



Union Street

A joint zine by Jeanne Gomoll & Scott Custis

© Lisa Freitag

[JG] I was impressed by the intense passion inspired by the (mis-heard) phrase from the *Tarzan* song, "you'll be my heart." I'm curious, though, how do you think you would have reacted if someone had told and convinced you — *before* William was born — that being a mother would cause you to invest all your hopes, dreams and fears into another person? Would you have been more or less attracted to the idea of becoming a mother?

Interesting comment to **Jae** about the fact that there are no mommy Barbies. Not having been much of a player-with-dolls as a child, or a buyer-of-dolls as an adult, I don't have a whole lot of information on this topic, but I can't remember having ever seen a mommy doll. (Are there any?) It seems that Barbie-play usually involves pretending to *be* Barbie, whereas play with a baby doll almost always involves pretending to be part of a mother-baby relationship *with* the doll. Rather different. Play with a mommy doll would involve a sort of role-playing similar to Barbie-play. The kid would pretend to *be* that doll rather than having a relationship *with* the doll. To play with a mommy doll, the kid (and the doll) would need *another* doll to function as the child with whom the doll and the kid could have a relationship. (Maybe that's the reason for Ken and Barbie's various friends and family members: to provide the kid and Barbie people with whom they could have relationships.)

You are certainly not alone in wanting to preserve the possibilities in SF fandom that made your own youthful entry into fandom both possible and life-changing. I think that every fan who is seriously concerned with the function of conventions and fandom uses their own experience as a touch-point in their views of what fandom and conventions *should* be and do. I do, too. For me, the most important factor that encouraged me to join the Madison group and to begin my long involvement with SF fandom was the sense that here, I could actively integrate my interests in both SF and feminism. There was a newly-formed group — many of whom were interested in feminist SF and were

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To Everyone

[SC] Next month is Wis-Con and we will not be doing an issue of *Union St.* We will be back in June with catch up comments (we hope) and a cover. We hope to see you all at the convention.

© Jae Adams

[SC] Thanks for bringing Sheila and Tami aboard. A June cover is fine for us.

© Jim Nichols

[JG] Your cover doodle looks like an exercise in (ink) stream of conscious. It feels appropriate for a Spring cover.

© Michael Shannon

[JG] As you say, you liked *Girl in Landscape* a lot better than I did, but the difference between our opinions cannot be explained by your having heard Lethem read aloud. I've actually attended two Lethem readings and the experience hasn't helped me appreciate his writing at all. I think I'm going to have to give up on this writer. He's just not my cup of tea.

[SC] I like Lethem more than Jeanne does. I was amused and impressed with his first book, *Gun with Occasional Music* and that has kept me interested in his new stuff. I have yet to read *Amnesia Moon*, but expect to tackle it one of these days.

Thank you for the book and music reviews. I always like to know what people are reading and listening to.

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eager to talk about the fiction being written in this genre at the time. There was the possibility of a publication that would promote feminist SF: it became *Janus*. And later, there was a subgroup of fandom and a convention that made me feel part of a large movement of people who shared my interests. And so, just as you are interested in providing a welcoming space for kids who remind you of yourself when you first encountered fandom, so too am I. You say, however, that you “cannot imagine coming today as a stranger to any of the conventions that [you] attend.” Let me assure you that a lot of people attend WisCon as their very first SF convention and that they still experience a rush of acceptance and “discovered family.” We read their comments every year in the WisCon survey forms. It may be that WisCon attracts a larger number of first-time congoers than most other conventions. Or it may be that all conventions attract a similar number of first-time congoers. The people who return are the ones that are attracted to that particular kind of convention. I don’t think I would have stuck around fandom if my first experience had been at a large general interest convention. I was looking less for acceptance than activism. I know that I would have stuck around if I’d encountered something like WisCon. So, I guess what I’m saying is that I think the conventions that would attract a young Lisa Freitag are still around, but that I think it’s a good thing too that there are conventions around that will attract other new SF fans too, with different needs and interests.

