

# Union Street

A joint zine by Jeanne Gomoll & Scott Custis

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## © General

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[SC] I want to take this opportunity to welcome **Tamara Vining** and **Shelia Lightsey** to our merry band of writers. They both contributed fine first zines.

In other business, the answer is yes, I really do plan to do an update of the SF 3 Directory this year in time for the annual meeting in October. You are all eligible to be listed in the directory as well as receive a copy. Updated information should be sent to me. The deadline for corrections will be September 1, 2000.

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## © Calvin Powers

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[SC] I think it is laudable that you have chosen to promote yourself by your unusual and rather old fashioned first name. I think it is a fine choice. I have fond memories of playing with my cousin Calvin when I was a kid. He lived in California and we used to travel out to visit my mom's family every year or so when I was a child. I haven't seen him in many years, but the name has a pleasant ring to me. I'm not sure of the wisdom of your strategy to associate yourself with famous Calvins, however. The first famous Calvin I always think of is Calvin the Chipmunk ("Calvin...Calvin!...CALVIN!!!") The second is Calvin Coolidge, one our distinguished presidents.

I have not seen "Shanghai Noon" or "Keeping the Faith", though you are one of a growing number of people who have recommended the later film to me. I will look for it on video. I did not like "Mission Impossible" or "Small Time Crooks" quite as much as you did, though I certainly didn't hate them. John Woo is a wonderful action film director. I particularly enjoyed "Face Off"

which has a very science fictional plot, excellent action sequences and inspired acting by Nicholas Cage and John Travolta ultimately playing each other. I cannot quibble with the way Woo directed "Mission Impossible," but I guess I am a bit hung up on the idea that the TV series was about a team of people who worked closely together. The movies appear to be just casting Tom Cruise as a James Bond rip-off.

We missed seeing you at WisCon and hope you will come next year.

[JG] I love Calvin's snow grotesques. Thanks for reprinting that scene. I miss Calvin & Hobbs.

Interesting strategy for meetings — to say one thing clearly and simply, and save the rest of your comments for later emails. I agree that for folks comfortable with participation in meeting conversations, limiting oneself is effective, but I think you can be equally effective with a slightly higher limit.

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## © Michael Shannon

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[SC] I enjoyed your essay on Tegan, work and your gardening efforts. I haven't much to really respond to, other than to say that I enjoyed reading about what is going on with you and hope you will continue sending us updates.

I have a couple Neil Gaiman books on my to-read stack. I am looking forward to them. I was very impressed with him when I saw him at Mad Media Con a couple years ago and I hope I see him again at a future convention. He has dropped in at WisCon at least once undercover. I hope we can someday lure him into the open and get him to participate in programming. I like Jonathan Lethem somewhat more than Jeanne does. Thanks for the comments on his latest novel.

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## © Georgie Schnobrich

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[JG] I liked your comments on the Elian case, mostly because you touched on the many nuances and gray areas, rather than following the more common approach of the media pundits and many water cooler conversationalists who act as if it's all black and white, good and bad.

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## © Vicki Rosenzweig

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[SC] Congratulations on the new tattoo. Can we look forward to a picture of it in your zine at some point? So tattoos are becoming a “particular hobby of [yours],” should we expect more of them? Are you aiming for the title of The Painted Lady of Turbo Apa?

[JG] The Madison SF group has gone through the experience of changing meeting sites several times. I can sympathize with your impatience with those who are complaining about something that — to you — is a minor issue. But maybe it's not a minor issue for some of the folks who keep bringing it up. And while perfectionism may often be self-defeating; it's no less self-defeating to assume that no improvement is possible. It's hard to believe that in New York City there aren't lots of other choices for a meeting site!

I'm assuming that you didn't really mean to say to **Tami**, that “white Americans can ignore race.” Whites don't ignore race, so much as tend to base our lives on a huge range of assumptions about race, the first of which is that white is the default.

As for your comment to **Pat** about those Everest-cleaning crews, I don't think any of these people are doing anything more than carrying down trash. I don't think that there are any plans to bring down bodies. The corpses are way on the uppermost slopes of the mountain where oxygen is so rarefied that the most in-shape climber is doing well just being able to put one foot in front of the other and resting every few steps. It's simply not physically possible for a climber to carry much dead weight down (over and above their survival gear), not to mention hack a body out of the ice formation in which most of them are encrusted. The effects of oxygen deprivation cannot be ignored up there, and there are no machines that can be brought up there to aid the process.

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## © Tracy Benton

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[SC] Nice sharp color photos. I hope the show was a success.

