
OBSESSIONS



Hello, this is *Obsessions* 27, a publication of The Obsessive Press (number 68), which if it were on sale in fine stores everywhere, right next to *Time*, *Newsweek* and *Ms*, would have a cover price of at least \$5.00 and if AWA gets held up at the Canadian border because I wrote that we'll know the Mounties are reading it, for sure... (This has been a Paranoid Security Check Production)... Anyway, the address is 2018 Jenifer Street, Madison, WI 53704 and all material is copyright © by Jeanne Gomoll, 1983. Happy New Year everyone.

This Fall has been characterized by several surprising turnabouts in my personal life. Actually, since I haven't talked about the first turnabout and the second one more or less brought me back to where I was, I could just leave it at that: and say everything is the same as it was. But with nearly 8 pages of mailing comments finished last night and a front cover, I have one more page available to fill and so I'll tell you the story.

I've been involved for the past year and a half with Peter—a friend here in Madison, the mathematics grad student, remember, who took care of me after I'd had my wisdom teeth out. All along I've been telling myself and telling friends when the subject came up, that I saw our relationship as a definitely temporary one because of the differences in our political beliefs. Peter being much more conservative than I, especially on economic issues, not so much social—we've tended to try to "shelve" discussion when it got round to the disputed areas. I expected that sooner or later I'd grow dissatisfied with that procedure and "shelve" the relationship as well. Things, in fact, did come to a confrontation in September, a few weeks after WorldCon, and I told Peter that the situation was bothering me tremendously and that I was starting to anticipate a gradual ending of our involvement. At the same time, I was starting to develop an extremely close, and completely platonic relationship with an old friend of mine who used to be in a lot of my University English classes. Kent and I share feelings about and interests in most of the political areas that Peter and I simply avoid. The chance to explore this new friendship and examine myself and this new friend (which always happens in the first stages of a friendship, I think: you get a chance to see yourself from a new point of view) catalyzed a whole lot of thinking with regard to Peter's and my relationship. So we talked, Peter and I, and the confrontation went infinitely better than I had imagined. In fact Peter ended up comforting me, instead of the reverse, as I had expected. There was no scene, just a lot of open, honest talk and examinations. And for weeks afterward Peter made no special pleas nor put any pressure on me to change my mind. We agreed to let things quietly wind down and to start seeing other people. In the course of the confrontation, we both agreed that we'd started out with some rather naive assumptions about one another. Both of us, I think, assumed the other would eventually

"grow up" out of the views we held. I thought that, with experience and getting to know a wider range of people, that Peter would become less conservative. Peter, at times, tended to patronize my views to the extent that I felt he considered them childish. Neither viewpoint represented a very respectful attitude of the other. Well, in the months that followed that mutual admission, the attitudes that discounted the other's viewpoints went away. We started listening to one another more carefully—perhaps not agreeing any more than we had before—but not immediately categorizing whatever the other said into a "typically liberal" or "typically reactionary" box. We discovered that we had a few more basic assumptions in common that we'd thought, and also learned to avoid out-and-out hurtful arguments in a more constructive way than simply shelving any discussion that tended toward conflict. And our relationship in general started improving to the point that we've shelved the decision to let our involvement wind down. Once again, we're seeing each other on an almost daily basis—well, three or four days a week, I'd guess. The arguments and bickering that had begun to erupt more and more frequently as a result of the growing tension between us seems to have completely disappeared. And I'm feeling very good about everything between us. If Peter can come to terms within himself with the fact that our relationship will never be a traditional one (i.e., marriage and children, etc.), and I think he is accepting that, we may have a long time in front of us.

As for other events in my life in recent months, I think I've said enough within the mailing comments about my continuing exercise program, etc. Everyone's talking about weight and exercise and diet has provided me with a lot of irresistible comment hooks. In fact I wonder if I am not beginning to be a bit insufferable. If anyone would like to tell me to shut up a little about this latest obsession of mine, feel free, and I'll try to quell my (verbal) enthusiasm some.

