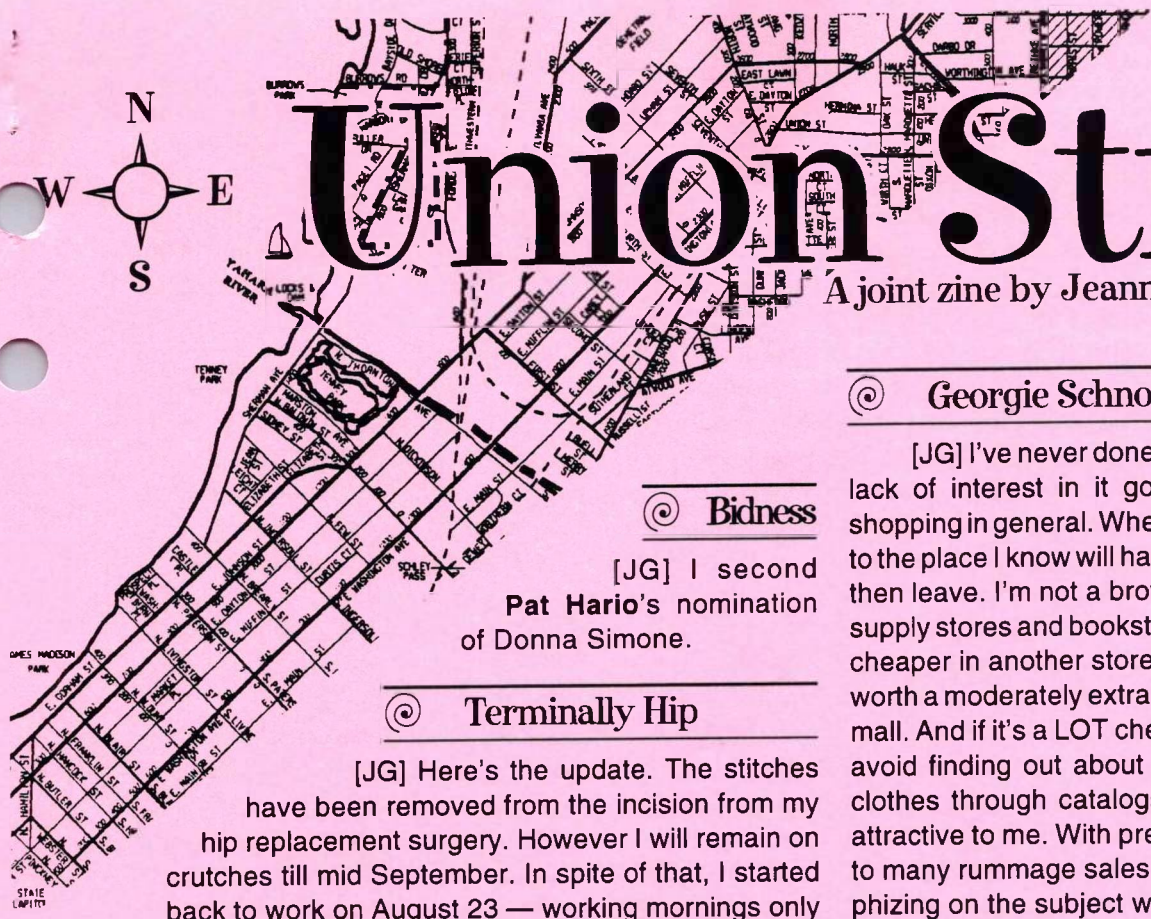


Union Street

A joint zine by Jeanne Gomoll & Scott Custis



⊙ Georgie Schnobrich

[JG] I've never done much rummaging. I think my lack of interest in it goes along with a dislike for shopping in general. When I shop, I prefer to go directly to the place I know will have the thing I want, buy it, and then leave. I'm not a browser, except maybe in office supply stores and bookstores. The thing I want may be cheaper in another store, but I almost always feel it's worth a moderately extra cost to avoid more time in the mall. And if it's a LOT cheaper someplace else, I try to avoid finding out about it. I tend to buy a lot of my clothes through catalogs. On-line shopping is quite attractive to me. With preferences like that, I don't get to many rummage sales. Nevertheless, your philosophizing on the subject was vastly entertaining.

⊙ Bidness

[JG] I second Pat Hario's nomination of Donna Simone.