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## © Jae Adams

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[SC] I don't think “annual” *Turbo* parties existed at WisCon before Steve Swartz and I threw one at WisCon 19. That was before we got access to all the 6th floor suites as part of our hotel contract. Steve and I paid the hotel \$50.00 for the use of a suite that night. It turned into a big bash that went on until almost 5 in the morning. I think it was the only thing going on the 6th floor that night besides the Con Suite. I always liked doing a *Turbo* party

at WisCon because it seemed the most likely time we could get so many *Turbo* contributors together in one place. It seemed a nice idea to have a place nearly all of us could look forward to meeting once a year. I continued the practice until I stopped being OE. **Kim and Kathi** threw parties during Kim's tenure as OE. So the “tradition” such as it is isn't that old. You are correct that there is no requirement that there must be an apa party at WisCon, or, if there is a party, that the OE has to organize it, fund it or even host it. I completely support your effort to stop doing it if that is what you want. Anyone else in the apa is free to do it if they feel one must be done.

I also see no reason the OE has to swallow the expenses of the business pages. When I was OE, we often copied the business pages off here at home rather than pay Kinko's. I kept the expenses to a minimum so I didn't have to raise funds from the membership, which is a hassle. I also had some excess funds from membership accounts donated to *Turbo*. I certainly don't think you should absorb \$108 per year in apa expenses. We should have long ago established some sort of annual membership fee to offset these expenses. If you started that effort, I would support it. Unfortunately formal bureaucratic business motions have enjoyed little support in recent years in the apa (my motion to downsize the membership to 25 is a good example) so I am no longer inclined to offer motions. If you want to do something about these issues, Jae, I will enthusiastically support you.

Interesting comments about WisCon. Most of the people I was hanging out with were working or managing to have a good time. Sometimes both.

Regarding your comment to me about being in Laurie Edison's photo project, ho ho ho.

[JG] Interesting comments about Barbie. It got me asking all sorts of questions, like why do some girls play dolls and other girls don't? Do most girls pretend to BE the doll when they're playing with Barbie? Did you? Do you? Or is it more about manipulating fictional characters? And then I started asking more global questions, like what is play all about anyway? What is it for? Is it a survival mechanism: practicing roles for the future? Is there anything more? Do people have a basic need to play that has nothing to do with learning or survival? I have answers to none of these questions, but your comments about Barbie makes me think about big ideas, so thank you for that. It's been fascinating.

I like your idea of a fan meeting revolving around the reading of the members' various fan writing.

I'm probably another one of those drivers that irritate **Pat**; I don't always drive the speed limit either, though I haven't been honked at for that. However, I

have been honked at several times for failing to push a yellow light for a left turn. I figure if I can stop at a yellow, I should. The driver behind me thinks I could have gotten into the intersection on the yellow before it turned red, and they could have followed me through. The other day I was delighted to see one of those drivers that honk at me for stopping on yellows, caught in his own petard. Tailgating a driver that turned left at the very end of a yellow light, he was brought up short when the first driver stopped for a cat crossing the street. BANG! It was a fender-bender. He leaped out of his car and started yelling at the woman who had stopped (and seemed uninjured). He didn't notice the cop whose squad car was second in line in on-coming traffic. The cop got out of his car and was standing there, arms akimbo, shaking his head. I had been waiting on my bike for the light to change and had seen the whole thing. "Do you need a witness?" I called to the cop. "No, no," he said, shaking his head at the yelling driver who suddenly shut up when he realized that a cop had seen the whole thing. "Go on," said the cop. "I've got this." I laughed all the way home.

I loved APT's *Cyrano*. It was one of my favorites of all of APT's productions.

Interesting that the letters "a" and "g" are of so much interest to your letter-artist friends. Me too. In high school I purposefully changed the way I printed those two letters specifically. It's the first time I recall thinking about the printing/writing as a kind of art form.

One of my favorite visual pleasures is that luminous green of leaves, the first few days after they have come out. Yes.

I'd love to see what Rome looked like with all those gaudily painted statures. All the movies and images we have all portray white marble statues and architecture. There was a similar reevaluation of Native Southwest American art, when people realized that the muted tints of pottery and clothing were caused by the sun fading the original vibrant colors....

I love it: Jon as "Shovel Man." The city is in peril: I must away! Sounds like a Halloween costume to me.

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### © Julie Gomoll

[SC] Great travel piece once again, Julie. The pictures turned out great. I have no trouble telling you that the safari part of your trip appealed to me the most as something I would like to do. Sharks, however, are best appreciated on TV in my humble opinion. The baboon in your room story was hilarious. I would like to read more

sometime about your visit to Mandela's prison that you mentioned.