I’ve also encountered people who have fixed views of what WisCon is, even though they themselves have never actually attended a WisCon. There’s not a whole lot you can say to these people. Their assumptions are a lot more complex and deep-rooted than simple preconceptions about WisCon. Oftentimes, I think, the term feminism for these folks includes in its definition a sense of personal exclusion. And so, to be perceived as welcoming to these folks, WisCon would need to divest itself of formal connections to feminism. That’s far too large a price in my mind for reassurance about their own bogies. Other people who I’ve encountered who have said that they feel that WisCon doesn’t “want” them are those who are established and celebrated in other segments of fandom. Their fame doesn’t always translate when they come to WisCon, but that’s for them to deal with, not us.

I’m sorry you had some bad experiences on WisCon panels. Everyone who participates on panels has felt at times that their contribution hasn’t always been appreciated by their fellow panelists. It’s happened to me more than once after I’ve made a statement that I was told (or made to feel) by another

panelist that my sentiments were completely irrelevant to the subject at hand or wrong-headed in general. But don’t you think that situations like these are more often functions of the personalities involved, than they are evidence of an elitist programming department? Frankly, I don’t think any programming department in any convention has much, if any power over the specifics of what gets said on any given panel, who gets to say it, and how the panelists interact with one another. That’s why (in the years when I’ve worked on programming at WisCon) I’ve tended to move away from the Readercon model of programming in which panel ideas are generated by the programming committee which then invites panelists to fill seats on those panels. Inevitably, one of the first comments made at one of those top-down designed panels is that one of the panelists has no idea as to why they are on the panel and doesn’t really understand what it’s supposed to be about. I feel that a panel whose members were able to participate in its design prior to the convention has a far better chance of going well. Nevertheless, the programming committee doesn’t have much power in forcing people to be polite to one another. (And boy, I’d hate to see the uproar if we rejected panelists because they had been reported to have been impolite on a panel! The argument about standards in fanzine publishing would be nothing compared to this!) All we can do is what most cons do these days, and that is to give folks the opportunity to let us know privately the names of people with whom they’d rather not be on a panel. Some people do take advantage of this option....

As for that Feminism 101 panel you described, with an approach along the lines of “the way we were” — well, I think that’s on the agenda for WisCon 24. Justine Larbalastier invited me to join her on a panel...

“—on the way the history of feminism and SF has been told. ... I'd like to have 4 or 5 panellists with each one giving their own version of the history of feminism and SF (briefly) and then we can talk about why these histories are different/similar—and how many different kinds of feminist SF there are etc. And also about the nature of creating a history of the field and what becomes the dominant story and what doesn't [An open letter to Joanna Russ, by Jeanne Gomoll] is a lovely example of this! As an example of my brief history of the field I would argue that in the 1950s there was a shift in SF and it became more interested in social issues and thus attracted more women—in most histories of feminism and SF I've read it's argued that this began in the 1960s or 1970s.”

See you there, I hope.

[SC] Just to add to Jeanne's comments above about WisCon, I am always amused when men complain that they aren't welcome at WisCon. Next year, WisCon 25 will be coordinated by **Diane Martin**. She will be the first female WisCon con-chair in five years. The last four consecutive conventions were headed by men. I would casually guess that half the WisCon department heads are men. More than half the SF 3 Executive Board is made up of men. So whenever I hear this complaint about WisCon I always wonder how we Men of WisCon can be so hard on other guys. Maybe we are not REAL men?

Of course programming is where men are underrepresented and that contributes to the impression that men are absent from WisCon. But the shortage of men on programming is not the result of an exclusionary policy on the part of the programming department, it is due to a lack of involvement by men. The last male head of WisCon programming was Steve Swartz at WisCon 20. Male involvement in programming has declined since then. I think that needs to change before our reputation among guys improves.