⊙ Terminally Hip

[JG] Here's the update. The stitches have been removed from the incision from my hip replacement surgery. However I will remain on crutches till mid September. In spite of that, I started back to work on August 23 — working mornings only for that whole week. I'll start increasing the number of hours I stay at work next week. I've matched Scott's work schedule so he can help me get ready in the morning. Then we both take the car together. I drop him off at his office and take the car to work with me so I can leave whenever I get tired. Thank goodness for special handicapped parking; I usually park right next to a door into my building. When I start going full time, Scott will just drop me off at the DNR and pick me up on his way home. In any case that means I am actually getting to work at the insanely early hour of 7:30 am. Keep in mind that my normal workday used to begin at 9:15. *sigh* I've watched a lot of videos and I've read a lot of books, but I didn't do the course of study I'd planned to do; neither did I do the writing I was thinking of doing. I was tired a lot more than I expected and slept more than I would have thought possible during my seclusion at home. There are more details below within mailing comments in response to specific questions, so if you want to know more, read on....

Thanks to all of you who sent cards and flowers and to those of you who offered help or visited with me while I was cooped up in the house.

Because I have been keeping Scott extraordinarily busy waiting on me hand and foot, this zine contains only JG comments.

And I loved your musings on your Platonic art-making ideal — a real, edible cake, as opposed to a virtual cake. Certainly those of us lucky enough to have tasted your cakes must all agree that the actual cakes are a great deal more tasty than a Schnobrich Hologram Original. I don't share your feelings, though, about a drawing, for instance, created on a computer as opposed to one made with pen, ink and Bristol board. To me, the ultimate result — the finished drawing — is basically the same no matter which tools were used in its creation. I've come to prefer the electronic tools over my old drafting table and technical pens, because the electronic ones are capable of doing so much more. And, since nobody's ever expressed an interest in *eating* my drawings, the difference between laser toner and India Ink is negligible in terms of a media that satisfies my audience....

I noticed the chaste storyline of *The Phantom Menace*, too. It may not have been so obvious if there hadn't been two young, very attractive, available, major characters in the movie who simply seemed not to notice one another as sexual beings. (I might not have noticed the absence of a love story if there hadn't been such an obvious Hollywood match.) But I can't think of many films which star two characters of the opposite sex — both good looking, both in their 20s,

both unattached, who are having adventures together — where they did not get entangled sexually and emotionally. (I can think of plenty of same-sex pairings that don't end in bed, but that's another topic.) It's a bit of a game in most films (an easy one, I admit; rarely is there any doubt) to identify at first glance the person with whom the movie's protagonist will fall in love. It makes me think about the underlying "rules" in the movie-universe: that if one is the protagonist, one is able to recognize one's love in an instant, and alternately, can recognize someone *else's* love in an instant (as Obiwan apparently recognized Anakin's future love, Amidala).

Stoicism can get one in trouble in today's medical system as I've learned. Marshalling one's strength, striving to be objective, clear and unemotional about pain, mostly results in the doctors not believing one is experiencing problematic pain at all. On several occasions — not just my most recent experience with the medical establishment — I've used my best vocabulary to honestly describe my feelings, and seen doctors discount the words because my body language seems to contradict it. I might say "I'm in constant pain and am unable to sleep for more than a couple hours at a time," but the fact that I am looking them in the eye, speaking in a normal, calm, confident tone of voice contradicts that message. And it's only later when they understand what is wrong with me (a life-threatening infection or the complete absence of cartilage in my hip), that they exclaim, aghast: "Why didn't you TELL us you were feeling so much pain?!" I think I may have inherited or learned some of my behavior around pain from my dad, who also tends to avoid talking about pain and puts a lot of effort into ignoring it when there doesn't seem to be anything that can be done about it. In some ways, I still find that admirable — when people concentrate on getting on with life rather than dwelling on things about which nothing can be done. But in the past few years, my dad has been hospitalized for major medical problems, and like **Tracy's** dad has created more problems for his own health and for his loved ones by resisting the efforts of others — mostly, my mom — to get him to see the doctor more often. I think I need to be careful about not letting myself go in this direction.

I believe it's neurolinguistic programming which shows that people's eyes look in different directions, depending on whether they're remembering or creating or visualizing. I think I'm like you in that I tend to let my eyes go a bit unfocussed when I slip into a visualizing/creative mode. When people at work ask me to come up with some ideas, I invariably tell them I'll get back to them after I've thought about it for a while.

