

Obsessions ²³

This is OBSESSIONS #23, and an Obsessive Press Publication #62. I think. This is very embarrassing, but I seem to have a difficult time keeping track of what number I'm on. Do any of you have this problem? Anyway, here I am again. A postmailing. My address is still 2018 Jenifer Street, Madison, WI 53704. And you can still reach me by phone at 608-241-8445 (eves) or 608-267-7483 (days).

It used to be that of all the days of the week, Fridays were the good ones. TGIF, and all: thank ghu the weekend is only one day's time away. You know. Things have changed though. Often nowadays, I wake up and say, "Oh, no, not Friday!" Or else, after having painfully relocated my consciousness on a Monday morning (as several friends of mine will tell you, I am definitely not the type to bounce cheerfully from bed, instantly alert), I am apt to try to temper some of my usual morning crankiness by reminding myself, that, well at least it's Monday.

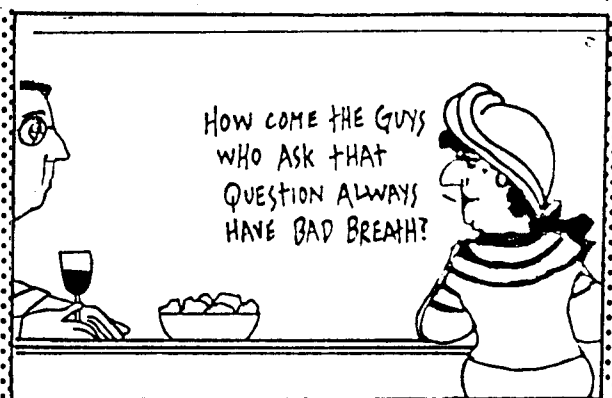
I still like my job at the Department of Natural Resources very much (I'm the graphic artist for the Bureau of Parks and Recreation), but no, that's not the reason for such a warped sense of the week. Along with most people whose work schedule is the day shift, Monday through Friday, I look forward to weekends as being a time for myself and for personal priorities, rather than for those set by my employer.

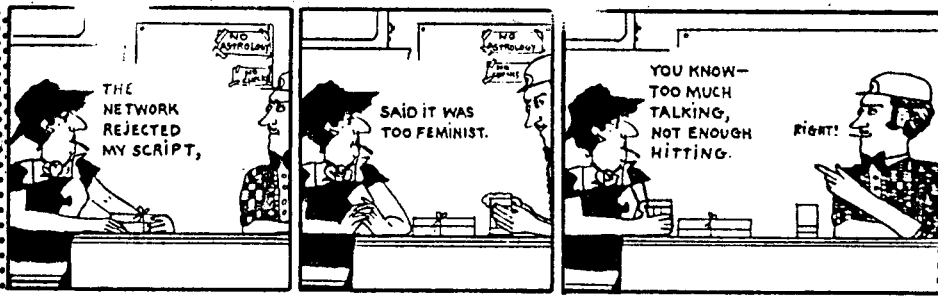
I haven't gotten into S&M, either.

No, this just happens to be one of those times in my life marked by involvement in a new obsession.

* * *

The first time something like this happened was more than 20 years ago. I was in the third grade at Calhoun Elementary Public School and I had to steal Madelaine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* from the library. Thievery was necessary because the librarian had restricted all first-, second-, and third-graders to a small corner of the library in which the shelves were stocked with See-Dick-and-Jane type books and the occassional Dr. Seuss. This was one of those familiar cases of arbitrary age-discrimination, unusual only in that it didn't have to do with sex, liquor or money. Presumably, the librarian felt that fragile, young children had to be protected from literature that might discourage them. But I had been reading for a couple years (and gotten in trouble for it in class), and was quite capable of reading "real" books as I thought of books without illustrations at the time. I was deter-



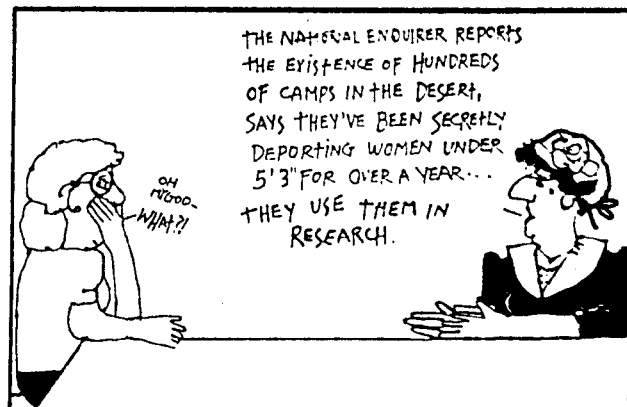


mined to read real books, and so I took them without bothering to check them out because, had I done so, the librarian would have confiscated them and sent me back to the picture books. I learned considerable sleight of hand, walking casually from the library as if I hadn't found anything that interested me, all the while hiding a contraband book behind a notebook in the hand furthest from the librarian's desk as I passed it. The task of returning those stolen books was far easier. All I had to do was to drop them anonymously into the book return box out in the hallway, which I would do at the earliest opportunity, reading the books at eye-staining speed during recess, on the bus and after bedtime at home. (I had visions of the library branch of the FBI breaking down the door to my family's home and searching for the "hot" books.)

That's how I became a casual criminal, and on the side, learned to be paranoid about books. It soon became obvious to me that there was no Library Gestapo, or if there was one, that it was operating with incredible ineptitude. (I was of course, too young at that point to have had many dealings with the Postal Service, and so was still relatively naive when it came to the subject of bureaucratic productivity.) But, as I said, that

year of library larceny, casual though it became, also infected me with a virulent form of bookish paranoia that lasted for a large part of my elementary school career. Feeling that my book source was tenuous, to say the least, I constantly worried that I would someday "run out" of books to read. As the stack of books on my desk at home started to dwindle down to three or four, panic would take hold and I would feverishly start laying plans for replenishing my supply. The school libraries at Calhoun and at St. Luke's (where I finished off grade school), were after all both small ones, the New Berlin Public Library non-existent until the late '60's, and so it wasn't until I was old enough to visit the Milwaukee Public Library and had access to the high school library that I realized how totally absurd were my fears of running out of reading material. Indeed, I wish that I could reclaim the certainty I once felt that it was possible to read all the books in which one had any interest.

That first stolen book, *A Wrinkle in Time*, also started me off on an obsession with science fiction and fantasy literature, but that's a whole other story with an entirely different list of behavioral changes, none of which, by the way, included an affection for Mondays. Quite the opposite, in fact.



In later years, I became obsessed with SF&F, with academia (budgeting myself to only one night a month "off" from studying—and even then feeling guilty), then with movies (eliminating, of necessity, some of my academic obsessiveness when I started to indulge in the opportunities offered by the UW's dozens of \$1 movies shown on campus every weekend), with art, with fandom, and of course, with feminism. You will note that none of these activities are exactly restricted to weekdays.

