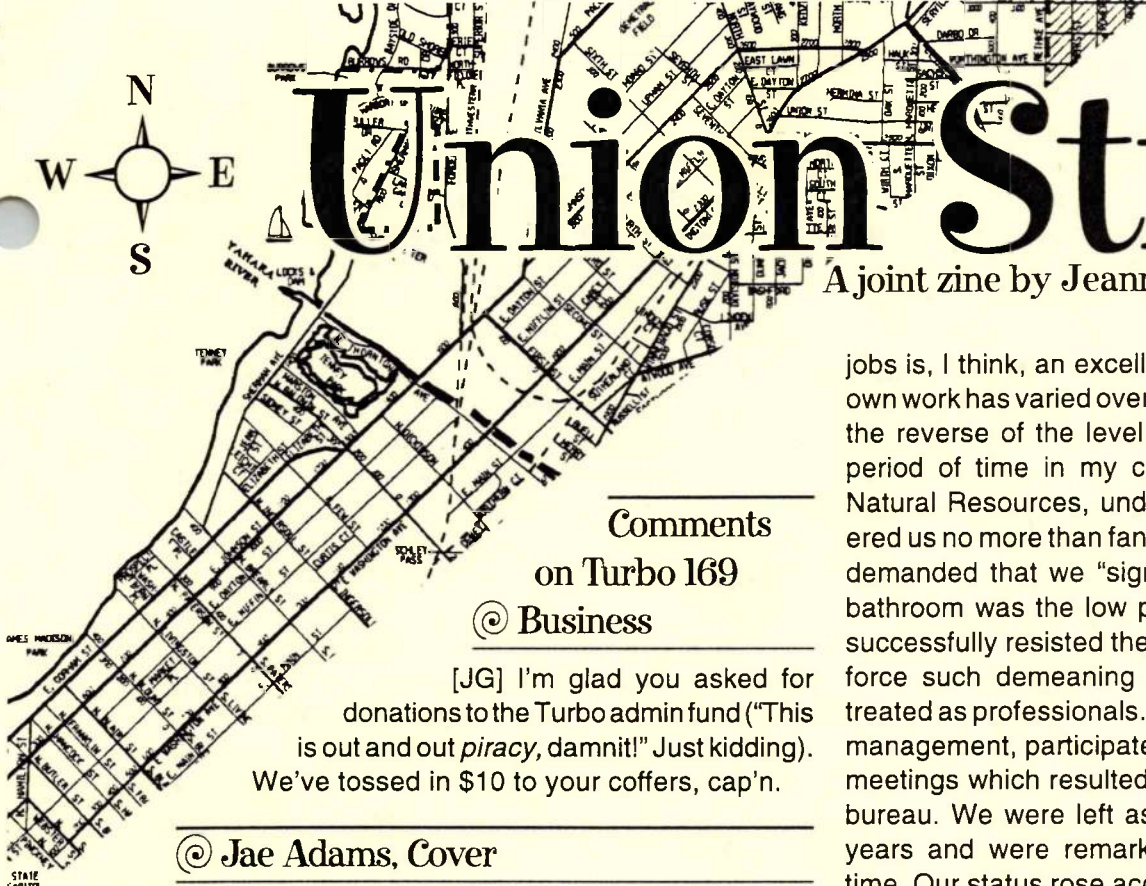


# Union Street

A joint zine by Jeanne Gomoll & Scott Custis



## Comments on Turbo 169

### © Business

[JG] I'm glad you asked for donations to the Turbo admin fund ("This is out and out *piracy*, damnit!" Just kidding). We've tossed in \$10 to your coffers, cap'n.

### © Jae Adams, Cover

[JG] A fine cover, Jae. And thanks for the notes, too. I like the way the type is slanted away from the perpendicular, and the sense that we are seeing just a tiny detail in a much larger work. Have you seen the menu covers at the restaurant on Willy Street, the El Dorado? They use the same idea. I think the menu type — which looks like it was burnt with branding irons onto wooden boards — is text from a Western novel, maybe one by Zane Grey. This fits nicely into the El Dorado's very Western motif. On one wall there is a glass case in which pulp novels are displayed. One title, *The Bionic Cowboy*, caught my eye last time we ate there. I wish I had been able to leaf through it to see whether it had a Western/SF fusion plot.

[SC] I really liked the "Charles de Lint" cover, Jae. Nice work from a fine quote.

### © Barbara Jensen

[JG] What an excellent paper, Barb. This is the second time I read it, and I realized this time that it is a sort of Rorschach essay. Each reading has caused me to make connections with things I am thinking about or experiencing currently.

Fussell's rule of thumb that the amount of supervision in a job indicates its comparative status to other

jobs is, I think, an excellent insight. The status of my own work has varied over the years precisely reflecting the reverse of the level of supervision. A brief, bad period of time in my career at the Department of Natural Resources, under a supervisor who considered us no more than fancy word processors, and who demanded that we "sign out" when we went to the bathroom was the low point. The other artists and I successfully resisted the supervisor's attempts to enforce such demeaning rules and demanded to be treated as professionals. We took our complaints up to management, participated in some conflict resolution meetings which resulted in her transfer to a different bureau. We were left as a self-guided team for two years and were remarkably productive during that time. Our status rose accordingly, but the experience made me realize how certain workers (like word processors) are arbitrarily classified as untrustworthy by the kind of supervision enforced upon them.