Sometimes people want to sit in my office and "watch" as I design something for them, but I always chase them away, because for me, creating something is not at all compatible with talking about it. I can discuss the drawing or layout afterward — about why it works or why one option may work better for my client than another — but while I'm *doing* it, I find it almost impossible to verbalize the process. As you and I found out when we used to lay out *Aurora* together, the visualizing/creative mode is not extremely conducive to conversation. I still laugh at how few full sentences were ever spoken by either of us during those layout sessions, and yet — at the same time — how enormously and satisfyingly full of communication were those afternoons! I'd love to work on an art project with you sometime again; I miss it.

I don't think you want me for a president. The trains might run on time, but I'd be designing the timetables.

My sister Julie and I talked a bit about the consensual reality of sex and gender identity during her week-long visit here in Madison. People are all the time mistaking her for a man. She says the frequency with which this happens to her doesn't seem to change depending upon her weight which has been up and down, hair length which has been very short and longish, or her clothing. It happens to me occasionally too, though not as often as Julie experiences it; but it seems to both of us that the cause for the mistaken identity has more to do with tone of voice, carriage and movement than visual cues. I have been mistaken for a man most often when I am being very assertive, when my voice is strong and my movements have been direct. Usually the person is distracted and is not looking at me directly. Julie says that people mistake her for a man even when they are looking directly at her, and since both of us are "amply endowed" as they say, this is a little strange. But certainly it suggests to me that our culture's gender signals are a whole lot more subtle than we usually assume. Recently, I've thought about this some more. One of the videos I watched during my confinement was *Oscar and Lucinda*, a wonderful film by the way. Lucinda reminded me a lot of you, Georgie. She was a petite, beautiful redhead with a wonderfully eccentric taste in clothing. She tended to wear pants which matched the fabric of a shorter-than-fashionable skirt-dress. (There must be a technical term for this kind of style, but I don't know it. There was something very masculine and tailored about the tapered part of her trousers around her ankles and about her shoes. Certainly it looked wonderfully practical and at the same time exotic and beautiful.) Her looks and her life style were a scandal

to Australian and British society, though no one in the film ever described her as too “mannish” looking/acting or anything like that. Lucinda owned a glass-making company, she socialized with men (though she did not have lovers), and she liked to gamble. I am just assuming that it was the gender violations that caused the scandal. Here we are — a hundred years after the time this story was set — and the film-makers were able to correctly assume we'd all understand the reason Lucinda's behavior and dress caused such a scandal without ever having another character verbalize the reasons. It's like Jane Austin assuming her audience understands how a man might become wealthy after a stint of navy duty. It's amazing, though, that some false assumptions about gender have prevailed for hundreds of years....

© Ruth Merrill

[JG] I'm glad you're taking guilt-free time for yourself away from your kids. Sounds like an extremely healthy thing to do.

I think Gwyneth Paltro's *real* hair was short in *Shakespeare in Love* and that her long hair was the wig. Still the bit of camera-work when she removed the short-hair wig and lets down her long hair must have been tricky to film. I suspect a bit of clever editing.

After my hip operation, Scott didn't have to move downstairs so that he would be near me in case I needed him at night. We rented a hospital bed complete with trapeze and put it into my office for me — a long way from our upstairs bedroom where Scott slept. But I kept the cordless phone near me at night. It turns out that if you dial your own phone number and hang up, all the phones in the house ring three times — and *voilà*, you've got an intercom. We'd both pick up the phones after they rang, and I'd tell Scott what I needed. It worked pretty slick, especially during the first week after I got home when I was still a little unsure of myself on crutches. Scott would make sure I got safely to the bathroom.

As for my hip's swift deterioration via osteoarthritis — it was weird, and no, there are no theories as to why it affected me so dramatically, quickly, and at such a young age. In fact there isn't much of anything known about osteoarthritis at all. They don't know what causes it, who is likely to get it or how much of your body will be affected once you've got it. It may only ever affect my left hip, on the other hand, I may have to deal with it eventually in other joints. Researchers think osteoarthritis may have some connection to autoimmune disease, but they're not sure. There seems to be some genetic component; my dad had both his hips replaced

as a result of cartilage deterioration. But, basically the only way they can know if you've got osteoarthritis is to rely on a patient's reports of pain. Thanks for your offer of help. I appreciate it, even if I didn't take you up on your offer. Scott has been taking very good care of me, indeed. And since last week (August 23), I've been going into work in the mornings. I expect that I'll start going full time next week. It's difficult since I will be on crutches for another two and a half weeks, but it's good to be getting out again. We've even gone out to eat and to a couple movies in the last week. So I'm no longer a stay-at-home invalid.