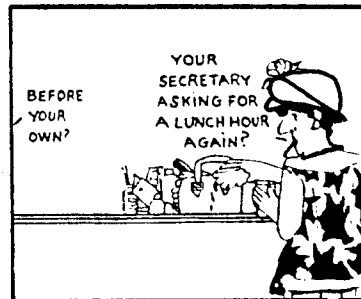
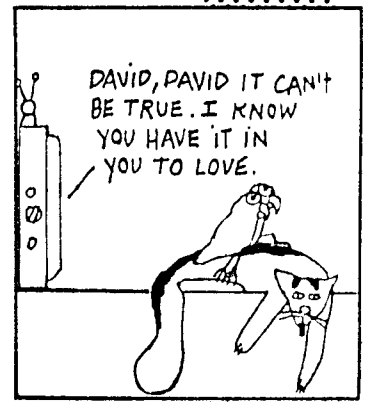
There have been other less epic obsessions in my life, like getting hooked on Heinlein in my grade school days and constructing a wall-size chart containing all of his stories and novels together with all of his characters, plus the technological and sociological changes portrayed in his work. That one ended quickly enough when I finally convinced my teacher to let me write a term paper on Heinlein and discovered what a fascist he was/is, once I sat down and really thought about what he was preaching. Still, I've always considered my obsessions to be things that revolve primarily around thinking, i.e., cerebral activities.

This latest obsession breaks the rule.

For the last three months I've been weightlifting. I've also been swimming a mile a week, riding my bike to and from work, going off on 15-30 mile bike excursions on weekends, and in general, (according to my gleeful brother who for years has taken this rap himself), been a "jock."

On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, during my lunch hour, I walk down to the local YWCA, which is conveniently only 3 blocks away from my office, change into shorts and a T-shirt, do 15 minutes worth of warm-up stretching exercises, and then do about 45 minutes of weightlifting on a universal gym and with some free weights. My best weight with the bench press (10 repetitions, 3X), is 86 pounds, so far. My legs are the really strong parts of me, though. On the leg press I'm up to 400 pounds (10 reps, 3X). That's probably due in part to the bike riding and swimming that I'm doing on the side.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, I swim laps at the Y during my lunch hours. So far, I've only had time to do a half mile (what with hair drying time, etc...). It's a small pool and so that translates into 30 laps, or 60 lengths. Last week though, I took a day off from work as part of the weekend to go up to Minneapolis to my brother's wedding, and had enough extra time in the morning to do a whole mile. I was gleefully swaggering about that accomplishment for the whole day. In fact, the whole thing—the experience and my program's effect on my health, pleases me a whole lot.



It started out early this summer with a resolution to get some exercise to compensate for my increasingly sedentary habits of the past several years. Everything I do seems to involve sitting on my ass. At work I mostly sit on a stool over my drafting table. Fannish activities mostly involve sitting behind a typewriter, my home drafting table, or a telephone. Occasional expeditions to cons more than compensate for incidental traveling exertions with the obligatory rite of restaurant observances. Reading two or three books a week doesn't help my cardio-vascular system much. More and more, my conception of myself as an active, strong person, did not jive with the image reflected back at me in mirrors, or with the way I could get winded so easily after a few flights of stairs at a con hotel with the usual elevator problems.

So, last June I bought a Sekai-1000 10-speed bike. It's a wonderful machine. Last summer, I borrowed a neighbor's 10-speed during the bus strike, and that was nice enough, especially since I'd never ridden anything but a one-speed bubble-tire bike before. (That old clunker was one that I'd brought with me to Madison and some thief with a sense of humor stole the lock from it—and left the bike—as if to show me what they thought of the bike.) This new bike of mine wouldn't have just the lock stolen from it. It is a very, very good bike. It's locked with a strong, fat steel cable whenever it's parked. Even with the experience of last summer's borrowed bike, I had no idea how nice it would be to ride a bike like the one I have now. I've turned into a real bike freak, or *Bikey*, as they call us here. Next Spring, I'm planning on joining a biking club so that I can go on some longer trips with others (Maybe I'll find a whole new fandom!) One

of my plans is to bike to Milwaukee to visit my folks, which is a trip of about 80 miles. As with most of my obsessions, this is going to be another long-term process, with lots of resulting behavioral changes...

Like: Getting stronger. Every two or three weeks I increase the weights I lift by about 5 pounds. That first day with the new weights leaves my muscles aching and sometimes I can't do 10 repetitions a full three times. By the end of the week, those same weights are manageable and I'm doing the 10 reps, three times. After another week

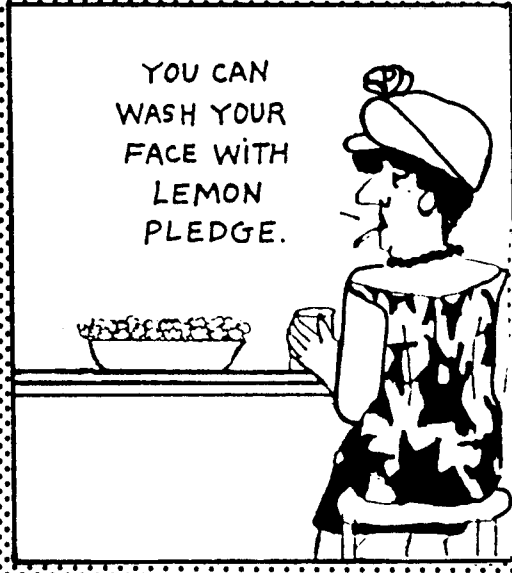
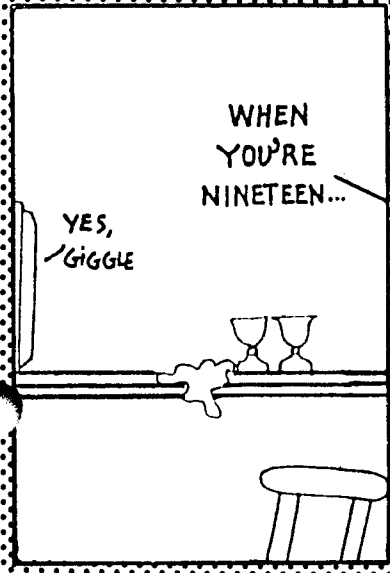
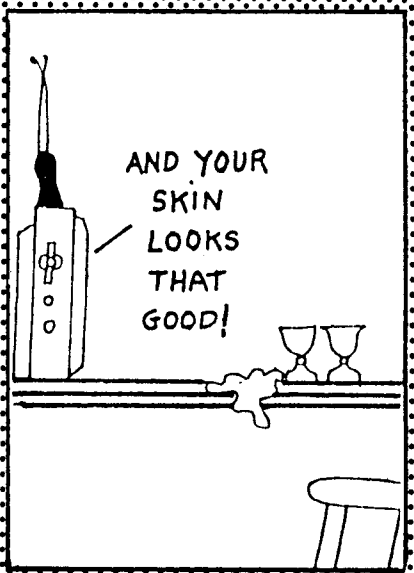
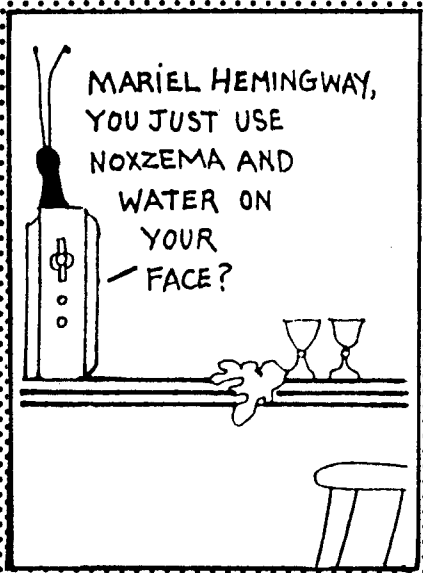
or two, those weights are actually easy.