I've still got and still enjoy the job at the DNR, but worry that with the huge projected State deficit this year, that there will be a lot more staff layoffs and that I may be in danger this year. Still, I'm piling up good professional experience and

MAILING ² COMMENTS

It's marathon time, folks. I've got—let's see, one and one-half inches of AWA-zines to catch up on this evening and tomorrow morning. It's New Year's Day and I have some time. It's nice to make your acquaintances again. Starting with mailing #34, most of my "x's" seem out-of-date and curiously oblique after all this time, and I find myself skipping past mailings with no understanding of why I thought I had things to say at those highlighted spots. Many months ago I seem to have been quite taken with Joan Gordon's zine, though, for there are "x's" galore throughout her zine. Under the section in which she talks about journal writing, I've scribbled *Les Guerillères* and *The Three Marias* as much-recommended fictional diaries by women for their connection to all of the philosophical points Joan brings up in relation to journal-writing. And if no one else has explained yet, here is the way one plays "sissors", Joan: With a bunch of people sitting around in a circle you pass around a sissors, saying (each time you pass it), "I pass this sissors uncrossed" or "I pass this sissors crossed." Now, because you are doing all sorts of weird things with the sissors when you pass it (opening its blades, closing its blades, turning it over, passing it over your head, under your leg, or blowing on it), people naturally assume that what you are saying refers to what you are doing with the sissors. As each person after you tries their luck (saying one of the two allowed announcements), you tell them if they are right or wrong. And that depends not on what they are doing with the sissors, but on the position of their legs—whether they are crossed or uncrossed. Gradually most of the people in the group will catch on, and join in the fun of stumping the remaining confused folks. Towards the end, people make broad, obvious motions with their legs as they pass the sissors, saying: "I receive these sissors crossed," and, stretching their legs far apart, they say, "and I pass these sissors on, uncrossed." By this time, though, the remaining people have gotten so engrossed in watching hands, trying to catch the subtle nuances that apparently seem so laughably obvious to everyone else, that they don't even look at what is being done with everyone's legs. It's a sort of verbal musical chairs.//I don't think I met you at Chicon did I? I would have liked to.//Your comment to Rebecca that you agreed with Hawthorne's definition of unpardonable sin as "violating in

cold blood, the sanctity of the human heart," reminded me of a list of three sins (the only three sins, according to some essay-writer I read long ago, retaining only this list of sins:)Arrogance, presumption, and bad manners. Somehow, that all sin can be included in these three qualities fascinates me. (Not that I believe it, but I am fascinated by the sensibility that sees life so. And the same for your definition: so much can be understood by what offends any given person, a much better indicator of character than, say, "my 10 favorite things.")

I have a suggestion for Cheryl Cline's chicken-for-2-persons-three-times recipe, according to this scribbled note in the margin. It says to steam the chicken instead of boiling it. Indeed, boiling chicken takes a lot more flavor out of it, and besides, steaming is faster.

Anne Laurie, you and I seem to have had very different experiences with Quality Paperback Book Club. Where you recommend to friends that they not buy from QPBC, I frequently recommend them. They've never sent me any damaged books, and in fact, on several occasions when I've had special requests (for books that they no longer advertised), my business was handled extremely efficiently, and personally, no computers. Also, I just like their selections and production quality. I've been ordering books from QPBS for about 7 years now and have nothing but praise for their operation.

...Well, I've never responded to every zine in an AWAzine before, but this is certainly my worst record so far. As I looked through my copy of AWA, and noted my "x's", it seemed to me that most of the things I would say in response had been said already, that the conversation had progressed too many levels beyond the point I'd have to enter now. Things will probably improve as I move forward in time. On to AWA mailing #35.