[JG] You say that zebras are "rather ungraceful runners." Have you seen that car commercial (I forget which brand) that has a car racing across the veldt with a herd of zebras running along side it (in a perfect line)? I am assuming that it was done with some sort of Photoshop wizardry. But now I wonder if they cloned a horse painted to look like a zebra, because they seemed to run with quite a bit of grace. Any opinion? Have you seen it?

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### © Maureen Kincaid Speller

[SC] I enjoyed reading about your gardening adventures even though I have almost no interest in doing gardening myself. Growing up on a farm I ended up doing enough gardening against my will that I long ago decided that I would avoid it ever afterwards. I failed to pay any attention to gardening lessons from my parents. Nowadays I am lucky to keep the grass mowed and the weeds under control in our yard. Unfortunately the decisions we make in our youth sometimes come back to haunt us. My dad is very good at growing raspberries. We love raspberries and they are expensive as hell to buy in the store or at Farmers Market. I know he easily grows more than he can eat. Sometimes I wish I had some room to try growing raspberries with the old man's techniques. I think of it every time I spend \$4.00 on a pint of fresh berries at the market.

Tough news about the loss of your freelance work connection with the book club. Isn't unrestricted global capitalism wonderful? Here is hoping you find work from a new source.

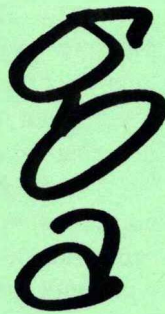
[JG] Lovely garden stuff, though not being a gardener (at all), I have nothing much to contribute here, except to ask you whether you are reading Lucy Huntzinger's on-line diary (and her special-interest gardening diary). You seem to share a similar attitude with Lucy about it all.

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### © Julie Zachman

[SC] Congratulations on the house. Can't wait to see it. Do I sense a housewarming party is in your future? Adoption? Really?

I have also tried to lure Beth into *Turbo* with similar results. I once thought about trying to get to her by bringing in Dan. But I think that is a very slim possibility. I think she could get hooked if we got her started, but she is not an easy catch.



[JG] Congratulations on the new house (and temporary apartment)! We will endeavor not to give you a housewarming present until you have moved to the actual house and have retrieved your belongings from yon and far. The life juggling necessary for this complicated move sounds frightening. Though I can see that you and I react similarly to the prospect of such chaos. Yes, what is needed here is a DATABASE!! Good luck!

Gosh, I hope we get around to starting to meet Mondays on the Terrace! We keep finding ourselves busy on Mondays, even though we have the very best of intentions....

What a lovely and terribly sad image you painted of your brother in law playing the harmonica for his sons. I hope he defies medical expectations and stays well for a long time.

And excellent response to the article **Jae** franked through the apa, by Ellen Ulman. I agree with you entirely. You say at the end that "it is sloppy journalism or essay-writing to extrapolate so much from so little." Here, here. But I wonder if her essay was based not upon "so little," but upon so many fears.

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### © Jerome Van Epps

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[SC] Thanks for the WisCon piece. I saw the cow costume moving around the convention. I know it must have been hard work, but lots of folks were amused. WisCon sometimes needs a little more frivolity. I thought you threw a fine party. I hope it was worth the trouble and I hope you decide to do one at WisCon again next year.

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### © Clay Colwell

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[SC] Regarding your comment to **Pat** on *Into Thin Air*, you wrote, "...I can't shake the feeling that an Everest climb should not be lauded or advertised as some sort of Weekend Warrior jaunt...it seems that the uglier side of Capitalism is marching on." I think you pretty well summed up the view of the author. I don't think further reflection is really necessary.

[JG] My request for titles wasn't for "girls adventures," but for adventures about girls traveling abroad. I've read neither Heidi nor Pippi Longstocking, but I doubt that either would have been of much interest to my niece who is about to travel to Paris and London with her grandmother.... Actually, I'm afraid nothing I gave Sarah would probably have held much interest to her at this point. She's reached the age where anything recommended by an adult relative is automatically assumed to be boring. \*sigh\*

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### © Nevenah Smith

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[SC] It is nice to read that you have been reflecting on your life at this point and have concluded that you are doing well. Good. You have seemed happy living in New Orleans. I think it suits you. I don't know if anyone is so "independent" that they can't fit the right person into their life. I was on my own for a long time before I met Jeanne. I think it is as you said, when the right person comes along, you will find a way to fit each other into the spaces in your lives.