© Calvin Stacy Powers

[JG] Your comment to **Clay** that websites exist that feature "unofficial" Myers-Briggs type tests" sent me off to my browser and I found one of them almost immediately. It seems to be run by a mildly right-wing kook sort of person whose other interests besides Myers-Briggs are Clinton bashing and football. But the test summary he ran was brief (basically 4 questions, each involving a choice between two columns of characteristics). There wasn't much doubt in my mind for any of the choices, and so I'm pretty confident that I would score the same set of initials with the more complex battery of Myers-Briggs questions. Apparently I am INTJ: Introverted, Intuitive, Thinking, Judging. The summary provided with my final "score" seemed pretty spot on. Anyway thanks for pointing me in the right direction. I'd been curious about the Myers-Briggs test for a long time. (By the way, the site was: <www.haleonline.com>)

[SC] And apparently, I am classified as ISFJ, introverted, Sensing, Feeling, Judging.

Galaxy Quest was the only one of the three movies you reviewed that we saw. We enjoyed it immensely. The antics of Tim Allen and his crew were funny enough, but what really got to me were the convention and SF fan scenes. That stuff was priceless.

I also joined *Turbo* partly to improve my writing through practice. Unfortunately I haven't been working very hard at it lately. I can't remember the last time I wrote

an essay for the apa, for example. Some months I can't even do comments. Several times I have had to use a vacation day from work to get in what little I get in. I want to do more writing for *Turbo* because I like to write, but I seem to be having a very tough time setting time aside to do it. I am looking forward to the essays you have set yourself to do for us, but I am also patient. I know how life goes.

© Georgie Schnobrich

[JG] I totally agree with you about how many suburbanites exaggerate the dangers of urban living. It's a common pattern isn't it? A group of people flees a place or walls themselves off from others, and it gets easy (or perhaps necessary) to imagine that those left behind or on the other side of the wall have grown into terrible beings. Maybe it's a guilt reaction. The more Native Americans killed off by American settlers, the more often the Native Americans were portrayed as sub-human monsters. Some suburbanites also tend to be good at changing the picture to fit the situation. Early suburbanites fled the inner cities for a lot of reasons, some of them not very humanitarian. Believing that the inner cities are dangerous places, full of people who do not deserve humane treatment makes it easier to maintain isolated suburbs and avoid responsibility for the whole metropolitan area.

I'm intrigued by your comments on the failings of Sturgeon's law, especially how you feel it doesn't apply well when talking about the value of so-called amateur activities. Well, I had to agree with you right away that sometimes Sturgeon's Law just doesn't apply. For all that it is called a "Law" and with that formidable mathematical reference to percentages, it nevertheless reflects a completely subjective and irrational judgement. I mean ... take it to its logical end point. If 90% of *everything* is crap, then 90% of all writing is crap, and 90% of all fiction is crap, and 90% of all SF/F is crap, and 90% of everything written by any one author is crap. 90% of everything by Ursula Le Guin is crap. 90% of *The Left Hand of Darkness* is crap and 90% of any given paragraph in that book is crap.... Well, one could go on and on. Obviously Sturgeon never meant his law to be taken to such a literal extreme. It is a rule most of us use on one subjective level of judgement, but that we abandon after we move on to a level of stuff we mostly like. And "stuff we mostly like" often has nothing to do with quality as can be defined by a majority of our fellow humans.

For instance, I know lots of people who love so-called "bad" movies. They have a whole hierarchy of judgements about which of these so-called bad mov-

ies are better in their badness than others. On the other hand, if there is a genre of "bad movies," I'd probably categorize all of them among the 90% of movies that are crap to me that I'd prefer not to waste my time on. We all know people to whom the whole of the science fiction genre mostly disappears beneath their perceived crap level.

Here's another for instance: I think I tend to be a lot more tolerant of mediocre SF/F than I am of mediocre mystery fiction. There have been a few mystery novels that I have enjoyed, but I've had to be convinced that they were exceptional in some way. Similarly, I've managed to convince some steadfast non-SF readers to read a few exceptional examples of SF without being able to change their general dislike of the genre.

All this is perhaps too roundabout a way of saying that maybe "crap" in the case of Sturgeon's law is simply a shorthand way of describing the way it's necessary to triage our interests and time. We only have *time* for a metaphorical 10% slice of most of the pies available to us. We have to choose.