I think D. Carol Roberts zine, this time was a beautiful example of what should be a new artform, "bio-art", perhaps. It reminds me a little of the sort of vitae artists often produce: combination letters/experience descriptions, illustrated and designed to demonstrate their style and ability. Only D's, of course is hundreds

of levels more personal and more revealing than any vitae tries to be. Effective and lovely performance. Thank you. And for a different sort of performance, thank you, Jean Weber! I'm amazed at how much information you managed to pack into that short 2-page zine. I appreciated the biography. And you're welcome for the review. Actually we've done it again, or rather Cheryl Cline has done it. Cheryl's small press review in the current issue of Aurora again reviews your fanzine, Weberwoman's Wrevenge, and much more skillfully than I did the first time. Cheryl's really an amazingly good reviewer-of-the-small-press: she obviously enjoys the artform (of the small press); it helps that she's a fine writer to boot.

Congratulations on the weight loss, Tina, and good luck to you on maintaining the new life style. I know what you mean about starting something like that (weight loss through diet, though in my case it's been through exercise), and realizing that the rest of you life is going to be lived differently, that something fundamental is now altered. I've been able to do one or two week diets. (Sometimes in the last few months I've gotten frustrated with the minimal losses I now make with exercise: I'm practically down to what probably is my optimum weight and so there aren't any really dramatic losses anymore, and to try to hurry the final stages, I've tried a few short diets.) They're excruciatingly difficult for me and I can't imagine maintaining one for very long, much less a lifetime. So, I further admire your will-power.

I've had similar surprising experiences with my mother in connection with my weight loss too. I think both of us come from a family situation that must be partly responsible for the habits that led to overweight. For me, my mother wasn't worried about my health or anorexia, she was just plain angry. There's always been pressure on me from her to diet, even when I was a little girl (age 12 it started, I think). She has communicated to me for a long time that she didn't think my weight was attractive on me, but when I look in the photo albums at pictures of me as a pre-teen and young teenager, I see only a very athletic, thin girl. I'm really amazed to remember thinking that I was chunky and ugly. And I did. I was constantly embarrassed about my appearance along with typical adolescent clumsiness. And I can see now that that self-image came mainly from being convinced by my mother that I was fat.

I think now, looking back, that what happened was around that time, my independence started to show. I continued to be quite athletic, and growing in strength in a tom-boyish sort of way, and my mother wanted me to turn into a stereotyped sweet-little-girl and start showing interest in make-up, sewing, cooking, and boys. Well, I learned to cook many years later, but at the time, I cared nothing for those others. I also told my parents about that time that I didn't think that I would ever marry and that I'd changed my mind about being a nurse. At that age, I think I'd decided to be a mathematician (which is a silly story in itself, but not for now). Anyway, I think that my mother tried to force me back into the mold (of herself, of the daughter she'd been expecting to bring up) with guilt. It worked, to an extent. I did gradually give up athletic activities during high school, but she only reinforced my isolation there: Not only did I not like to play flirting/dating games, and not only was I more interested in my books than most of my classmates, but I was convinced that I was not good looking too, and used that perception to rationalize my isolation. Then, to show my mother that I didn't care about the goals she'd like me to work for, I scorned interest in cosmetics and clothing, frustrated her expectations (and opportunity to complain to friends about "typical teenager daughters") when I got hooked on classical music instead of rock (she hated classical as much as, if not more than rock, but that's not something parents complain about), and proclaimed that I didn't care about being overweight and refused to go on a diet. Thus began a constant tug-of-war between the two of us, my mother periodically urging me to diet, me saying I felt fine the way I was and refusing. Mom goes on frequent diets, sometimes losing weight for a while, but never really keeping it off. It's quite obvious that she needs to "punish" herself at intervals, but that she's not really going to change any habits permanently. Now, it's become clear to me that she thinks that I've cheated somehow by slimming down permanently, and doing so without punishing myself. Her face clouds up and she shakes her head angrily when I'm home and ask for a second helping of dessert. She does not want to hear about any of the work I do at the pool or in the weight-training gym at the YWCA. I think she'd be delighted to hear that I'd back-slid and was gaining weight back. ...All of which makes me feel real good that I don't live with my

folks anymore. I probably still wouldn't be feeling very good about myself if I was there.

