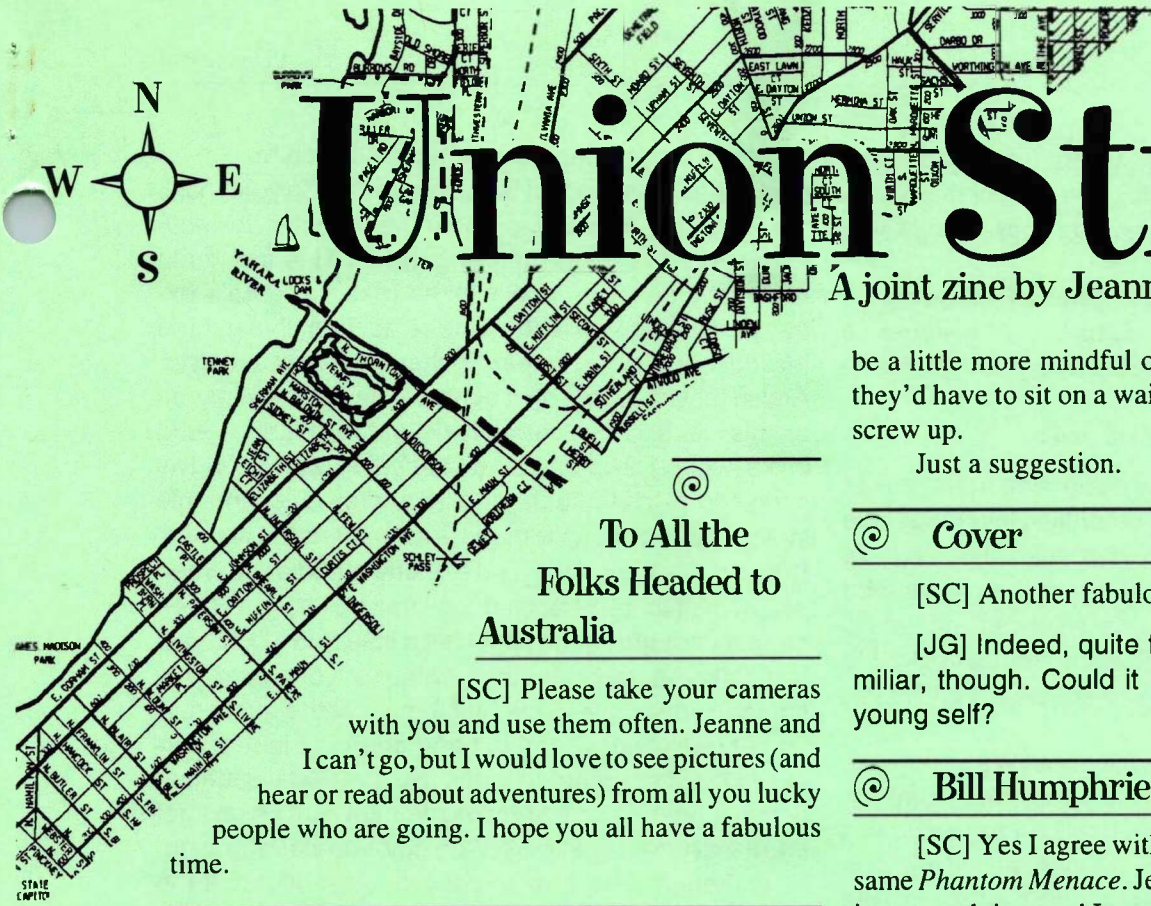


Union Street

A joint zine by Jeanne Gomoll & Scott Custis



To All the Folks Headed to Australia

[SC] Please take your cameras with you and use them often. Jeanne and I can't go, but I would love to see pictures (and hear or read about adventures) from all you lucky people who are going. I hope you all have a fabulous time.

☉ Official Business

[SC] Turnover in the apa continues and it is getting a little difficult to keep up with the rapid comings and goings of members. It also makes it seem that the apa is in more turmoil than it is really suffering because a small number of membership slots keeping changing over. I made this suggestion before, **Jae**, and I think it bears repeating. I propose that there is no divine need for our membership to remain at 30 if we are having trouble maintaining stability at that level. *Turbo* used to have 25 members with 5 on a "spec" list. I see no need for a "spec" list, but we certainly could allow the membership to drop down to 25 if it meant reducing the rate of membership turnover for awhile. A casual look at the membership reveals something like 23 members who have been solid, reliable contributors for a long time. Going to 25 ought to slow changeover down a lot and maybe even establish a healthy waitlist over time. We can always go back up to 30 if things get too stable (or increase the membership by one or two slots if no one drops out for a year, for example.)