I choose to participate in the kind of amateur productions that are apas because I classify apa writing among my top 10% opportunities for communication, community and lively conversation, not so much because I think apas provide exceptional and reliable sources of literature. (Sorry, folks.) But I *really* like the fact that this communication tool functions as an art form in itself. So it's a question of 10% of what, defined by who and how. You say in a comment to me, that if there is a value in participation in amateur productions, then "we still need an audience. And if we do that for each other, we either have to adjust our judgement on what makes the 'best of literature' or admit there's value and pleasure in slumming." There's another option, I think. I think it means we just need to add to the list of things we need in our lives.

I wish **Diane Martin** would join in on this discussion. She and Jim Hudson have been very involved for the last couple years in amateur Shakespeare productions and I bet she'd have some really interesting things to say about how her understanding of Shakespeare has been deepened by her acting experiences. Scott and I have gone to see Diane and Jim act twice and it's been fun, but if we chose which plays to attend simply on the basis of literary/dramatic merit, we would probably have made other choices. Scott and I have gone and will probably go again, I think, because we like to know a little about what our friends are passionate about, to see them enjoying themselves and share with them, in even a small part, the experiences that affect them deeply. I can vicariously

enjoy Diane and Jim's performances a bit because I know them, and I can begin to understand how performing Shakespeare helps one to understand the text better. But basically, for me, this has more to do with friendship than slumming or redefining the "best in literature."

I second your comment to **Jim Nichols** with regard to the tendency of homeowners to accumulate stuff. Just last week we got around to gathering up the Styrofoam stored in our attic. You know, the stuff that comes form-fitted around computers and electronic devices? Well, we had about 12 years worth of that stuff up there and it piled up to a small mountain on our porch, and waits now for delivery to a Styrofoam recycling place we just heard about. It's amazing.

Not many people claim to be living in a "starter home," though many people are tempted to buy a "starter home," because it's a good marketing strategy to suggest to people that they'll have to tolerate certain construction or location shortcomings for just a short time.

Great metaphorical description (in a comment to **Maureen**) of the process of brewing an apa conversation! And good point about how everyday tasks can be almost impossibly difficult at times.

[SC] Three cheers for your friends who moved into the Victorian house. I would say that the presence of the Doberman alone is the best home security system they could get, add to that the alternating work schedules of the other tenants and I doubt they will have any problems with burglars, at least. Jeanne and I have talked about getting a dog from time to time, partly for security reasons. We also live in a neighborhood that is close to a lower income, apartment-dominated area that has been one of Madison's trouble spots for some time. One of the things we have noticed lately is that house values in Madison have gone up so much in recent years that even the little houses that predominate in our area can sell for close to \$100,000. The rise in property values has resulted in a noticeable improvement in how well these (suddenly valuable) properties are cared for these days. That has had the effect of halting the perception of decline from the "bad" area to surrounding neighborhoods. These days we are less concerned about people fleeing in fear from our troubled neighborhood than we are about some of the old folks in the area being taxed out of their homes due to rising property values.

Regarding your comment to me on Michael Moore and Upton Sinclair, in my opinion, the reason we don't use our modern technology to produce "harrowing exposes" is that such things don't appeal to advertisers. That is the first rule of modern media, will it offend advertis-

ers? In this age of monstrous corporate domination of media, it amazes me that Moore managed to get any of his *TV Nation* pieces aired in the first place.

© Vijay Bowen

[SC] I have had a busy month also, but I am afraid that I can't come up with anything that compares to flash dancing or an erotic photoshoot (tasteful or not. Come to think of it, a naked overweight 43 year old bald guy couldn't be photographed tastefully in any case.) I hope you have fun at Lunacon.

© Pat Hario

[JG] OK then, when should we schedule our first Monday night at the Terrace?

Thanks for the article on the expedition to clean up Everest. It must be happening right about now, about the time of the *Turbo* deadline. Have you heard how it turned out? Was the group able to bring down as much garbage as they hoped? I wondered when I was reading the article whether the group was planning to bring down corpses too, along with the oxygen bottles and tent poles.