On a less serious note, I also sympathize with your enjoyment of COKE. Ah, yes, the Elixir of Life. I used to drink more Coke than I do now, much more, but have been trying to cut down on it over the past couple years. I have found one drink that I like pretty well. (I tried Pepsi Light for a while, and I agree that's not bad. Anything, in fact with a citrus base tends to mask the saccharine after-taste. And so if you like Pepsi Light, you might also like what I found:) Shasta brand diet cream soda. I taste absolutely no after-taste, and in fact I like the taste of it better than non-diet cream soda. When I was a kid, my favorite pop flavor was cream, and so I've been really enjoying this stuff. I keep the fridge stocked up with it and seldom have Coke except at friends' houses or at restaurants now.

Cheryl, I think you are a glutton for punishment, but yes, I think the AWAZine is a fine idea. The real positive point is that, as you say, it would help the AWABook get off the ground. There are so many piles and piles of zines that need to be gone through for the book that I can imagine the "daunting" (to say the least) prospect it must be to start work on the book. But by doing a shorter zine once a year, we could either just bind the zines for a book after a period of time, or if someone is really ambitious, still go back and try to catch all the past bests-of-AWA and do a retrospective zine that includes more current writing. Your idea is a brilliant response to the British complaints of American bushel-hiding, though, that's for sure.

Mog chastises me for giving you the names of male-authored books for your definitive statement on the Male/Female lit-split, and here I go again. But no apologies. This is really good. If you don't like this book, I'll give up and agree with you that we've got different tastes here. But try John Barth's Sabbatical. It's really marvelous, and it fits in well with your area of study. It's supposedly written by two people, Fen and Susan, a husband and wife and it's about the very split you're interested in, because the book is about writing the book and the attempt to write from both points of view. But it's not the typical, sterile writing-about-writing book, artifice for artifice sake, that has become stylish this past decade and a half. The full title is Sabbatical: A Romance, and it is, it is. I felt something akin to what I felt in read-

ing French's The Bleeding Heart, that the relationship at the heart of the novel is one of a kind that is a mature, complex and real: and is the sort I am aiming for and riddled with the sorts of problems I find in relationships. Thus the problem-solving in these books becomes particularly important to me. But back to its sense of romance: Barth has really changed, I think, in the past few years from the days of The End of the Road, Giles Goat-Boy, etc. It seems to me that he must have spent the last few years learning a whole lot about his relationship with a woman. Anyway, I'd really like to see what you might have to say about this combination of romance and modern novel. (Actually, since the writing of the novel is the main bit of business in this book, it might be that the word "romance" is somewhat of a pun.) Oh well.

I'm sorry Mog, but it really is a good novel. The best I've read this winter. What happened with your reproduction this time? It looks as though someone retyped them in East Lansing when the ditto didn't work well enough to read. On the other hand, if pages 2 and 4 are experiments in a new kind of ditto master, I'd say you should stick with it.

In describing the film, American Pictures, you say: *When you come out, you see people so differently; people on the street aren't just robots anymore, each one is a person and probably a reasonably nice person too. You lose (I did I mean) a whole lot of conditioning to see people as threatening and inhuman in the city. Things, I kid you not, will happen to you afterwards, simply because your body language has changed so that you appear more open and friendly, and you are willing to take more chances. The effect is of course temporary, but while it lasts, you learn something.* I felt a flash of deja vu as I read that commentary. I've had the opposite sensation after a Fellini film, coming out on the street afterwards, and seeing people differently: seeing people as potentially grotesque, seeing individuals I don't usually notice, or else seeing everyone in a way I don't usually see them. And instead of seeing everyone as being probably nice people as you did, I see them all as being potentially monster-like. It's a bizarre sensation, and as you say it only lasts temporarily (thank goodness). But it occurs to me that this isn't such a limited sensation (the "fellini syndrome" as I've called it to myself), but one that could perhaps be applied to suspected effects of, say,

pornographic films and literature. And if someone saturates themselves with that sort of "art", maybe it doesn't wear off. A scary theory.