I think if people had to sit on a waitlist for a few months, they might be a little less likely to let their membership drop right away, and current members would

be a little more mindful of your deadlines if they knew they'd have to sit on a waitlist for several months if they screw up.

Just a suggestion.

☉ Cover

[SC] Another fabulous cover, **Georgie**. Wow.

[JG] Indeed, quite fabulous. That face looks familiar, though. Could it not be a self-portrait of your young self?

☉ Bill Humphries

[SC] Yes I agree with you, I think you and I saw the same *Phantom Menace*. Jeanne and I recently went to see it a second time and I actually liked it a little better. The second time, I could just relax and enjoy the individual scenes and action set-pieces without the distraction of the larger story. For example, the first time I saw it, I felt the pod race lasted way too long. I wanted the story to hurry up and move on to other things that I was more interested in. The second time, I could just let myself enjoy the visual hocus pocus and not be concerned about the larger scheme of things.

[JG] I mostly agree with that, although the pod race didn't improve with time for me. It was even less interesting, a seeming plug for the video game. I too thought the scenes on Naboo reminded me of Gurney's artwork in *Dinotopia*, so much so that it almost felt like a rip-off. I forgot to check to see if Gurney was listed in the credits.

☉ Vicki Rosenzweig

[SC] Regarding your comments about your unpleasant conversation with **Steve Swartz** at WisCon, I consider myself a friend of Steve's of many years so I don't feel I can weigh in with a substantive response to your comments until I have seen what Steve has to say on his own behalf. I will admit that your version of events

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sounded a lot like something Steve might say (in fact, some of it he does say again in his own zine for this issue), but I am reasonably sure that hurting your feelings was not his goal.

Otherwise, thanks for the excellent WisCon report. I am glad you mostly had a good time and I really value the program comments because I saw very little programming myself.

Thanks also for the medical update.

[JG] Steve isn't the only one who's expressed dissatisfaction with WisCon recently. Several people at the concom post-mortem (the one held a couple weeks after the convention) critiqued the program for being oriented too much towards writers as opposed to readers. And at least one other person has talked to me about issues similar to the ones Steve talked to you about.

Steve's specific comments about W23 programming don't have much credibility with me, however, since as far as I know, he attended no panels at this year's convention. He said he peeked into a few programs. I'm sorry his peeks didn't coincide with more exciting and challenging moments in those panels, but his "review" is hardly authoritative. My own con report in the last *Union Street*, along with many positive comments in the W23 survey forms, not to mention the on-line discussions and email messages received, show that quite a lot of people are extremely enthusiastic about what they observed and participated in during Memorial Day 1999.

We have some differences of opinion.

Steve was wrong, I think, to have presented his opinion to you as any sort of objective reaction to the actual W23 program. I sure wish he had said something to me of the criticisms he expressed to you. We would have had a big old argument. He deserves to have had his comments challenged on the spot. I believe there are some sincerely-meant opinions at the core of his complaints, but his credibility with me lies not in his experience at W23, but in the fact that he coordinated W20's extraordinary program. I heard quite a few assumptions challenged in this year's panels, especially in discussions about and with people of color and those about class. It's too bad he didn't peek into any of these discussions. He might have heard some very interesting conversations.

First of all, I want to stress that I have heard vastly more compliments than complaints about W23 programming. Nevertheless, I think it's important to discuss the negative reactions, too.