[JG] "Send us some rain!" you write. I think we are sending you quite a lot of water via the river systems. Has any of our flood reached New Orleans yet?

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### © Marijean Trew

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[SC] So I take it you had a good time in Acapulco? Good luck on the new relationship (is it too soon to call it a relationship?)

I liked the masked sea snorkeler.

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### © Ruth Nichols

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[SC] This issue of *Turbo* apa has been such a pleasure to read because there have been a lot of zines by happy people. Unhappy people often do more compelling writing, but it is nice to read about lives that are moving in a positive direction.

I thought your comments to **Lisa** about living in an abusive relationship were very interesting. It is so easy to stand outside a relationship looking in and wonder why a woman doesn't just leave the abusive guy, but it really may not be as simple or safe as it seems. Scary stuff.

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### © Carl Juarez

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[SC] Compelling stuff about Microsoft. You have stated in stark terms what I have felt about Microsoft for a long time, only you put it in even stronger terms. Their corporate actions are as much of a threat to us as unregulated genetic engineering of food crops? Wow. I am looking forward to the responses from our other computer professional contributors. Your zine was the first in a long time that had me cheering out loud. Scary, but it sounded dead right. Do you hold out any hope that the court ordered break up of the company will help?

[JG] Fascinating stuff about Microsoft! Thank you. It's just as I suspected!

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 © Tamara Vining
 

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[SC] Welcome you wild woman. I found the story of your finding your career to be so cool and inspiring. You did what is so hard for most people (myself included) to do, and that is to just walk away and do what you really want to do with your life. And it has worked out! You really are doing sound for movies. That is so great! Congratulations. I hope you keep us posted on interesting projects that come your way. Jeanne and I go to a lot of films and we always stay for the credits. We will be looking forward to seeing your name up there one of these days.

I had not heard the whole wall story, only some bits and pieces, so thanks for writing about it. You were very fortunate as I am sure you know, but the thing that resonated with me was the realistic way you described the chaotic rush of thoughts, feelings and emotions. It is very weird how our minds and bodies respond to situations like that. It is kind of hard to describe it to someone who has never experienced something like it. I have been in a couple of car accidents where time slowed down, events were out of control and yet I was still sort of aware of what was happening. At the same time I did not have an objective view of the event so there was much about what happened that I had to find out later.

[JG] Another excellent zine, Tami. I bought a copy of Cameron's *The Artist's Way* a few months ago, on the recommendation of a friend. Ever since then, I have been hearing good things about it, though I haven't started reading/doing it yet.

You've told me your wall story in person, but it was just as terrifying in print. I sure am glad you survived!

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 © Andy Hooper
 

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[SC] It is so good to have a contribution from you. I loved it. Once again I found myself totally engrossed in a subject I would have thought I had no interest in whatsoever. You have worked your magic again.

I remember Hot Wheels cars. I was a kid when I last heard of them. I never got into buying them. I think I was

past my toy car stage when Hot Wheels came along. They still make them you say? Not only that, but there is a whole trade market for them? I had no idea. I probably couldn't care less, but reading about it all in the context of your struggle to get a gift for your nephew was very entertaining.

I was also fascinated by your piece on the Thingmaker. I never owned one, but I vaguely remember them. It is amazing that such a dangerous device could ever be sold nationally as a toy, yet it was and no doubt lots of kids had endless hours of fun with it. I think your theory that its dangerousness was one of its attractions is probably quite correct. Do you sometimes think toys are a little too safe these days?

[JG] Your comments on cool model cars reminded me of the collection of model cars I saw recently. A friend of a friend of a friend owns two trailer homes. He and his wife recently moved out of one into a new trailer home right next door. They use the old one as storage for his model car collections. He recently sold most of the model tractors, but he still has some of those left, along with a couple shelves of gumball machines. It was amazing — hundreds of cars all exhibited on floor-to-ceiling shelves, each just high enough to hold them, all dusted meticulously. He is obviously running out of room, because there are boxes stacked all around with cars still not unpacked. He told us he was now limiting his buying to one line of cars sold by a tool manufacturing company. (MAC, Scott thinks, but I'm not sure about that. I think if it were MAC, my mind would have connected the name to the computer, and I would still remember.) In any case this tool company orders a limited number of cars manufactured each year — limited to the number of orders it receives from its customers. I expect that makes them more valuable. I was stunned. (I'm being vague about who and where we saw this, because the trailer home is not exactly protected by a very good security system, and I suspect there's a lot of valuable stuff in there. Putting directions in print seems like a bad idea.)

—Jeanne Gomoll & Scott Custis

20 July 2000