© Pat Hario

[JG] Thanks for including Part 2 of your account of the trivia contest here in the apa. It made for wonderfully entertaining reading, though at times I wondered if you were less entertained in the actual doing of it than I was in reading about it!

Thanks again for the frozen dish for my convalescence, Pat, and for making time to come over and visit in the middle of such a maddeningly busy time as it must have been just before your Australia trip. We both look forward to hearing all about your adventures. Barb Gilligan gave us a print out of your itinerary, and we've been looking at it every once in a while to see where you all were on any given day.

© Vijay Bowen

[JG] Several descriptions in your latest zine created exotic and amazing images in my mind. The police recruitment table at the Folsome Street East fair was one. Another was your description of yourself standing atop the truck, topless, wielding a whip at an adoring audience. My, what an apa cover a picture of *that* would make!

If I were to make a list of my absolute, bottom line requirements for a friendship, that list would have to include reciprocal support of each others dreams. I'm glad you're giving Tom that gift, but saddened that he seems to think it's such an unusual thing in a friendship. I've had a couple relationships where my successes caused my partner to feel jealousy, where my excitement in a new skill and activity were so threatening to him, that I couldn't even talk with him about it. More than anything else, that killed our friendship, and I would never again get too close to anyone that made me feel guilty for that kind of happiness.

On the other hand, the question is sometimes asked with real sincerity, “is this a direction I should go?” The blindly supportive answer is sometimes not

the best response. I've been asked a few times by friends who think it might be neat to be an artist, whether or not I think they could be an artist. I usually answer that if they love doing art and if they're willing to put a lot of time into learning some new skills, they should try for it. My answer has obviously frustrated a few of these friends who asked the question. Some people obviously think that there is an "artist temperament" or some sort of innate artist identity which is all that is necessary. I also encounter lots of people at work who believe that if they own the software that they can do anything I can do. Then they get the software and I start getting phone calls that quickly escalate in frustration and sometimes even anger, that the work doesn't do itself.

Your response to **Vicki's** comment about non-verbal processing reminds me of some stuff Stephen King has written about how he writes and develops fictional ideas. (This is the best part of King's writing, in my opinion, especially in the last decade or so, as he has shifted from writing about fantastic monsters to non-fantastic, monstrous human beings. I like the fact that he seems more and more interested in the source of his own imagination and the process of creating fiction.) In one of his latest novels, *Bag of Bones*, which is about a writer recovering from his wife's death, King talks about taking long walks during which he is consciously NOT thinking about his next book or trying to solve plotting problems in a current one. However, as he walks, he is subliminally aware of the "moving boys" carrying big crates of material into his subconscious. At some point, he knows that all the material for a new story is there, waiting for him, and he starts to write. The process of writing for him, then, consists of unpacking those boxes, and figuring out the meaning and connections of the things in those boxes. I've also felt that sense of material accumulating in my mind as I walked or otherwise moved, not specifically concentrating on the creative task at hand. It sometimes feels as if the crucial thinking is going on in my peripheral consciousness and that if I sat down at that moment and tried to draw it or wrote it down, that it would disappear. I need to wait, and not look at it directly until it assumes a more solid or conscious form.

I had a similar reaction to **Pat's** question about personal responsibility as you had. The more I thought about it, the more complex my reaction was to it and eventually I realized that all I could say was, "I don't know." Good for you for attempting to articulate the potential contradictions in response.

© Jim Brooks

[JG] I'm really sorry to hear that you're leaving the apa, Jim. While I'm sure you will have no trouble convincing at least one person to frank material through *Turbo* for you, please feel free to ask Scott and I, too, if you should ever lack the opportunity. We'll sure miss seeing your writing here. And now I'm wondering if the opportunity you wrote about was offered to you by **Andy Hooper**. I hope you'll eventually let us know what new project you've embarked upon.