[SC] I was reasonably happy with how the Oscars worked out this year, all things considered. I thought Billy Crystal was a bit dull this year. Kevin Spacey gave the funniest acceptance "speech" and Michael Caine gave the most gracious one. I was really pleased that the best actress trophy went to the star of *Boys Don't Cry* (whose name escapes me at the moment) and best screenplay went to John Irving for *The Cider House Rules*.

American Beauty and *The Insider* were my choices for best picture of those nominated, but I have to admit that I was also rooting a little for *The Cider House Rules*. In one particular way, *Cider House* was the bravest film of the best picture nominees. The thing that made *Cider House* extraordinary was its subject matter, abortion. If you watch many Hollywood movies and TV shows, it soon becomes clear how conservative these industries are and how closely they adhere to "traditional family values." It is very rare to even hear the word "abortion" spoken in the movies. Whenever a plot takes us to the question of whether a mother is going to keep her child, they usually discuss the options without even saying the word "abortion," and then the result of the discussion is always the same. The mother always chooses to keep her baby no matter the circumstances, and the message is always that this choice is the "right" one. I do not remember the last time I saw the heroine of a film or TV show choose to have a safe and legal abortion. I have occasionally seen secondary characters have abortions

only to regret it later or suffer some calamity because they made the "wrong" choice.

In the old days before abortion was legal, all a writer had to do to put his heroine in crisis was to make her pregnant unexpectedly. Since she didn't have any options, the story always became focused on how everyone deals with her condition. This is often still done in period movies. Since safe and legal abortion came on the scene, writers ought to have a tougher time putting a woman in such a bind in films set in contemporary time. But now what they do is make her pregnant, and then immediately have her reject any suggestion that she abort it. Then they can resolve the story as before. The morally right choice is always to keep the baby. Check it out yourself in the future and see if you see what I mean.

© Jerome Van Epps

[JG] Very funny stories about the therapy and counseling panel and MCI's quest for your penny. As for the Dominican restaurant, nuns would have been my assumption, too. Having gone to Catholic grade schools taught by Dominican nuns, that's my first thought.

[SC] You guys are a couple of wild and crazy party animals, judging from your party schedule. We had a fine time at your last party, thanks for doing it. We look forward to other fun stuff you have planned.

Interesting response on Native Americans, the Incas and the Aztecs. I have also seen the excellent film *Black Robe* and have heard Mary Russell refer to it in relation to *The Sparrow*. I agree with your conclusion that the whole of human history could be looked at as one long evolution of who is "us" and who is "them."

© Diane Martin

[JG] Thanks for the Tiptree shortlist reviews, Diane. There are quite a few books on your list that I'll probably search out, especially *The Iron Bridge*. I like time travel stories anyway, so this one looks like one that I'll really enjoy. Congratulations on finishing a year of judging and for a wonderful award. I'm so glad that *The Conqueror's Child* won! I'm hoping to see it on the Hugo ballot too.

© Ruth Merrill

[JG] Hope you're feeling a little more organized in your new house. Duplicate kitchen tools was one thing Scott and I didn't have to worry much about when we moved in together. Scott has never been much into cooking. It was mostly electronic equipment and furniture that needed to be sorted out.

After seeing the film, *Mansfield Park*, I looked through Austen's novel and could find no references to slavery. But that isn't very surprising. Austen never details anything considered men's business at the time. She apparently made it a rule never to describe a conversation or scene in which ladies were not participants. There is a character in one of her novels who fled France after her husband was executed on the guillotine, but she never makes any comment on the political events of her time. She was a smart woman and people do gossip, so it sure does make me curious about what she actually thought about some current events of her time.

© Clay Colwell

[JG] Hey, don't feel guilty! I liked *Pig in the City* too. I'm actually surprised it hasn't become a cult favorite.

[SC] I thought *Pig in the City* was okay. I liked the first one better because I thought it was more politically subversive, and *Pig* had nothing that could top the goose running around in *Babe* yelling "Christmas is murder! Christmas is murder!" That still makes me laugh.

© Kathi & Kim Nash

[JG] I had to laugh about that possible bomb disguised in Christmas wrapping. What if it was a bomb?! The poor terrorist kept waiting to hear the explosion and finally went into the building one day to find his bomb, still unopened on the reception desk. He sighs, puts the bomb under his arm, and grumbles, "government workers!"

