego for his daughter's high school graduation party. It was Danny and his wife, Kelly, who just got back from seeing *Hamilton* in New York City. We had great fun hearing about their experience. Also at the same party was friend of theirs who not only saw *Hamilton* in New York, but got a backstage pass to meet the cast. Awesome.

Ruth and Jim Nichols

Ruth, sorry for the loss of your mother. Very nice obit. and photos, thanks for sharing it.

Congratulations on the home improvements. House projects are so expensive and scary, but so wonderfully satisfying when finished satisfactorily. We have always found it was worth it to do it even if it cost a bit more than we were hoping.

Catie Pfeifer

Wonderful description of your Emo Phillips show at the Stoughton Opera House. We will have to check out Phillips on You Tube sometime. Jeanne and I have attended a few shows at the Stoughton Opera House, sometimes along with Jim and Diane. We have had a few adventures, too (we got hopelessly confused and turned around in a snowstorm trying to walk back to our car after a show one night, even on well-lit city streets.) The thing about the Opera House we noticed on our very first visit there was that many of the other attendees seemed to be bringing pillows into the show with them. It's a beautiful and wonderfully intimate theater space and we figured we would certainly be coming back again. So, after our first experience, we went right out and bought some cushions, too, because those old wooden theater seats are way too hard for our tender, contemporary backsides. Your seats were on the theater's main floor? Did you notice the odd wire contraption on the bottom of your chair seat? Those are very old seats, that wire thing is for your hat.

Thanks for the great tip about the Irish Cultural Heritage Center.

Steve Johnson

I liked your bulleted memorable moments from your Rocky's Pizza days. Many of us have fond memories of jobs like that. Your close call with the "moonie" was creepy, and I did not guess where that story was going. But I knew right away what was likely up with those Christmas Eve brownies and I laughed, until it became clear how genuinely unpleasant it turned out for you. The brilliance of brownies is, of course, that they look so innocent, and can be taken almost anywhere, yet they can be packed with trouble. You are not the first person I know who took in a brownie or two unawares and regretted the experience. Your story is also not the first one I know of where people brought loaded brownies to a work place. I think you did the right thing with your speeding ticket. "There are times when we all need to play the role doled out to us." I think that is true enough in this scenario. New cops are especially prone to becoming defensive when challenged and young people are especially unlikely to be listened to, or sympathized with, by cops. My advice would have been to accept the ticket,

but show up in court and make a plea to the judge. You might have gotten it reduced, at least. Many young people don't bother doing that, but it can be worth the effort.

Cathy Gilligan

Thank you for publishing the book list. I know you guys vote on your choices for the year whereas we allow our group leader to choose for us. A few things on your list that leap out at me are *Nemesis Games* by Corey, which Jeanne and I loved and our group will discuss later this year, *Planetfall* by Newman we did recently which had a divided response in our group and *Seveneves* by Stephenson which we are doing later this summer. Your list contains a number of interesting things I was unaware of.

Andy Hooper

I loved your comment to Lisa about Donald Trump being "...like a drunk uncle rambling at an endless Thanksgiving dinner." The other day we heard someone on the radio talking about Sanders supporters who are deciding not to support Hillary in the fall election as being equivalent to walking into your grocery store to find they are out of your favorite beer and deciding to drink bleach instead.

Comments on #359

Darlene Coltrain

Beautiful flying/leaping frog cover. Thank you. Also, you should know that back cover is a persistent temptation.

Lisa Freitag

As noted earlier, we are *Hamilton* fanatics in this household, too. Jeanne got a copy of the Broadway cast recording around Christmas time and listened to it over and over for a couple weeks. I have listened to parts of it many times and all the way through it several times during my morning workouts. We listened to it in the car again last weekend. We also watched the Tony Awards mostly for *Hamilton* performances (we also noticed a few other shows, like *Waitress*, that also look great). Your essay on the show was very well written. I smiled all the way through it, but I laughed out loud at Hamilpeeps ("And me? I'm the damn fool that microwaved him.") and your photos. Outstanding!

Walter Freitag

Although we don't have a dog, we are much more dog people than cat people. Sorry for your loss of April.

I have LEGO April together and I have put her to good use on my desk. I used some paperclips to tilt her back end up and tilted a little sideways over a photo of Scott Walker I cut out of the newspaper. Makes me smile.