In spite of the fact that you are having hard times financially, it sounds as though you are well embarked on some extremely interesting work with the translating you've been doing. It sounds like a Good Thing.

You know, after I'd written all that stuff down about how I used to experience orgasms on the next-door tree swing and all, I've tried it a few time since then (using other equipment), and I've been shocked to find out that it doesn't work for me anymore. Now, I know that it did when I first started weight training, because when I first began, I tried one of the stations at the universal which necessitated a position similar to my old tree play. And I could feel the sensation begin to build up and would have come if I hadn't quickly dropped to the ground and crossed that one off my exercise list. It's been more than a year since then, and a lot of muscles...and it simply doesn't work anymore. So much for your theory that it's "a matter of muscle." Just the opposite I think. It feels to me now that I've got too much control and that whatever used to happen can't get loose anymore. Luckily, my rippling muscles (if I clench my fists tight enough, and under the right light, you know...) don't affect other methods.

Helen, your description of Canberra reminds me quite a lot of Madison, my home. Like, Canberra, Madison is a town built for a governmental function and its cycles are, for the most part, the cycles of the legislature and the university. But then you probably read about my town in ANZAPA. I feel bad about having had to drop out of that apazine after only one zine. But the way mail was between the US and Australia, I got my mailing only days before I had to send out a zine in reply if it would get there in time for the next mailing, and of course I was never able to get it out in that short a time. And then I started to feel like I'd never get to be a part of the conversation...and I let other priorities supersede it, and gradually let myself be pushed off the roster. Ah well. It was a bit silly of me to have tried to add that to my activities at this point. I'm having a hard enough time keeping up with AWA and correspondance with close friends, much less try to work in another apa. *sigh*

Your comments, Anne Laurie on the numerical growth of media fandom, makes me wonder if there isn't going to be a new controversy coming up with the fanzine Hugos...that is, that with any display of interest in them at all, media fans could easily take over the fanzine hugos from even LOCUS or SFR if they were still eligible, and certainly from whatever fannish fanzine now rises to the top...

...Well that's a better showing for AWA mailing #35. Now on to #36. Excuse me while I take some time to read it. I think I may go for a swim as well. ...Pardon me. I'll be right back.

I agree with you Marty, about the generally better quality of the radio version as opposed to the TV version of Hitchhiker. And I agree, too, that the TV version still managed to do some pretty neat things with the miniscule budget. I hear, for example, that all the computer graphics are actually hand animation, which is really amazing and quite outstanding.

Thanks, Fran, for the Read and Ferry articles. I especially liked the critique by Read of Esquire's fashion layout.

I still think the idea of an AWA genzine is a good idea, Cheryl, especially now with the added specs you've thought through. But I agree that some of the best writing will probably be in the bios. I think that editing by the author will work out fine, though. As far as my writing is concerned there's very little I'd really object to being in a genzine: Like Anne Laurie, I generally assume that anything I put in a letter, and certainly in an apazine copied 50+ times, eventually ends up in the public domain. I figure that the main thing that "protects" my anonymity is the fact that few people really care about my private life. It'd be rather egotistic, after all, to think that the New York Times (or even Locus) is faunching after the reprint rights to my journals...

An excellent review, by the way, of The White Hotel. You should get it printed someplace. If you have no idea of a place offhand, send a typed copy to me and I'll submit it to the local newspaper The Feminist Connection for you: I bet they'd print it, and they pay a small, but cashable amount for accepted reviews.//As for enormously popular, but wrong-headed books by men supposedly sympathetic to women, you might try Hotel New Hampshire. Though I liked

both that book and Garp, I too was really impressed by French's essay/review of Garp in ...: I think she caught the problem right on the head.