© Maureen Kincaid Speller

[JG] You look at algal blooms like miniature forests. I've occasionally squinted at full size forests and imagined what the earth might look like to a non-human who considered earth's pre-oxygen climax habitat a perfect place to live. Plants and forests that flourished in oxygen's presence would look like noxious, poison-spewing growths, some kind of horrible, polluting mold (at least from a low orbit point-of-view).

Your enormous list of things-to-do around your house confused me for a moment. I thought you meant to have it ALL done before you left for Australia. As it is, just getting ready for the contractors sounds like far more than a month's work to me. I hope you got it all done and that you are blissfully happy with the results. I also hope you have a wonderful time in Australia and come home to a lovely house.

When Scott and I moved into our house here on Union Street, we made a list of things we hoped to get done in the first year. As it turned out we were woefully naïve about how much it would cost to have all those things done, and as are both rather unskilled in house repair, we have yet to check off all the jobs on that original list ten years later....

Thanks much for the evocative and most informative descriptions of Brit holidays. Most of them are complete surprises to me; I've never heard of them except where Roman Catholic tradition intersects Episcopalian traditions.

I was interested in your use of the term, "hobby horse." My memory of this term is of a large toy for children — a wooden horse built upon the base of a rocking chair. I also think of it as a derogatory reference to someone who goes on and on in boring detail about an interest of theirs not shared by their audience. (He's on his hobby horse again, one would say. I always thought that meant the person was playing with themselves and going nowhere as on a toy, wooden hobbyhorse. But maybe the meaning comes more

directly from the obsessive trance induced by the hobby horse dancers on May Day?)

I hope you are able to come to WisCon someday. I think the best way to start a convention that bucks as many traditions as WisCon did in its early days (in content and format), is to do it as cluelessly as we did. The group of people who started WisCon had no experience at running conventions and in fact very little experience even at *attending* conventions. It's much easier to invent some kinds of wheels if your group doesn't have a lot of members convinced they know exactly what all wheels look like. A bunch of us young fans went to our first SF convention in Kansas City — the first worldcon whose attendance topped 1000+. We noticed that MidAmericon had multiple tracks of programming, so we assumed our convention should have multiple tracks of programming, ignoring the fact that WisCon 1 attracted only about 250 attendees. In fact, very few cons used multiple programming tracks; this was just Big Mac's strategy for handling vast numbers of attendees. We decided to focus on the kind of programming that we were most interested in and didn't understand the uproar from out-of-town fans who tried to tell us we were doing it all "wrong." Maybe you could gather up a group of promising neos, bring them to WisCon, and keep them in isolation while you planned a programming-intensive, Brit convention.

Thanks for the good wishes regarding my surgery. As I read your comments, I remembered that it was around the time of your visit to Madison that I was beginning to realize just how significantly my leg pains were going to curtail my activities and lifestyle. I remember having a very difficult time of it getting through the whole House on the Rock tour. My limitations increased quite a bit from that and I am indeed very happy now, to be able to look forward to being able to hike again, not to mention go camping, bicycle, and in general enjoy a mobile life. If this operation were not available, I think I would probably be in a wheel chair by this time.

© **Jae Adams**

[JG] Scott and I will be going to APT to see *You Never Can Tell* on the second-to-last day of APT's season. We're taking a risk that the performance will be rained out, but we're hopeful. Originally we had tickets for early August, but we had to exchange them when we realized I would be back from the hospital only a couple days by that date. So we missed seeing the play with **Diane**, Jim, **Tracy**, Bill, and Barb Gilligan. We also ended up missing *The Master Builder* be-

cause I wasn't well enough to go to an APT performance in mid-August. We wish now that we had exchanged our tickets for that play as well. Ah well. We'll be sure to let you know what we think of *You Never Can Tell* when we finally see it.

I also liked the learning scenes in the latest animated version of *Tarzan*. I was especially impressed by the animal-learning he does. When Tarzan realizes as a boy that he's never going to be able to be a stronger ape, he goes about learning stuff from the other animals in the forest, and in the end his flexibility saves him in several situations. I think that's a great lesson.

I found the witch in *Wicked: the Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West* was fairly sympathetic until near the end of the novel. At that point, it seemed to me that the author was forced to plug a lot of awkward plotting into the storyline in order to convince us the "real" witch was capable of the awful deeds performed by the mythic Wicked Witch. I did not much like either the witch or the novel by the end, but I think I would probably have liked it a little more if I had at least been acquainted with more than the movie version of *The Wizard of Oz*.