As I said, Steve's complaint isn't the only one I've heard about WisCon. In fact, a male friend that I

respect a lot decided not to attend WisCon for similar reasons to the ones that Steve expressed to you, Vicki. He feels that WisCon is sometimes hostile to male homosexuals and to men in general. This friend felt especially sensitive about jokes made at men's expense, for instance at the Tiptree auction. I've got the feeling that this may be partly what Steve is reacting to. And in that case, my own behavior bears examination on this issue. I have certainly delighted in turn-around jokes, which I always assume are being understood as sarcastic re-statements of silly and/or objectionable statements traditionally made at the expense of women. But one has to be pretty sure of one's audience when sarcasm of this sort is used, and maybe I haven't been careful enough. I know that I felt a little odd at Potlatch last year, at their auction, when a very cute guy stripped very close to the buff to benefit the auction. A lot of people were laughing and cheering in that sarcastic manner meant to mock the traditional situation of men cheering on a stripping woman. But I didn't get into it that time. I didn't know the guy who was stripping, even though I knew he was a very close friend of the people running the convention. But I wondered then how it might feel to hear similar jokes from a panelist at WisCon if you didn't know that person well or didn't feel very much a part of the WisCon community. Maybe some people are feeling similarly uncomfortable at WisCon.

I think I'm going to try to restrain that particular kind of humor in myself from now on. I don't want friends who I know to be supporters of feminism and progressive politics to feel uncomfortable at WisCon.

On the other hand, I can only say that I'm sorry if these folks feel we've spent *enough* time on feminism from women's and lesbians' perspectives. It's *not* enough yet. And while I can appreciate and will always support, programming exploring men's different roads to feminism, I'm not ready to say we're all equal now, that the problems are equally men's and women's now.... If that's what Steve meant when he told you he no longer thinks women are oppressed (any more than men are), well I think he's wrong, and that's what we would have had a big argument about. Individuals take time to recover from trauma and everyone begins at a different point and takes a different amount of time to make the journey. It's too bad you didn't ask him if he judged racial inequities with an analogous measuring tool, and if he thought whites are just as oppressed by racism as are people of color. It's an excellent question, one that I hope Steve answers in a mailing comment to you.

The other criticism of WisCon—expressed by members of the concom—about WisCon's growing

number of programs slanted toward writers, is a more confusing criticism. I pointed out (again) at that meeting that the programming process has always been a democratic one. New ideas are always welcome. If a WisCon member wants to suggest a program, all they have to do is send in an idea and if enough people sign up as panelists, we schedule it. Nevertheless, it is true that the writers workshop has drawn in more people who want to write, and the growing success of our convention for people interested in feminist SF has drawn in more and more pros in this sub-genre of feminist SF. The large number of passionate, interested, active people is the most encouraging aspect of recent WisCon changes, in my mind, so I get a little confused by the idea that this stuff might be seen as any kind of *threat* to WisCon

I've thought a little more about the comments since that WisCon meeting, and (after counting) I discovered that there were a much larger number of reader-oriented panels than writer-oriented panels at W23. Certainly all three of the panels I was on were reader-oriented. And on a quick scan, I count 63 panels that I would call reader-oriented out of 105 (because they were about books, not about how to write or publish books). I counted about 15 writer-oriented panels, not counting the writers workshop which is scheduled before WisCon, nor the living rooms which are an adjunct to WisCon programming. Perhaps, I'm not using the term "reader oriented" in the same way as those who feel awash in so-called writer-oriented panels. Part of the criticism, after all, was about how many more pros (or so-called "semi-pros") there are on panels these days compared to the old days. (Please do not ask me what a "semi-pro" is.) Certainly we have more pros on panels these days, but of course we usually place *everyone* that wants to be on a panel, so again, the solution to the problem (if there is a problem) is to volunteer to be on panels. Moments after this topic was raised at the WisCon meeting, I picked up a survey form that was lying on the table in front of me and noticed that the person who had filled it out was complaining about panels without any pros on them. "Get rid of those," they wrote.

© Georgie Schnobrich

[SC] Thanks for the WisCon comments. Regarding the *Turbo* party, yes we should all tip our hats to **Jaе** put for putting on a very fine party especially considering that she didn't realize a *Turbo* party was part of the job of being OE. It isn't, actually, but it seems to have become a tradition at WisCon for the OE to do one. There has been some debate locally whether a *Turbo* party at WisCon

should be held in a 6th floor party suite (where, by policy, it must be open to the whole convention) or in a private room as it was this year so it can be a private party. The room this year seemed pretty packed during the time I was there, but I think it went well anyway. It was real nice to have the space all to ourselves.

I love the Black and Decker Indoor Power Tools. I bet you could sell some cartoons featuring those ideas.

I hope a Dragon Tail cake owes its name to its appearance and not its ingredients.