(There is a very petite, small-boned, thin woman who works out at the YWCA Bodyworks who recently won a weightlifting contest in her weight category. Legend has it that as she approached the several hundred pound free weight on the stage, that she narrowed her eyes, stiffened her jaw, glared at the weight, planted her hands on her hips, and growled with the lowest register of her voice: "...EASY!"

That has been a slogan for some of us at Bodyworks ever since.)

Like: Losing weight. That's an unplanned-for, somewhat surprising side effect. I guess if I'd thought about it, I would have realized that doing all this exercise, plus skipping weekday lunches would have some effect on my weight. But I would never have predicted it to have as dramatic an effect as it has. I've been losing an average of a half a pound per day. During the first month, it was more like a whole pound a day. I've gone down two dress sizes, am fast running out of clothes that look halfway presentable, but I'm going to wait another couple months before I start spending a lot of money replenishing





my wardrobe. I don't want to have to do that twice.

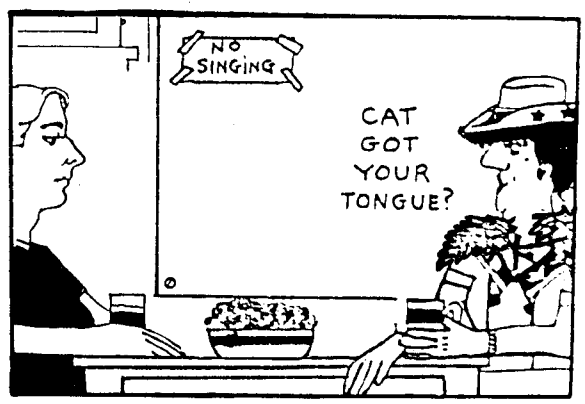
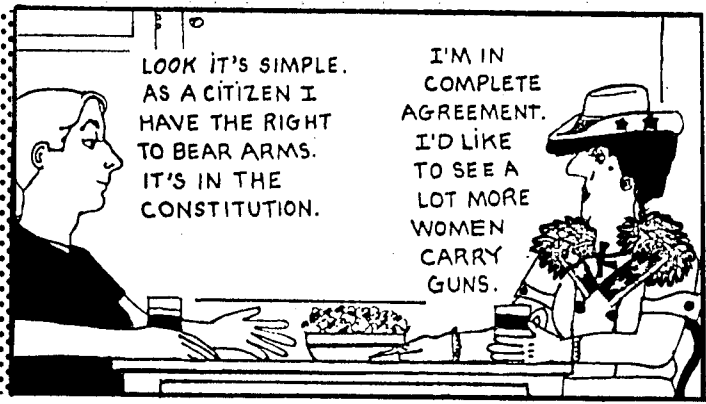
Like: Needing more sleep. This is the only drawback so far, unless I count the impending bank account disaster that will be caused by all the necessary clothes shopping. I used to need only 4 hours of sleep a night, usually turning in at 2AM or so, and getting up at 6AM. Of course, I would rather have slept later (and wouldn't have minded staying up later still if that were possible), but I'm stuck with office hours at work. Now, since starting weightlifting, swimming and biking, I rarely stay up any later than midnight, and am far better off if I can get to bed by at least 11PM. (...she says as she looks at her watch and sees that it is definitely past her bedtime.)

Like: More energy. More energy to do things, to enjoy other people, to enjoy myself. If that weren't more than offset by the loss of two to three hours productive work time because

increased sleep needs, I'd have become an incredible dynamo. I'd maybe have had time to actually get my apazine in on time rather than having to do a postmailing. As it happens, I'm only an average dynamo at present. Seriously though, I think I'm more often in a good mood since I began all this.

Like: Lots of compliments. Which is nice.

Like: A cheering gallery. Which needs some explanation. I've missed only one or two days workouts at the YWCA. Whenever I can't make a noontime workout, I try to get to the Y after work. Before I went up to Minneapolis a couple weeks ago I did a double workout (the mile swim) to make up in advance for my weekend vacation. I worried about Denvention, though. I was afraid that after 7 days gone, it



would be hard to get back into a routine. So what I did was to use the hotel pool every morning and swim laps. I'm blind for all practical purposes when not wearing glasses and that's the way I swim. So as a result, I don't know who the fans were up there on the balconies most mornings while I swam my laps. No one ever came up and identified themselves as one of the persons cheering and counting off my laps in loud voices. They knew my name though.

And, like: A growing affection for Mondays. The thing about weightlifting, you see, is that you can't do it every day unless you very carefully work with different muscle groups every other day. (Like legs on Monday and arms on Tuesday and so on.) The theory is that parts of your muscles get broken down with weightlifting and need time to rebuild. Mondays therefore, have become my "best" days. Weights seem the lightest, I seem the strongest on Mondays, because I've had two whole days to rebuild muscles. Fridays, on the other hand are the worst. Not only do the weights seem heavier than they were on Wednesday, but it's the end of a workweek as well, and I'm tired from that.

But I am most definitely in shape.

* * *

On other levels. The relationship I mentioned in the last *Obsessions*—with the guy who nursed me through my recuperation from wisdom tooth surgery—is still going marvelously. Recently we had a serious discussion about how much time we've been spending together and I told him that I needed more time by myself, that at times the intensity of things was making me cranky. So we've settled on a couple days a week that are completely my own: to work, goof off, see others, whatever. We've always had a perfectly workable understanding that

if either of us arranges to be with somebody else, that's OK, but what I've had some problem with is time that I've had no formal "plans" for, and needing more of that time alone. But as have all of our talks like this so far, this one got resolved happily. No serious problems in communication or understanding, and things are settled nicely. ...It's been about 7 months now.

My job has had a somewhat choppy time of it. This summer has been somewhat crazy because of it. Reagan made cuts. Governor Drefus made cuts. And the Department of Natural Resources being an unpopular department to both of those executive offices, attracted a lot of cuts. What made it even worse is that in my bureau, the Bureau of Parks and Recreation, we just got a new Director who has been Assistant Director for the past 20 years or so, although his job title could more accurately have been called Chief Hatchet Man. Old DW has a LOT of grudges to pay back. So, on top of all the federal and state budget cuts, our bureau is having to deal with high-level revenge. Mostly he's trying to dismantle the planning section of the Bureau, getting back at all the younger, definitely smarter, pains in the neck he's endured for so long. From my point of view, this involves most of the bright, most likeable people in the bureau.