© **Tom Havighurst**

[JG] It's interesting that you are trying to apply lessons you learned while working out to other areas in your life. Keeping charts on your progress? Always use a clean towel? Remembering to breathe? Three reps of 10 every day? Making sure you have someone spotting you? Sorry, just joking. I think you're probably on to something by allowing yourself to start easy and not overexerting yourself with anything new. Good insight!

I liked *Matrix* a little more than you did, though I agree with you that the guns were silly at best. And good point about wondering why the aliens can't control their own perception of the "stink" of humanity. Maybe that was a metaphor.

© **Karl Hailman and Hope Kiefer**

[JG] What great questions from Forest! It's easy to forget how much of the world we adults take for granted until reminded by children's questions how strange the world is. Speaking of alien worlds, what's a "group" program?

 © **Marjjean Trew**

[JG] It looks to me like your zine's graphics result from a symbol font, though I don't know which font you're using. It's not one I have. The title graphics spell out "Marjjean Trew (MJ) four times. The graphics next to each of our names spell out the names. Whatever font you're using, it has a lot of un-used keys, especially in the lower cases. So, what font is it?

I don't think there is any rule against networking here in the apa. It seems to me that a few people between jobs have mentioned their job searches here in the apa. Good luck with your job search!

Thanks for the essay about your father and the pain you still feel about his death. My father's been having some fairly serious health problems lately, and it was scary reading your story.... It's going to be a sad day when we finally lose my dad. Even though I know it will happen eventually, it's hard to imagine life without him here.

 © **Kim & Kathi Nash**

[JG] OK, I give. Which of you wrote your zine this time?

 © **carl juarez**

[JG] 1) 1 or 2; 2) All the time. More often than not, in fact. This is real easy on a Mac since many programs share the same shortcuts.

 © **Clay Colwell**

[JG] Good point about Halloween outings that are more often supervised these days. I usually went out with my brother. My parents stayed home and handed out candy. We were told to stay within our own subdivision, but that's about the only instructions we received. My parents would probably be suspected of child abuse if they behaved this way with children now.

A current novel that poses the protagonist with the option of joining serial killers or dying is Mary Doria Russell's *The Sparrow*.

 © **Carrie Root**

[JG] What allergy have you been combating with antihistamines for ten years?

 © **Lisa Freitag**

[JG] What an excellent essay comparing Readercon and Convergence. You made some interesting points about the frustration felt by old-time fans and the fact that their/our growing isolation is in large part our own fault. Nevertheless, I think the fact that TV and movies have made SF part of the mainstream is a significant factor in the different senses of identity held by old farts and new fans. And it's not a gap that will easily be bridged simply by recognizing that new fans aren't as alien as the old farts see them. There are, in fact, some pretty major differences between the two groups and perhaps that means that the elder culture incubated in a world that no longer exists will soon die out altogether. Could be.

 © **Diane Martin**

[JG] I'm going to have to re-read *A Fire upon the Deep*. I thought the only thing I needed to know from that book for *A Deepness in the Sky* was a knowledge of the galaxy's structure. I completely forgot that Pham exists in that far future world.

Thanks for your good thoughts (not to mention the card, lasagna and visit!). I was surprised to mostly avoid any depression following my surgery. Even in the days afterward in the hospital, I was in the most extraordinarily *good mood*. It reminded me a little of the "high" I felt years ago, after my tubal ligation when I realized how much a burden the fear of getting pregnant had been on my shoulders and how relieved I was when the possibility was finally gone. Experiencing the absence of the particular pain in my hip, even though it was temporarily replaced by the pain of the incision on my hip was a similarly enormous relief and my mood soared. The only time I came down was after my three-week check-up, when my doctor asked me to stay on crutches for another month to make sure the bond between artificial hip and real bone was as strong as possible. I appreciate the reasoning but I wish I had known right from the start that I would be on crutches for 7 weeks. I was mentally prepared to start walking on both legs at three weeks, and my spirits dipped for a couple days after the plan was changed.

 © **Jim Frenkel**

[JG] What kind of "battering" did you receive at the hands of your family when you returned home from New York and dealing with your mother's estate? And why does your brother consider you a demon?