Sara, as I told Mog, my holding-myself-off-the-ground method of coming doesn't seem to work anymore, but I appreciate the reference to testimonies in The Hite Report: I'll be very interested in reading that section someday, and am glad to find out that other women have experienced the same thing.//The weights are working out fine, as you guessed. The contacts didn't. I had some difficulty the first week with them, but more than the discomfort, found myself really resenting having to think about my eyes' comfort so much of the time, and having to spend so much time in front of a mirror that I gave them up "temporarily"--until I had a week (I told myself) with less going on, and more time to devote to getting used to them. Well, it's been about a half a year, and I still haven't found that week. This is beginning to feel like when I was in college and kept putting off trying LSD because I wanted to have a couple days of no responsibility in which to try the stuff. Actually, all that was mostly rationalization for not really wanting to tangle in mind-altering drugs when I have weird enough reactions to the legal ones already. I begin to think that I'm never going to find the time to get used to contacts, and anyway, I tell myself further, I was not having a very easy time of it that week and maybe it wouldn't work anyway. Sometimes I'm very good at procrastination.

So many political questions come down to assumptions: whether people are basically good or basically bad, not to mention the assumptions of what makes goodness and badness. This is the point of dissent, I suspect, when it comes to this whole question (started by Mog) re sexual relationships between children and adults. You say that the biggest problem has to do with unequal power balance rather than sexual activity between the generations per se. That to me seems to be an opinion based on the assumption that, removed from the harmful influences of a patriarchal society, people would basically act quite decently toward one another and no one would ever be hurt by any generation-skipping relationships. I guess I just don't know about that...

This mailing seems to have several people talking about their weight, and the number of calories it takes to maintain their weight (or to get

below, in order to lose weight). Mikki, for instance says that her normal diet is 900-1000 calories. Gerri Balter says that even with 1½ hours of exercise a day, that she could lose weight only if she limited her diet to 400 calories a day. ...Something is wrong here. Let me quote from The Aerobics Way, by Kenneth H. Cooper, M.D.: *If you are a normally active person, the basic number of calories it takes just to maintain your present weight (neither gaining nor losing) can be determined by multiplying your weight in pounds times 15. (If you are quite sedentary, multiply your weight times 12, since you are burning fewer calories during the course of the day. If you are pregnant or are a lactating mother, multiply your weight times 18. If you are doing manual labor, multiply your weight times 20.)* I know that one problem I had when I considered dieting or exercising was that it seemed that to actually lose a lot of weight meant an impossible amount of exercise or a super-human effort of dieting. One of the things I learned reading this book by Cooper is that facts of body weight as controlled by diet and exercise are really hard and fast rules (unless you've got some unusual, and very rare hormonal problem) that can be used to control my body. That's the important thing I learned: that with a not very exhausting exercise program (45 minutes a day/6 days a week), or—if I had a bit more willpower—a not very drastic change in my eating habits, that I can change my weight. The surprising sense of control was immediate ...but I wonder why for so many women it is at all surprising to find that we can control our bodies?

I think that one way or the other, we are encouraged to believe that we cannot control our bodies, much less our lives and our interaction with others. I think that this attitude comes up again and again in how women think of their bodies and their chances of changing their bodies. To believe that our bodies do not respond to a decrease in food-energy—that they subsist and retain their bulk through some apparently supernatural avoidance of the laws of nature—is a not uncommon way to absolve ourselves of ability and responsibility of doing anything about our desires for change. Because really: Mikki, even assuming that your lifestyle is a sedentary one, you could only weigh 75-83 pounds if 900-1000 calories is a maintenance diet for

you. And given that you, Gerri, exercise $1\frac{1}{2}$ every day, the sedentary rate could not apply to you, making your weight (given a maintenance diet of 400 calories) close to $26\frac{1}{2}$ pounds... I can hardly believe that either of you would be writing about the problem of weight loss if you were down to such starvation-frames already.