Though working in the Bureau could very likely become an uncomfortable thing if most of the planners go, my job is not at all in jeopardy. It turns out that one of the cutbacks that the DNR is making is to refuse all future requests from other departments (some of them already in the works) for staff artists. The artists already working for the DNR will do work for all the bureaus, from now on. If any-



thing, my job has acquired more security. There is the possibility that all the artists will be physically collected into one large office space, but all of our supervisors are fighting to prevent that. It seems possible that we will all stay where we are now and meet every week or two with someone who will hand out assignments from other bureaus to add to our current loads. There is even the possibility of future level advancements (since some of us may take on a management position eventually within the artists' group).

Still the changes in my own department and meetings to rough out the plans for the artists' reorganization have taken an incredible amount—too much—of energy.

* * *

Before I start typing up the mailing comments, I suppose I should at least do what I suggested for the last anniversary issue of AWA in the first place. That is, that capsule biography. Although I wasn't at all sorry that I suggested it (Anne Laurie) when I got to read all of your capsule bios, I'm beginning to feel the twinges of regret now, as I settle down to do my own. Oh well:

I was born 10 September 1951 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and moved to a suburb of Milwaukee with my family in 1959. My biggest regret was leaving the library on North Avenue which I was just starting to get acquainted with. Grade school was awful. I read on my own, but never did much schoolwork and so was told by my 8th grade teacher, a nun, that I would be lucky to graduate from high school much less even to think about getting into college. Thus it was with great pleasure that I returned one day and spoke with Sister Mary Rupert after I had graduated with honors from the UW-Madison and remind her of her prediction. High school started me off on my obsessive academic habits and gave me refuge from a mostly frustrating relationship with my parents.

My parents have told all of us at one time or another that their children are the most important things in their lives, and that our success is their success. The big problem with this maxim is that our success is measured with their standards, i.e., that we

marry, live and raise our children as good Catholics, become financially successful, and visit home a lot. All this makes it difficult for my gay brother who lives with his lover in San Francisco, and myself who has no plans for marriage or children. None of us has any inclinations to return to the Catholic religion, and though the older of us have all achieved somewhat stable incomes, we don't go home very often. This, you see, has made our parents consider themselves to be complete failures, and they guilt trip us on that all the time.

I have three brothers (ages 28, 26 and 12) and one 18 year-old sister. We are all very close friends. Well maybe not yet with Danny, the youngest, but I expect he'll be relating to us other than as aunts and uncles in a few more years. My brother Rick is a cabinet-maker and lives with his lover, Dan, in San Francisco. My brother Steve (the "jock") is an engineer/sales person for Allan Bradley in Denver and just got married to a woman he's been living with for the past few years. Right now they're down in the Virgin Islands on a clipper boat on their honeymoon. Envy. The youngest one of us, (who might have been named "oops" appropriately enough, but all good Catholic families have those), is a cute kid. He hates reading which makes me think he's going to be very different than the rest of us have turned out. What he's good at is figuring out how things work; he already laughs at my mechanical "ability." Sometimes he comes out to visit me on the bus and we go to SF films and feed the ducks. Julie is my only sister, and we are very close indeed. She still lives in Milwaukee, and she's presently working in a quick-print place. Some of you might have met her, in fact, at some midwest cons; like WisCon, MiniCon or X-Con. Many people say we look alike. I think she's a neat woman, much stronger than I was at her age, much more street-wise.

My father is a designer/sales person for Mead Containers (a corrugated container manufacturing corporation), and my mother has started her own at-home business, doing freelance word-processing. I made her stationery and business cards.

I can talk with my father much more easily than I can with my mother. I don't think she and I will ever get to be friends. Arguments still end with her accusing me of "using" my college education against her. My lifestyle disappoints and scares her tremendously, and we've never really been able to talk about our differences without one of us getting teary, hysterical or walking out angry.

High school was great. College was heaven. It wasn't until my very last semester that I started to realize that maybe I was in the wrong field. I should have majored in Geography back in the late 1800's, when it was still a descriptive field (like writing con reports about a part of the world no one had seem much of). Nowadays, you have to know statistics and it's changed from a very qualitative field to a quantitative one. How many service stations are needed in an area of so big a population. So I turned down a fellowship to the UW graduate school in City Planning—temporarily, I thought—and settled down into some shit jobs while I considered what I wanted to do. Here I was, with a BA in Geography and I was spending more time keeping up on things I 'd started with 40+ credits in post-1940 British and American Lit than I was doing Geography and City Planning. I helped start a Feminist Reading Group. I tried to coax us into publishing a newsletter. It didn't work. So I got involved in a local group that was starting an SF fanzine. A couple months later I was Co-Editor of *Janus*. I've been that for about 5 years and now I'm on the editorial staff (we went cooperative) of the fanzine that *Janus* became: *Aurora*. My work on the fanzine, in combination with my BA in Geography got me a job with the state of Wisconsin 2 years ago as a Graphic Artist II in the Bureau of Park Planning. I'm one of those rare human beings whose college education is being called upon directly in my occupation.

Since moving away from home, more happened to me by way of relationships and emotions than did in terms of my occupation. I lived in a sort of rooming house my first two years in Madison, then lived for a year with 3

other women in my first apartment. After that I lived for two years with a lover, Dave. That relationship went very sour, and I hired thugs in the dead of night to move all my stuff from our apartment (because Dave kept unpacking my stuff to try to make me stay), and moved into my first apartment alone. I loved it and then promptly fell in love with another man, and that didn't last too long either, but it was much better for me than Dave had been. In between those two, and since, I've been involved in a largish number of relationships, most often overlapping. I generally make it quite clear that I'm not monogamous and try to avoid lovers that exhibit the tell-tale signs of such. I'm much more heterosexual than anything else, though there've been a few lapses. I make no pretense of calling myself bisexual though. Which brings you up to date in a general sort of way to the point when I got involved with Peter and have been finding myself going long stretches of time during which I'm sleeping only with him. I haven't felt guilty at all when opportunities have come up with others, it's just that the intensity of our relationship simply hasn't left much time.

Now I live in my second apartment of my own. I still work on the fanzine. I write for several feminist periodicals in town—reviews and articles. I still resist firmly the acquisition of a cat or any plant that can't survive being forgotten and left dry for a few weeks. Last year my tubes were cauterized and I am officially incapable of conceiving a child, an event I can still gleefully grin about. And I'm getting in shape. But I think I told you about that.