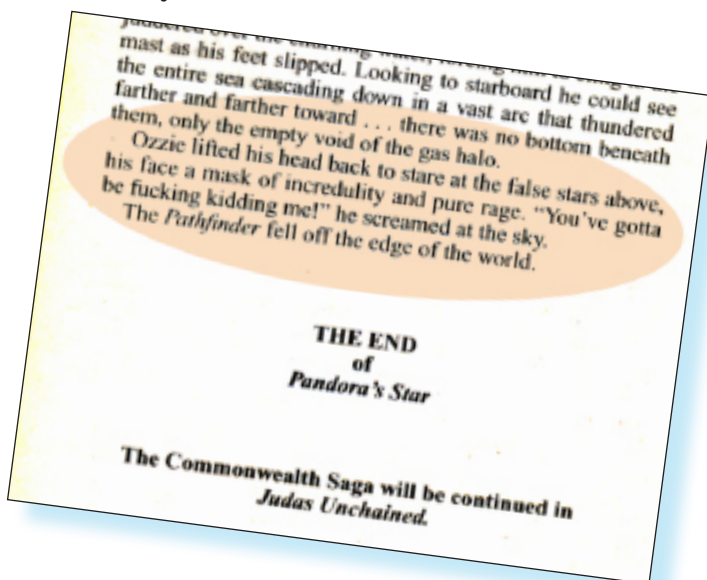
Greg Rihn

Your zines are a great way to almost share your many varied activities. Even the choices I would not have made end up being interesting and often educational. I had no idea what the plot of the famous play “The Skin of Our Teeth” was, but your description was excellent. I’m still not sure I would buy a ticket to see it myself, but I really appreciated your account. Thank you.

We have also talked about taking in Metropolitan Opera simulcasts here in Madison, but found that it was often hard to get tickets. I had never heard of the *Roberto Devereux* opera (not surprising, I have pretty limited experience with opera), but it sounds great. *April and the Extraordinary World* also caught our attention, however we missed seeing it during its brief run in Madison, but it’s on our list to seek out. I also particularly liked your description of the Historic Milwaukee walking tour. They only do this once a year? Is it always in the Spring? Tempting.

Steve Johnson

I could probably be convinced to seek out another Peter Hamilton series, but it’s taken me awhile to get over my last experience with his work even though I enjoyed his writing. Our book discussion group once chose *Pandora’s Star* to read. It was an ambitious assignment because our mass market copy clocked in at about 1000 pages. I think this was a book we were assigned in November for our next meeting in January (we always skip a December meeting and plan a party instead.) Plenty of time, except that *Pandora’s Star’s* plot ends on a literal cliff-hanger (see below). We discovered this late in the game. We rushed to Amazon order two copies of the next book (*Judas Unchained*) sent to us ASAP. We plunged into it (also 1000 pages) and managed to finish just in time for the meeting. We went to the discussion group feeling ready to discuss, only to discover (can those of you in book groups guess what happened?) ...we were the **only** people who showed up who even finished the first book. ACK! Very frustrating. So we told them how the series ended. Only seemed fair.



Andy Hooper

First I want to say that it was great fun seeing you and Carrie at Corflu in Chicago and, later at WisCon, and at our house for dinner. It reminded me again how Madison never felt the quite same to me after you guys moved to out to Seattle.

Thanks for taking me along our your trip to the Field Museum in Chicago. I have only been to Science and Industry and that was so long ago I barely remember it. Every time we go to Chicago (as well as Milwaukee and Minneapolis) I say to myself that we must take better advantage of these great cities that are so reachable from Madison. It would help if traveling to them was not such a hassle. After being abandoned by Siri, we ended up striking out on city streets on our own to drive the last few miles to our hotel. The last time we went to downtown Chicago before Corflu, we parked out near O’Hare and took the El train into the city, which was okay, but not ideal. Driving is often the best and quickest way to go because there is no convenient train service to any of these cities. Pardon the whining.

Julie Zachman

I have still not settled on the best way to read the APA. I keep wanting to write down comments as I’m doing a first read, but I can’t do that on the bus or at work very well. So I have made the mistake of putting it off until I have time at home to read and write, which is not working out. Now I think I will just forget about writing comments right away and just read it through on the bus, and then review again when I’m ready at home to write. I just have to be careful to not let too much time pass by in the middle.

I’m enjoying reading about your progress with Rosee. I also don’t mind seeing a bit of dog love in this APA to balance out Turbo’s well-established focus on cats.

Susan Hastings

I’m wishing you the best of luck on your job hunt. Great story about the belly dance performance as a way to share family culture and tradition. I would not describe my family as particularly religious or staid, but I think a belly dance performance would have been a big surprise for them, too.

Jim Frenkel

I hope the house sale goes smoothly and you don’t have to delay your plans for too long. Summer is a good time to sell and the Madison housing market has been lively, I’m told.

—Scott Custis. 19 June 2016