Rebecca, you can tell if you get something from the National Women's Mailing List, because in the corner of the mailing label with your name on it is an abbreviation of the mailing list...I forget off-hand what exactly the abbreviation is, but it's pretty recognizable. And yes, I've gotten about one or two things per week in the last couple months or so as a result of the list.

Ah, finally up to the current AWA, #36. Onward...

A tip on layout technique, Lyn: it would have been easier to read your first page if you had typed the second paragraph in two different columns, rather than jumping lines across the illustration.//I was very impressed by "All That Is Gold Does Not Glitter" (as I am by all of your writing), and hope your instructor was too.

I agreed with you about your discomfort with Gerri's article, "Young and Pretty." But when I wrote Anne Laurie about it (in connection with the article's publication in Harlot, I don't think that I had adequately thought my uneasiness through, and ended up merely sounding confused, I think. And wondering if I'd temporarily lost my sense of humor.

Again, another beautifully produced zine, DC. //No, don't hope that my life slows down a bit: much as I seem to complain about it at times, I'm the one that schedules my involvements, and I'm slowly learning that I need to be not only occupied, but frantically occupied. "Obsessed" is another word for it.

How did I get started on weight lifting? It's a sort of weird story. It's not something that I had ever before considered doing or had ever thought I'd like. But (in retrospect) it's got a lot of qualities which most activities that attract me possess. Firstly, that it's something that I can do on my own (not with a team or in competition or in a class), and secondly that it produces a somewhat tangible result (muscles, and numbers on my chart that gradually increase as my increasing strength allows me to lift greater weights). I started weight training in the same week that I started swimming and in the same week

that I bought a new 10-speed bicycle and started commuting back and forth to work on it. One week I was doing nothing physical and the next I was at the YWCA six days a week, biking every day to work, and touring on weekends. I have two explanations for this sudden conversion to Jockism. The first is the one I tell to casual acquaintances and relatives, and that is that I'd been considering an exercise regimen for a long time, as I'd been feeling bad about my health as more and more, the activities I spent most of my time on have had to do with sitting behind a desk, drafting table, or open book. And I pass by the YW every day... Plausible enough, and it may very well be the full explanation. The second possible explanation though, has to do with a book called Frogs Into Princes and is a sort of text for neuro-linguistic programming (a common-sense, pop therapy theory I found it an extremely interesting book, full of fairly rational suggestions for changing habits and patterns with simple and direct methods. (For those of you who would like to quit smoking, or lose or gain weight, it might be interesting to you too, and certainly worth a try.) Well, one of the chapters went through a self-therapy procedure. Basically its steps involved realizing that much of our behavior and many of our habits are formed in reaction to a real perceived need by ourselves that may or may not any longer be helped by those evolved habits. The authors suggest that you congratulate whatever part of you has evolved this scheme, and thank it, but to go on to tell it that you would like to do the job in another way from now on, and could the creative part of you please work up a list of other kinds of behaviors that would both solve your present problem and continue to satisfy the older problem. (All this vagueness because the authors say that you don't have to go into therapy to find out the reasons you are acting in such a way, but that your mind is perfectly capable of changing its outward behavior anyway. So, the authors say, having mapped out these suggestions, you can more or less leave it to your subconscious to work out a list, pick out an appropriate change and enact it in your behavior.) I'm simplifying it quite a bit: the section was several pages long, and as I read it, I substituted in my own desire to become more physically active, thanked my unconscious for whatever reason it was that kept me out-of-shape and overweight, and asked my creative part to work

out some behavior changes. The authors assure the reader that you might find out or not what your subconscious had decided, but that you might very well simply wake up one day and find your behavior had altered. I'm rather uncomfortable talking to various "parts" of myself: I've never thought of there being different people inside of my head (perhaps an "observation mode", but that's just me sitting on the other side of a curtain or on top of a mountain...). And so I was uncomfortable with the format of this therapy. But interest in the book kept me reading and concentrating. A week later I was enrolled in BodyWorks (the YWCA weight-training gym), swimming, and had bought my bike. Weird, huh? The book may only have provided me with the mental push to do what I had been on the edge of doing for a long time, but whatever happened, I'm really happy with the results.