My fannish career has included *Janus* and *Aurora*, primarily. I/We've gotten a few Hugo nominations for them, and I've gotten a couple for fan art, something that I haven't done a whole lot of recently since I do so much drawing at work. I have belonged to three apas: AWA, C/RAPA (Cascade Regional apa) and VOOTIE (funny cartoonists apa). I no longer contribute to VOOTIE. However I'm on the waitlist for an Aussie apa, ANZAPA. I don't know if I'll be able to manage 3. I've been a fan GoH at Armadillocon (Austin), Autoclave (Detroit), and AquaCon (LA). I'm thinking of accepting B-cons next.

I have lost track of the number of conventions I've attended, although I can manage to count the worldcons. There have been five of those. I think that if I weren't doing *Aurora*, I'd want to be doing a little fanzine on my own.

So there you are. More like the whole rocket together with the unjettisoned stages than a "capsule." But there you are anyhow.

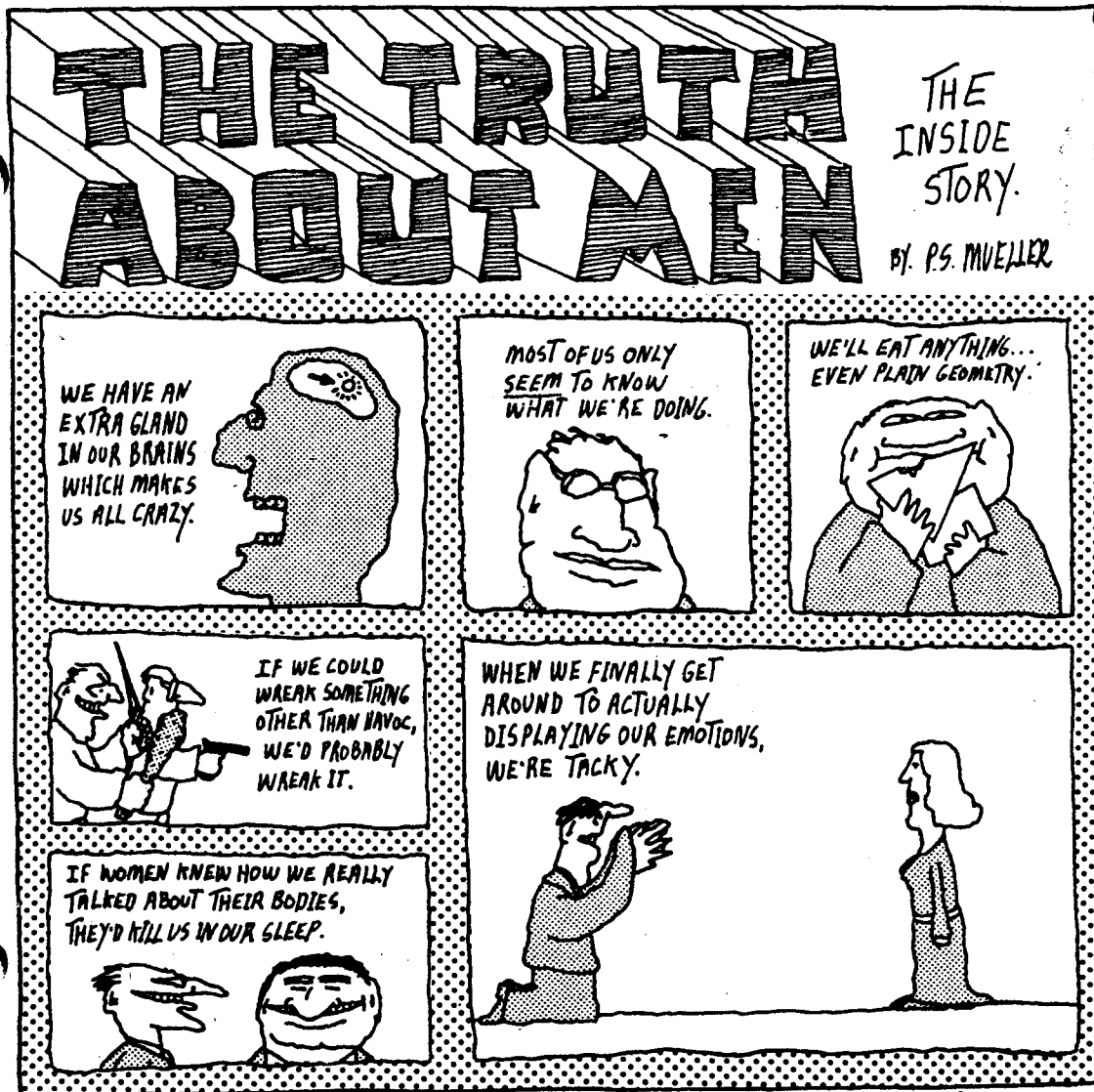
I don't know what's gotten into me this week. For months I've let other priorities—my job, other writing and drawing deadlines, a lover—take precedence over doing this apazine. Now I can't seem to spend enough on postage to say all I want to say. I hope that some of your previous comments about liking my writing were sincere, because I'm testing that sincerity with an awful lot of it here. (For a POSTMAILING yet. Probably get 2 comments)

MAILING COMMENTS (ON AWA 28)

Joan Gordon Thanks for your comments on *The Future of Difference*. I was especially intrigued by the "female trait" having to do with the blurring of distinction between "high art and artisanal products," or crafts. This is a subject that has been a part of an on-going discussion in another apa I belong to (C/Rapa), and one that I think really points out the

perceived differences between women's and men's work in this culture. For economic reasons, women have tended to work in fields of art that produce useful objects—because they can't afford the materials and/or training to become painters (as in Renaissance Europe), because they must combine their art with a socially acceptable "women's job" in order to survive

(lace-making, ceramic painting, sewing of one sort or another), and maybe too, because women have historically been involved with the domestic setting more than men and tend to want to use their skills to decorate it. But that's only the first step of the distinction-making process. Society has then said that women-created work=craft, and that men-created work=art. Larger-than-life oil paintings and sculpture and monuments are art, while a hand-painted vase is craft. Though the distinction between craft



and art is ostensibly not one based on sex, it has come down to that because economic realities force the definition. Until recently as women have gained some degree of economic freedom, art was that product created by a worker who worked on that product full-time. And craft was that product created by a worker who worked on that product part-time or in some supervised manner. There are exceptions of course. Take architecture as an example, which is certainly treated (and paid) like a high art—cathedrals, skyscrapers, etc. even though it is quintessentially a useful product-making process. But then its major practitioners are male and prestige must follow.

I like Ellen Goodman a lot. A local newspaper publishes some of her columns. Though, I suppose you are right, they are probably better read "on the run" since they are written so, on deadline.

Your quotation from Jocoby's book on "the Great Couple-Friendship Fiction," started me thinking about my mother. Sometimes I wonder if she even knows what a really close, intimate friendship is. I think that's part of the problem between us when she worries about me not marrying. I think that, based on her experience, she honestly believes that I'm passing up all chances for emotional intimacy. Both of us end up feeling sorry for one another.

Helen Swift Amazing how our fannish bios line up with some dates like our first SF book and almost the same year of introduction to fandom...