[SC] Wow, comments, you guys MUST be desperate. One of the things that I think helped make the Brat and Brau work so well, was that you ordered your food and picked it up at a counter and then you were free to sit wherever you liked and move around as much as you liked. This works well for socializing and doing business with a large number of people. At most other places we have been (not just Nicks) you have to sit in one place for the waiter to serve you. I don't miss having to fight basketball traffic to park at Brat and Brau, but something about the freedom to move around the room was really nice. I don't think we will be able to find another place that works quite like that, but I certainly agree with you that Nicks feels small and tight.

Of course for Jeanne and I, a weekly commitment is too hard. I echo the suggestions made earlier that maybe we need to think about a bi-weekly or monthly gathering rather than weekly, and we certainly need to think about doing it someplace other than Nicks.

© Jim Frenkel

[JG] Interesting zine, Jim!

So you think that people who talk in public are speaking at a slightly louder volume than face-to-face talkers around them? Maybe that's it. I guess I'd been assuming that they were talking just as loud or quietly as the rest of us and that there was something unconsciously unsettling to be aware of a one-sided conversation. Sounds like a Psychology Ph.D. thesis ready to be written.

I bet Ms. Manners has already dealt with this problem of rude cell phone talkers. I just wish I had been able to read what she had to say. I used to keep up with Ms. Manners when we subscribed to both the *Sunday Wisconsin State Journal* and the *Milwaukee Journal*. But we finally felt we had to choose for financial reasons and decided that local news was really important to us. One of the losses was Ms. Manners, who appeared in the *Milwaukee paper*. Anyway, I've been missing her all these years, but your comment caused me to wonder out loud, "Is Miss Manners on the Internet?" And hooray, she is! I found her at <www.underwire.com>! I looked back through the archives and failed to find anything about how to deal with rude cell phone talkers, but I'll check out her site every once in a while and let you know, someday, what she has to say.

I liked what you said about the various mini-portraits of women in *Topsy Turvey*. To my chagrin, I hadn't noticed how all the "women suffered for being women." Even the woman manager, I think, had a problematic relationship with her male co-manager. I did notice how the film kept a strictly focused view on Gilbert and Sullivan; other people's lives were revealed only insofar as their lives intersected with Gilbert's or Sullivan's. After seeing the film, my imagination took off and I began trying to fill in details in what we saw on screen. I assumed, for instance, that the woman with the infected leg would soon die because she was hiding what looked like a gangrenous infection. It's an interesting filming technique: Focused but completely honest about the spear carriers. It's not as if the spear carriers were underdeveloped, their stories were simply not followed. You called it tantalizing. Indeed.

In your comment to **Tracy**, you hinted at some stressful truths about working half-way across the country from the central office. I had never thought about how difficult office politics might get in such a situation. Do you find that there are balancing benefits in working far away from all that?

I loved your description of your trip to New Mexico. It sounds somewhat like a trip to Pleasantville. I'm glad you all had such a great time.

[SC] I agree with Jeanne, you have been doing some great zines lately. Thanks.

Regarding your comment to **Georgie** on creative writing, I just want to encourage you to tell us more about what you have learned about writing. Your observation that clarity is the key to inspiration was very interesting to me. At the end you said you'd come back to this topic someday. I will be waiting.

© Julie Zachman

[JG] I hope you're dealing artfully and gracefully with the whirlwind of activities. I wish you a wonderful new home and challenging new job; I send you condolences for Honey and best wishes to your brother Bob. What a stressful year you are having!

You say that religious theorists do not develop conspiracy theories, but are "trying to make sense of a senseless world." But isn't that what conspiracy theorists do too? Cubans and Mafia leaders plotting to kill President Kennedy seems to make more sense than the idea that there are lone loonies wandering around shooting people for random, crazy reasons. You say "the god given to us in many religions is somebody's Dad, idea of Dad, idealized Dad, or defense of Dad. Or Mom." Well, isn't a conspiracy theorist's idea of evil simply somebody's Dad, idea of Dad, demonized Dad or prosecution of Dad? Or Mom?