© Tracy Benton

[SC] Beautiful zine this month, Tracy. Great graphics.

Regarding your Dad, many of us are dealing with parents who are getting old. The challenges of coping with these folks are going to start being the stuff of dinner conversations and apa essays. I am lucky in that my father is fairly enthusiastic about dealing with his cholesterol, mild heart problems and, recently, diabetes. He exercises, watches what he eats and prepares much of his own food. I don't know how he would have been to deal with if my mother were still alive cooking for him. My Dad also learned from his experience with his own parents and has kept careful records that my siblings and I know where to find. I'm not his executor because I live out of state, but dealing with his estate should not be too complicated (only painful, when that time comes.) Good luck with your Dad.

Your organization and readiness made it a pleasure helping you move. Too bad they don't all go that smoothly.

Regarding your comment to **Brooks**, did I cry at *Little Women*? No. A better question is, what was I doing at *Little Women* in the first place? Jeanne told me there was a Civil War battle in it.

[JG] No, now don't you go exaggerating, Scott. I told you the Marches' father was fighting in the Civil War and that there is some doubt whether he would actually survive. I just forgot to mention that this information comes in the form of a couple letters home and isn't precisely part of the main plot.

I am also the named executor of my parents' estate, and not looking forward to the job.

Different versions of Shakespeare's plays have *always* "added scenes." **Pat** didn't mean that *Midsummer Night's Dream* added actual text. That *would* be wrong. But every play I've ever seen has had an actor (or a director) who caused me to re-think a line I thought I'd understood, by moving in such a way or doing something as they said the line, that changed the whole meaning of the line and the scene. Filmed versions of Shakespeare are doing this same thing in

a more flamboyant manner. The character exits according to Shakespeare's text, but in the film we see him exit the immediate scene, walk down the street a bit, and duck into an alley to avoid his wife. No words are spoken, but he did indeed exit, and we learned a little something extra about how that actor and/or director want us to understand his character.

I think the main reason parents have come under scrutiny after school shootings is that people want there to be someone to blame. One or two people to point a finger at and say if it hadn't been for them, this would not have happened. Life is easier that way.

© Mike Peterson.

[JG] Awwwww.

© Michael Rawdon

[SC] Glad that you are settling in, keeping busy and still happy with Apple. It was a good decision for you to go out there. As for us back here in Madison, hey, we are gradually getting used to telling new people in the group about all the great people who "used to live in Madison."

[JG] Well I can see why you don't want to color in your title logo every time. But here's a suggestion. Put little numbers inside the lines and add a color key so those who miss it can "color by number."

I think both Scott and I agree with you about how surprisingly good *The Matrix* was. I like your suggestion for changing the reason humans were wired up. Indeed they should be been tapped for processing power not heat.

JG comments stop here, I'm afraid. We're up to the night before deadline, and it's time to go to dinner, drop these pages off at Kinkos and drop it all off at **Jae's**. Sorry I didn't finish my comments, but it's been a busy few weeks getting ready at work and at home for my surgery and long stay at home. I just finished another apazine yesterday.... Anyway, sorry about this. Scott will have to carry on alone except for the brief JG Health update at the end of this zine.

© Michael Shannon

[SC] Welcome back to *Turbo*. Congratulations on the coming new addition to the family.

© Maureen Kincaid Speller

[SC] House on the Rock strikes me as one of those things that, once you've seen, you are powerfully tempted to show it to some other unsuspecting person. Take Paul through it? Absolutely. I wouldn't miss it. His reaction to the "historical" displays alone ought to be worth admission.

It would be very lovely to have you come to Madison again, this time for WisCon. Jeanne and I have to get down to making some serious plans to return to Britain, too. Leaving it up to chance has meant that it has been more than ten years since we were there. That is much longer than we ever thought we would be away.

Your comments to **Jim Brooks** about what changes in the world are going to mean to those generations coming after us was particularly interesting. Isn't this the stuff of science fiction? Nice to know that SF writers will have plenty of subjects to speculate on.

© Julie Zachman

[SC] Regarding going off in new directions with your writing, the stuff you have contributed so far has always been interesting. I can't believe you have run out of stories to tell us. However, the prospect that you will take a plunge into fiction is also very interesting. I hope you get the feedback on it that you seek. I will be looking forward to whatever new directions you decide to explore in these pages.