Thanks much for your reactions to my comments on Australia. Your saying that "you really either love it or fear it awfully" connects with the feeling that I've gotten from a lot of early, "exploratory" Aussie Lit. We've got the phrase "Up North" here in Wisconsin, too, and it means essentially the same thing, except that over the years the connotation has acquired more and more touristy elements.

I never did get into Judith Wright's poetry.

Thank you for your comments on the USA. No hurt feelings. One thing I find amusing about comments from people

about another country, is the predictable generalizations and protests by the natives that "we're not all like that!" The US is a big country, I want to say, and we're not all like that! Many of us have risked much to protest the Vietnam war, and are maybe as afraid of our country's tendencies to war as foreigners are. Maybe even more frustrated at our lack of ability to do anything sometimes. Some of us do not own cars and, as a matter of principle, use and support public transport.

...As for American humor, well I agree it's often different than the British brand, but I bet you aren't familiar with the differences between, say, different kinds of Midwest humor (Swedish-derived in Northern Minnesota and Polish-derived in Milwaukee), or between Cajun and Maine humorists. We're not all Bob Hope. Some of us are Joseph Heller and Gary Trudeau and Lily Tomlin.

I like hearing people talk about how they perceive the USA (much like we're all interested to hear how others perceive ourselves, personally). For instance, I recently met a British journalist who was traveling through the country by boat, down the Mississippi River, stopping in towns along the way staying in hotels. He talked about the "epic" quality of America. Even the TV weather broadcasts, he said, were epic. Several pressure zones are shown, and often arctic and equatorial influences are noted additionally; while in England one sees only pressure zone slices, or the equivalent of one of our state weather maps... I thought that was a rather interesting observation. (What are weather maps like in Australia?)

Hearing these comments about different perspectives is enlightening and interesting. Still, I usually have to fight back the urge to remind the speaker that "we're not all like that—" and try to remind myself that when I'm in the position of commenting on other countries, that I'm often guilty of the same sort of generalizing.

Congratulations on the way you handled matters with Perry. I noted in the margin next to your description of how you had dealt with that and with

several non-supportive friends, that we (American and Aussie women) have a whole lot of really important things in common and then starred your own revelation in the last paragraph on the same idea. Maybe the message is that we as individuals all share basic things, but that it's the random, group effects, the not-so-important things, that make national differences.

WHAT "rotton reproduction"!!!?

Allyson Whitfield I have to disagree with you about reproducing apazine excerpts (or entire zines) exactly as they were originally published. For many reasons:

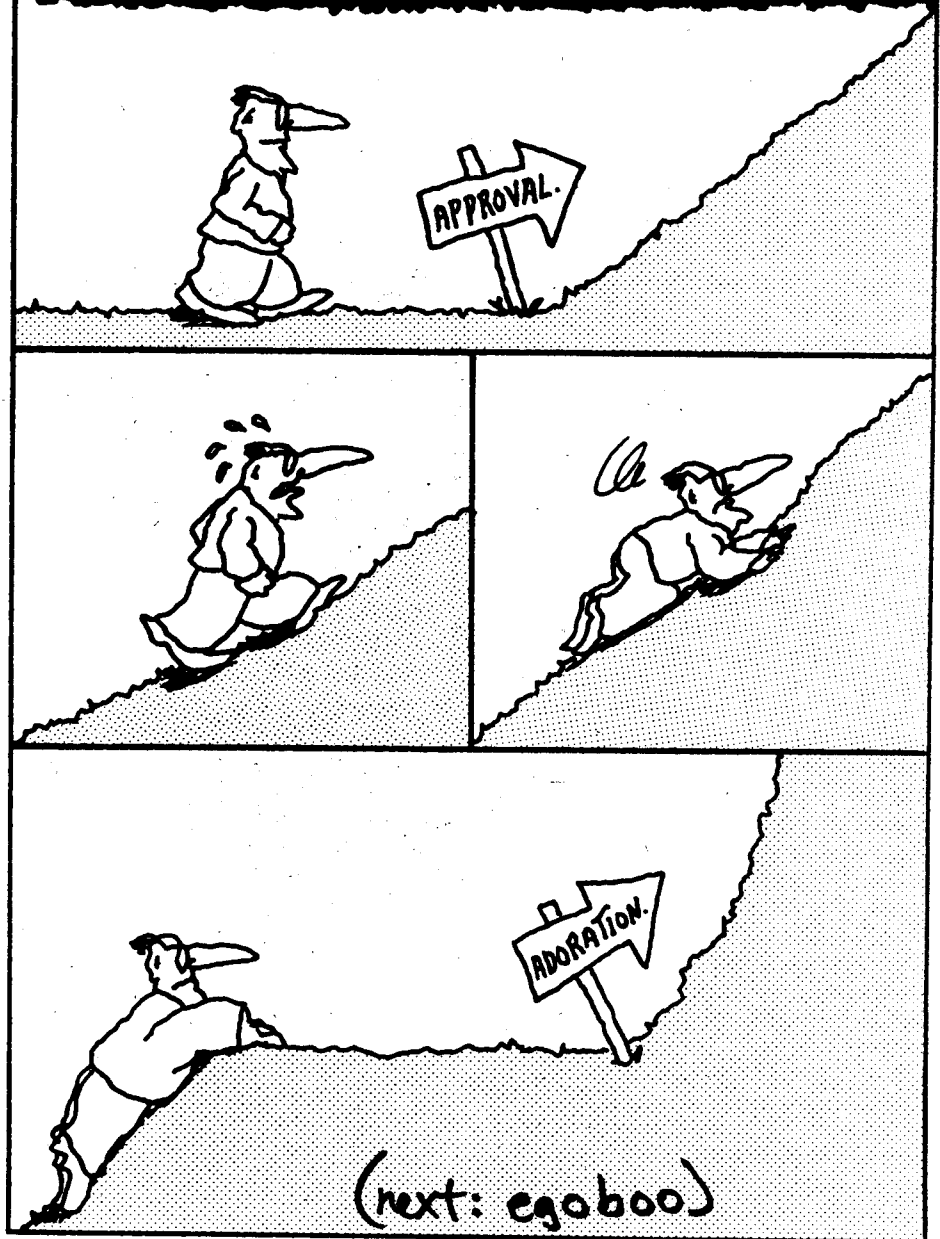
1) Publication logistics would be near impossible. Many zines wouldn't reproduce well and we'd have to have them redone (on the author's typewriter in some cases), or settle for illegibility.

2) Excerpts (rather than whole zine reproduction) would be difficult. And much of each individual zine should not be republished, in my opinion. It's dated material and not of lasting interest (like general non-specific replies to mc's).

I heartily agree with your comments re the MM censorship proposals. And of course, it's mostly the sex as opposed to the violence they're after. (And that's an example of a comment that is too nebulous, and non-referential that would be wasteful to reprint. We'd end up having to reproduce the entire apa opus to insure that references were understandable, and that's eliminating the main reason for an AWA book in my mind. That is to be able to read samples of the best of AWA. I don't want a whole reprinted AWA on hand. (In fact, if anyone is interested I've got a stack of the last year or two's worth of AWA here and I'd like to give it away again like I did the first part of my collection. I'm not a collector, you see. Anyone interested?))