I liked yours and **Georgie's** suggestions for Wisconsin colors. I think you've got them right. I also recognize Wisconsin farmscapes immediately.

[SC] House hunting and job hunting, yes I'd say that is a plate full of stuff to deal with all at once. Somehow I think you will find the job hunt easier.

Regarding your comment to me, "training bra" was a pretty terrible pun. You know I detest puns don't you? Of course you do.

© Hope Kiefer & Karl Hailman

[JG] A "Duke Barbie"? What? Actually, Scott and I are thinking of buying a wood chipper eventually. What do you have in mind, Karl?

Interesting comments, Hope, on how things change in the way we make and maintain friendships as we get older. There's a lot involved in this topic. I've been noticing that the best place for me to make new friends continues to be when I get involved in projects that are important to me. The year I did programming for WisCon 21 I got to know a new group of people who signed on to help. The Borders Book discussion has brought a few interesting new people into my life. And most recently, Scott's and my involvement in a neighborhood "Eco-Team" has acquainted us with some people who share our interest in environmental politics. I am hoping that some of those friendships continue after the Eco-Team meetings end. But it sure is true, that making friendships takes a lot more effort than it seemed to take when we were college students! Permanent life commitments (relationships, jobs, family) take a big chunk out of available time and energy for everyone. I'm glad you had a good reunion with your high school friends. I've completely lost touch with my high school and most of my college friends.

Neither Scott nor I have ever been called to jury duty either, and actually both of us would like to do it someday.

[SC] Thanks to you both for hosting the excellent Academy Award/Surprise **Pat Hario** Birthday Bash.

On the subject of friends, I agree with much of what you and Jeanne, above, have said on the subject. I have lost touch with a lot of the people I was close to in high school, college and so forth. One thing I have noticed that is different for me these days is that I no longer "hang out" like I used to do. For many years, I always had places to go to hang out with friends, or to meet my friends or to make new friends. I would go on a regular basis so folks would know where to find me. This was true even when I had my own apartment, I would just as soon hang out at a bar, for instance, than sit around my apartment. I never hang out anymore. If I am not at work, I am at home or out on some specific errand. I almost never go someplace like a bar or coffee shop just to be there because I like to be there and maybe someone I know will show up. I don't seem to have that sort of time anymore. How this affects my friendships these days is that it seems that in order to see people, I have to set up appointments or scheduled events. In the old days, it was much more casual. You just dropped in to the place everyone went and hung out.

Jeanne Gomoll & Scott Custis
21 April 2000

Gerald Schoenherr is Doing the AIDS Ride

Gerald Schoenherr — who many of you know as a Border's book seller and a WisCon program participant (remember the bagpipe panel?) — will be participating in a very special event, the **Twin Cities–Wisconsin–Chicago AIDS Ride** in just a few months.

Between July 10th and 15th, Gerald and more than 1,750 other people will ride their bicycles over 500 miles from Minneapolis to Chicago. For six straight days they will ride an average of 85 miles, spending the nights sleeping in tents and then getting up the next day to do it again.

It is estimated that over 33,400,000 people worldwide are infected with HIV right now. AIDS has affected nearly all of us, whether or not we know it, taking more than 410,800 people in the United States. That's *seven times* the number of American fatalities in the Vietnam War. With our help, the bikers in the AIDS ride hope to contribute funds to support and comfort those who are ill and in desperate need of care and intervention. (Funds generated by the Ride do not go to AIDS research, but directly supports those infected by the disease.)

To join the other bikers, Gerald has committed himself to raising at least \$2,300 before July. He can't make the ride without it! The money he raises will help support several not-for-profit HIV/AIDS service agencies in Wisconsin.

If you would like to make a contribution to Gerald's ride, you can send a check to him. Make your check payable to **Wisconsin AIDS Ride 5**. Please include Gerald's name and his rider number **(5065)** on your check.

Gerald Schoenherr
3006 Hermina
Madison, WI 53714

Thank you!

—Jeanne & Scott