In your comment to **Lisa** on eye contact, this is an interesting discussion. I am not quite sure whether I routinely make eye contact with other people in conversation or not. It doesn't make me particularly uncomfortable, but I have often noticed that it bothers other people. Years of working in prisons and mental institutions have taught me that eye contact can be used as an aggressive intimidation thing so I try to be quick to break off eye contact if I seem to be making the other person nervous. On the other hand, Jeanne pointed out to me years ago that I avoided making eye contact with wait staff in restaurants. I don't know why, but sometimes I still have to remind myself to look at our waiter when speaking to them.

© Tom Havighurst

[SC] Nice piece on your trip to California. You are such a cool traveling dude. I went to Disneyland as a very small child and I have great memories of the trip and telling my classmates about it at show and tell when we got back. It was great. I have heard that it has gotten rather run down so I think I'll just avoid going there again and keep the memories I have.

Your complaint about WisCon meetings, and how it would be nice to spend more social time with folks, is a feeling I share. Nicks has become kind of depressing to me. I think we need a change.

© **Steve Swartz**

[SC] Congratulations on the new "house mates."

On WisCon, sorry you had a less than ideal experience at WisCon. I very much enjoyed the time we had to hang out together. You might try suggesting some new panel ideas for programming. Who knows, maybe there are some other folks ready for something new, or at least something controversial. Or maybe not. I have seen very little programming at WisCons since before WisCon 20, though I've helped out quite a bit with various aspects of program planning the last few years. I guess I am not ready to say that I think you are right or wrong about programming, but whatever we are doing seems to be working for most of the folks who are coming year after year.

© **Kim and Kathi Nash**

[SC] Great July 4 party, as usual. Thanks.

© **Update on Jeanne's Health**

[JG] This month for me has mostly involved checking off jobs on a list entitled "To Do before Surgery." My hip replacement is scheduled on July 28th and they say I'll be in the hospital for 3-5 days after that. Then I'll be recuperating at home, off my left leg for two weeks at least. They say I'll be good as new in about five weeks. I'm planning on holding them to it.

My sister Julie will stay with me for the first week at home, which will be great for Scott and I, because that means Scott won't have to take so much time off work. In fact I'm hoping that with crutches I'll be largely self-sufficient by the time Julie leaves. I've got a stack of books to read, a list of videos to send out for, a course of study to attempt ("The Artist's Way"), and an idea for a story to attempt. The freezer downstairs is full of meals and a few desserts I've made in preparation for several weeks of convalescence, and I'm continuing to check off things done from my list. It looks

like everything I need to get done will be done on time. I've ordered the hospital bed to be moved into my ground floor office at home, sent for some decent nightgowns, and arranged things for my absence at work. I'm finishing off apazines for *Intercourse* and *Turbo Apa*. We even bought a new TV to set up in my office to make it easier for me to watch videos from bed. I've got lots of doctor visits scheduled this month in preparation for surgery — physical exams, procrit injections (which beef up my hemoglobin production so I don't need to donate blood in advance of surgery), and physical therapy sessions to practice with crutches and other equipment I will make acquaintance with in August. Scott and I are attending several shows in July for which we originally held August tickets, and engaging in a mad whirl of social activity with friends and relatives who want to do things with us before I'm tied down at home. We went to a book discussion two weeks ago and sailed across Lake Monona on a pontoon boat with a newly licensed pontoon captain/friend the next week. Yesterday, we drove to Milwaukee so we could meet my newly born nephew, Jacob — son of my brother Dan and sister-in-law Kelly. (He is very cute, but not so cute as his one-year-old sister who everyone assures me is the spitting image of me as a toddler.) We entertained visiting friends, John Bartelt and Lucy Huntzinger, and the weekend before, we went to the Art Fair on the Square, which involves a lot of walking, but I decided I did not want to miss it. So I took several high potency codeine pills, which I normally take only at night. Luckily they didn't make me sleepy as I was afraid of; I just got very very happy. How nice. In fact I got so happy, I suggested we continue walking long after Scott expected me to give up. I had a great time as I always do at this lovely outdoor show, thought I paid for it physically later that day. We've been busy. I'm almost looking forward to a restful August. I'm not looking forward to the surgery, though. But as usual I seem to be coping by not thinking about it much.

--Jeanne & Scott
7/20/99