Thanks for the lemon pie and waffle cookies recipe, Cheryl. I intend to try them soon.// I'm looking forward to the genzine too. You know, the title "feminary" (from The Three Marias) is still available... You hereby have permission to use any artwork of mine from AWA...or anywhere else for that matter. //I've got the dish-washing-for-food deal too, with a friend of mine here in Madison. Peter hates cooking, I love it, and so, on the frequent occasion when he's around, we split up the food detail accordingly. It's great, I agree. We've also got the (I think) ideal almost-living-together situation. He lives about 5 blocks away from me: I get my own apartment and plenty of privacy when I need it, plus easy access to hugs. He even pays for half the food and is going to help me stay faithful to my New Year's resolution to keep my checkbook balanced and start living on a budget this year. (I am beginning to appreciate the benefits of being involved with a mathematician...)//THANK YOU for the anti-unicorn! Could you send me a copy stamped with red or black ink on white paper, so that I can have a button made? If you send me two I'll make you a button too.

Jean Weber: My tastes are too expensive. With out much hesitation I've grown used to having a full-time paycheck, and couldn't imagine making do with less right now. At least voluntarily. Oh well. I know others who feel much as you do though. Jody Les, a cohort of mine at the Department of Natural Resources recently went half-time from his position as a park planner so that he could start a mapping business of his own (drawing and selling maps for special interest groups, trout fishers, for example), and that's working out pretty

well. Both he and his wife, in fact, work half time, opposite hours and trade off child care and working at home. (I really admire both of them, and am getting to be close friends with both Jody and Betty.) But I don't think he would have been able to swing the half time if it had not been for the bad financial situation the state agencies have been going through recently. Forced to make staff cut-backs, the Bureau was relieved when someone volunteered to cut back their hours (with cut back benefits as well), so they were under less pressure to lay off less willing employees. And Jody knows, too, that if there are more cutbacks now, his half-time position is far more vulnerable than his full-time position was. It's too bad that employers—governmental and private—can't be a little more flexible in good times. I agree with you that it seems irrational to ignore potential benefits in productivity and worker moral, etc.

More congratulations, Tina! I think it's wonderful that you've done so well with Weight Watchers. Well done! Your afgan analogy is a good one: I feel very similar about my own changes.

I agree with Rebecca. Mog, you should run your Fannish Danish through this apa. (Yes, I did get it and enjoyed it. Thank you.) Rebecca I'd add that besides finding fans who typeset to do typesetting for our printing projects, there is also the option of learning to typeset ourselves. I did it early last year at a cooperative printer (and then got charged only for materials and time on the typesetter, not for another typesetter's skills and time, so it was the cheapest yet), and I recommend it as reasonably easy for anyone who knows how to type already, and potentially being a valuable skill for freelancing or temporary employment. Besides, look at D's and the occasional AWA member who sends us typeset apazines: wouldn't it be great to try that yourself?

Anne Laurie, I love the sticker! (dog, woman and scale) Don't give up the aerobics class: I can truthfully assure you that the first couple weeks will be the worst, that it does get easier, and in no time you will find yourself addicted to the feeling you get from the exercise.

"Inking in the Stars"...I like it...Maybe I'll use it in Whimsey sometime. The progress report on that, by the way, is this: At the end of October an avalanche of christmas-related jobs fell on me, plus a whole lot of WisCon