How about if we make sure to reprint some art and graphics to convey some of the visual flavor of AWA?

THE QUEST.



Jane Boster The phrase you used in a comment to Joan, about being "afflicted with a dissertation," made me think of the weirdest image. In the margin of your apazine, there is a thumbnail sketch of a woman bent over from the weight of this mass of squirming, bubbling organisms, tentacles reaching around her torso and face, just about blinding her.

Moq Why are you (and others) still degrading your zines by labling them as having "no commercial value"? I don't understand. We don't, after all, go through Canadian customs now that Anne Laurie is OE... Or have I missed something, and has Michigan's economic situation come to such a point that they took out a mortgage with Canada for the place?

It takes someone who's lived up here to get it, but you did. What a great winter poem. Thanks.

NAME BADGE ACQUISITION ETIQUETTE: (cough)

1) You can buy them at a con art show and ask the artist to inscribe it with your name. This is usually understood to be included in the price of the nametag.
2) You can ask an artist friend of your's to do an nametag for you and ask them what their usual fee is. The friend might just say that they'd like to make one for you for nothing (or may tell you their fee), but even if they are prepared to do one as a gift for you, it's nice to have acknowledged—especially by friends—that what one does for a hobby or a living is a valuable thing and is not taken for granted. 3) Or yes, you can wait not only for an artist friend to "take a shine to you", but also to realize that you might really want a nametag by them (and won't just be accepting it and saying nice things about it just to be polite). (You see some artists have this problem about feeling they're "invisible" too. I can't tell you how many times I've had the experience of working with an artist through *Janus* or *Aurora*, to discover that these excellent artists are amazed that I like their work and roll over themselves in gratitude that we print it. I'm sitting there feeling bad because in some cases the art is so good I wish I could pay them more than the usual free contributor's copy.) But anyway, out of the parenthetical digression, I'd recommend #2.

Well, utopian SF had some effect on society, and not minor effect. You underestimate. I wrote a whole term paper for an urban planning class many years back on the effect and interrelations that literature had on urban planning in the United States and Europe. It was a deadend genre mainly because the writers who got involved mostly stayed close to the form established by Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, and no really good writers broadened the field after Bellamy. But for the decade or so in which Utopian novels and stories were published the effects were rather important, at least in the matter of idea exchanges. A lot of important architects and city planners, and even a few actual communal experiments and all the literature that resulted from that movement, started with the Utopian writers.

I liked your comments to Fran on the fantasy of a Good Man.

I sure wish you'd been at Denvention. You'd have been much disappointed, as I was at the programming. (There was no feminist programming. The thing that got the closest was some gay panels (which I missed) and a panel on *The Snow Queen*.)

Anne Laurie If that 2-foot tall African violet is still bothering you, try watering it with salt water. Works every time.

I like your phrase, "Curse of the Conshow". Sounds like a great title for a slideshow. My objection with most of these images—dragons, unicorns, etc.—is not the subject matter per se, but how they become trivialized through overuse. People stop drawing an image that is personally meaningful to them and comes from them (or a significant cultural membership), but start drawing (and buying) images that are merely copies of copies of copies of copies and lack any imagination or connection to the actual significance of the image. Take rainbows, for instance. Now, ex-AWA member Jane Hawkins has made a personal totem of rainbows and (remember?) can describe lots of personal experiences and ideas that connect her with that image. Her use of rainbows as compared to the blitz of mass marketed rainbows are two very different things. I hate it when Madison Avenue does this to ideas and images that start off with great meaning and inspiration. I hate it more when

fandom imitates Madison Avenue. I mean there's no need...

A "dead rainbow" makes no sense. Any ideas of what can be done to a rainbow to properly demonstrate disgust with the mass-marketed varieties?

Gayle Kaplan An amusing sidelight to the con/weapons controversy: At Aquacon last year, they had a heated discussion on the matter and one weapons freak stood up and suggested that all that was needed was to put up a sign in the hotel lobby warning mundanes that people would be walking around with weapons that looked real and in some cases were real, but not to worry. How reassuring that would be. You could tell the "safe" sharpshooters from the dangerous real-life terrorists by the namebadges, no doubt.

M A I L I N G N O . 2 9
comments continued...

Tina Thanks for another dose of anti-car medicine. I need that every once in a while. Whenever I feel tempted to look into the possibility of buying one, I sit in on a car-bitching session that my car-owning friends can easily be started on anytime I ask "Well, how's the car doing?" (Sit-back-for-an-hour-of-bitching-time.) This went wrong, that went wrong, it cost this much, I'm going to be broke for 3 months, I didn't even know my car had a whatchyamacallit, do you know what gas costs this week?, and I only get 2½ miles a gallon...on freeways, and it's been in the shop all week, I hate that mechanic, but he's the only one that can ever fix it, you wanna buy a car? "No," I say. (Which is the same thing I say when someone offers me a kitten, but that's another story, and I don't need any preventative anecdotes to resist the temptation.) Anyway, I'm doing quite well relying on my bike in the summer and the buses in the winter (\$16 buys a month pass good for unlimited bus riding. Such a deal, no shit.) I've even overcome the one big disadvantage of not owning a car—that is getting out of the city for outings, and a friend and I even circumvented that one this summer. We went up to Rock Island. (Which I recommend to all of you looking for a FANTASTIC backpacking vacation. It's an isolated island north of Door County Peninsula—Wisconsin's "thumb"

sticking into Lake Michigan—with gorgeous beaches all around it, lovely hiking trails and lots of quiet. No cars are allowed on the island; you have to backpack everything onto the island via foot ferry. The car gets parked at the ferry dock back on Washington Island, which is an hour's boat ride across the channel from the northern tip of the peninsula. Oh it was sooooo nice.) Anyway, my friend Peter and myself rented a car, took in a play, summerstock version of *Funny Girl* in Milwaukee, and then drove up to Rock Island for the weekend. Had a lovely time, and it was a pleasure knowing that if anything went wrong with the car it would be somebody else's responsibility. We paid about \$60 for the privilege, and for infrequent out-of-town jaunts I think that's well worth it. We're probably going to do it again, closer to home this weekend and go up to Devils Lake and hike up the bluffs and spend the day there. And I'm considering renting a car for WisCon instead of a room at the hotel (since busses don't run here on a schedule appreciative of convention nightlife). It will probably be cheaper and maybe more useful to do it that way.

Of course the reason I resist owning a car and the reason my resisting is practical is not one applicable to everyone. I live in a city that couldn't have been designed better to accommodate mass transit systems. (It turns out that with a city center squished on an isthmus between two lakes, all buses can have a central point of intersection, and scheduling and planning is very logical and economic as opposed to a city like LA which couldn't have been planned worse to accommodate mass transit. With the cost of gas, the cost of parking downtown and the cheap, very convenient mass transit system available to me, it would be CRAZY for me to have a car.

Avedon Hmmm. I have the feeling that if my exercise campaign continues to have the effect it has been having on my weight, that I may have a similar experience to your own, and find out about how a change in appearance to the more traditionally attractive criteria affect how others interact with me. I'm not sure I'm looking forward to that part much.

I'm so late with the doing of this

postmailing that I have noticed that a great many people have already congratulated you on getting a job in a *gasp* intelligently-run company. Let me add my congratulations to their's and give you my best wishes that you find no loopholes in the structure and that you continue to enjoy yourself. Neat!

Fran To you and Candice both: thank you for doing the organization work on the Women's Apa room at Denvention. It turned out really nicely. I met and got addresses of some really fascinating women who were attracted to the party and wanted to find out more about AWA. Did you get to meet Sandy Sanderson, the man who did the hoaxzine FEMIZINE, back in the '50's? He and his wife were at the party for a while and they were just incredible. I really enjoyed meeting them.

I'm sorry that my plans to get involved in coordinating something with the Denvention committee didn't work out. My contact with the concom at the convention though, trying to do that at that late time was very abrasive, though, and I kind of doubt if I could have arranged anything through the committee anyway. I think we'll need a committee of us, maybe a petition, to show "real" interest if we want to get anything from the Chicon committee.

Again, thanks. You and Candice did a beautiful job.

Cheryl Shit, every time I see the beautiful effect you get with stamps, I make resolutions to get out some of those rubber stamp catalogs I sent for on your advice and order some for myself. I don't know why, but I was completely unable to pick out any(or just a couple) and I always end up just looking when I take out those catalogs.

I forgot (or didn't you say?): What is "queynt"?

I thought your comments to AnneLaurie on unicorns were excellent. After reading that paragraph I was struck with an idea: a painting entered into an art show of a crucifix with a smiley face nailed onto it. Or an American Eagle with a smiley face. Or a "♀" with a smiley face inside it. The effect of mass marketing is stiffling.

I'm enjoying your conversation with Mog about SF and intelligence vs class. —I can tell, there are all these check marks next to that section in your zine. Damned if I can remember what I wanted to contribute to the conversation though.

D So I was wrong. ("I was wrong twice," as a certain egotistic, male member of the Madison SF group was heard to exclaim with a note of surprise in his voice.) Breaker Morant is back here in Madison too.

We have seen a lot of you here lately. It's nice.

I think that contacting those feminist publishing houses would be a fine idea. How do we go about contacting them? What do we give them in terms of sample material or outline?

Allyson Congratulations to you and Best Wishes. I think that one of those things is supposed to be said to the groom (the first, I think) and one to the bride. —implying that one needs a pat on the shoulder for having caught the other, and the other needs good luck for the impending confining situation. Well maybe I have it backwards. These superstitions are tricky.

Hope you haven't had to do too much (or won't have to do too much) "by the book." My brother, Steve and his lover, Betsy, just got married. By the book. And before it was over both of them were heartily wishing that they'd slipped out and eloped. As it was though, they're both the first (and possibly the only) offspring of a family to get married and both sets of parents got really enthusiastic with the process. The money that was spent on that one day's-worth of showy ceremony just wasn't worth it. At least everyone had a good time. If you're gonna spend a lot of money on a big party, it should be a good party.

AnneLaurie What a marvelous mock news-story. I'm trying to figure out where I can post it now.

I share your affection for wrap-around skirts. Recently I've found a reason for that affection that I hadn't ever noticed and that is that when you start losing weight, wrap-around skirts are usable for a much longer time than other sorts of clothing. (Like jeans which are embar-

...rassing when they tend to fall off if not all puckered up with a belt.)

You are doing yourself an injustice and furthermore, reinforcing a false image in your mind, by calling yourself the names you call yourself. Calling yourself "dumpy" ("short" is OK; "short" is a political cause for some of my friends so I will be careful. They bite my kneecaps if I make short jokes.) is a lot like Joyce calling herself unloveable. You become what you think you are. The words you use to describe your physical appearance are not what I would use, maybe with the exception of "short." What rises to my mind when I conjure up your image is a warm smile, a pleasant gravelly, soft voice, a physical presence that is projected by someone who is very comfortable with her body. Stop calling yourself names. If you like how you feel, find some positive words to communicate that feeling. If you don't like how you feel, change your appearance.

I loved your American stereotyped image of Australia. You forgot the part about the clichéd everything-upside-down joke.

Mog I did finally get a copy of the latest, sex issue of *Heresies*, and read your article and everything (well, some of the rest of the issue). I think they did a good job.

Janet No, that wasn't on purpose. ("Morman" instead of "Mormon") I'm a really, truly rotten speller. If I were better I could let you think that I was making an incisive political comment, but I wasn't. It was just another one of the hundreds of words in that apazine that could have been spelled a number of interesting ways, as far as I was concerned, but there were too many of them to check them all in the dictionary. This is life for me. I agree with Avedon about this, it's incurable. Some of can and some of us can't.

Miriam Welcome to AWA, Miriam. We may be able to get to know each other a little better than what was possible with artist/editorial board correspondance. Hope you enjoy yourself here.

Well, mailing comments are over now, as you can tell by the change in typing elements. And I'm back from the trip up to Devils Lake. Peter and I had a wonderful time. We spent most of the day on the bluffs around the lake: about 5 or 6 miles worth of hiking and—mostly—climbing. My legs still ache from the exercise. ...Well, I thought I was in better shape than I actually am I guess. Still, I know that I would never have been able to do as much a year ago. We had gorgeous weather—50's and 60's, clear sky, no wind. The tree color was starting to change and so the views from the tops of the bluffs made the climbs well worth the work. After the Devils Lake outing, we made a side trip to Parfrey's Glen, which is a scientific area quite near Devils Lake. It's an incredibly beautiful short length of bubbling brook and 100 or so square acres of land around it. Many rare plants and fauna live in the area. That's one of the reasons it was made into a scientific preserve. The other is the incredible beauty of the small canyon (or glen) carved by the brook. Deep in the Glen, the place resembles a cathedral, and is one of the most beautiful and peaceful places in the whole world, in my opinion. I was glad to be able to get back there at this time of the year especially (with all the foliage color changes). It was nice to be able to show it to Peter too. Come at the right time of year, & I'll take you.
♀ ♀

ART CREDITS

The *Sylvia* jokes are from *That Woman Must Be On Drugs and I'm in Training to Be Tall and Blond*, both by Nicole Hollander, published By St. Martin's Press, New York, 1981 and 1979, respectively. (Thank you, Mog, for introducing me to *Sylvia*. She's marvelous!) "*The Truth about Men*" and "*The Quest*" are reprinted from *Isthmus*, a weekly Madison newspaper. The logo is mine.

All material copyrighted © 1981 by Jeanne Gomoll, except for reprinted cartoons listed above.

♀
♀ ♀

See you in January. Love, *Jeanne*