Because of a recent vacation trip, I found myself considering some historical implications of your ideas. Scott and I went camping on the North Shore in August — i.e., the Minnesota coast of Lake Superior — and a bit north of there into Canada, up to Thunder Bay. (I think I recognized the subject of your gorgeous cliff photograph when we gazed at Palisade Head across the bay from Tettegouche State Park.) We had a great time camping in the forests, hiking through the Minnesota parks up to gorgeous waterfalls, and exploring the area. But one of the most unexpectedly interesting parts of our trip were visits to two "historical recreation" facilities. The first was the Grand Portage National Monument in Grand Portage, located near the U.S.-Canadian Border. This was a rebuilt version of the fur-trading headquarters of the Northwest Company as it looked in the late 1700s. The other was the Northwest Company headquarters at Old Fort William, in Thunder Bay, Canada — as it looked in the early 1800s. (The Northwest Company moved its headquarters after the American Revolution to avoid new U.S. taxes applied to goods transported across the border. That's why there are *two* Northwest Company "headquarters"

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*Union Street* was created using a Power Macintosh G3, Pagemaker 6.5, Illustrator 8.0, Photoshop 5.0, and a Laserwriter Select 360. Display font is Elroy. All contents copyright © 2000 by Scott Custis and Jeanne Gomoll, September 2000 for the *Turbo-Charged Party Animal* #171.

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sites.) At each of these historical recreation facilities, actors are employed to play the roles of aristocratic owners, officers and artisans, as well as Native Americans and of course, the Voyageurs. The actors pretend to know nothing about any time later than the one in which their character lives. At Fort William, each day was scheduled with a series of specific historical reenactments of actual events. We witnessed the Captain of the Fort "put out" (i.e., divorce) his Native American common law wife. What an interesting way to learn history.

But the part of our visit that came to mind when I reread your essay was what we learned about the role of the Voyageurs in the fur trading community. Except for the Native Americans, the Voyageurs had the lowest status in this group. The people responsible for carrying manufactured goods far into northern Canada and returning with furs were the Voyageurs — young men, mostly short, stocky French Canadians, all of whom initially signed on with the company for three years. That's the length of time, according to their contract, that it would take to pay back the company for equipment and the "opportunity." No Voyageur, however, actually ever began earning money after three years. Everything the Voyageur "bought" from the company — liquor, shoes, food, anything — they paid for with extra years added to their service; and there was no other source for some supplies than the company.... It was common after three years for a Voyageur to owe the company about 15 years of service; practically speaking, no Voyageur ever freed themselves of debt to the company. Actors portraying wealthy owners or upper class officers sniffed at our concern for the lowly Voyageurs. What more could they expect?, one officer explained. They were, after all, nothing but illiterate peasants.

And work was hard. The first leg of the trip north into Canada was on foot, because the rivers emptying into Lake Superior were full of rapids close to the shore and waterfalls further up river. These are the same rapids and gorgeous waterfalls that attract tourists like Scott and I, and exist because of the enormous, continuous escarpment that Parallels Lake Superior. These waterfalls and rapids made it necessary to "portage" goods and canoes on human backs about 28 miles inland to the beginning of the river route. Each Voyageur was responsible for six 90-pound packs of goods (manufactured goods if they were heading north; fur pelts if they were heading south). A Voyageur carried the canvas-wrapped packs on his back with straps across their foreheads. They'd carry two 90-pound packs on their back, a 40-pound pack of personal gear in front, and they'd trudge bent-over, up a

hill, leaving the other four packs at the bottom. Then, they would put down their packs and go back down to the bottom of the hill for another two packs, and so on ... for 28 miles. Scott and I climbed some of those hills on paths cut by Park rangers and stairways built on the steepest portions. Even so, our hikes were exhausting enough with nothing but some water bottles, maps and a paperback book weighing down our backpacks. I can't imagine what it must have been like to push through all kinds of weather and deep forest on non-existent paths while carrying 220 pounds. I tried, but I wasn't able to even lift even one of those 90-pound packs!

There were lots of injuries, of course, but nothing anyone could do to help a fellow Voyageur if he was hurt badly enough that he could no longer walk. No one could or would carry an injured man: they'd be fined with additional years if they left any of their packs behind. An injured Voyageur might be helped to a less painful death if they were still near Lake Superior, which of course is ice-cold. You see, a person dies in considerably less pain if one's body freezes to death first: that's the only "first aid" that was offered.

Voyageurs spent the late summer and fall carrying manufactured goods (cloth, liquor, tools) north to the Indian settlements in northern Canada, and the spring and early summer carrying animal pelts back south to the Grand Portage. They slept an average of 3-4 hours a night under the stars or beneath their canoes. They carried dry tinder under their shirts for fire-making, which they depended upon to keep warm, and they took extraordinary pains to care for their packs, since they were fined (in years) for any damage to the merchandise.

It must have been a horribly hard life. Voyageurs who actually survived their ordeal for more ten years were often given leave from the trading route and allowed to work off the rest of their debt to the company in the headquarters stockade. There weren't many job openings there, but there weren't many surviving Voyageurs either, so it balanced off. The hierarchy in the stockade was dramatic. The Scottish Owners who arrived each year for the Grand Rendezvous became multi-millionaires with the profits made from the fur trade. There was a small "middle class," of upper class Scott and British soldiers who could hope for promotion within the stockade and other trading stations along the Voyageurs' route. These guys were actually paid, as opposed to the Voyageur's time-owed deal. Even lower than the Voyageurs were the Native Americans, of course, but at least these folks slept in warm teepees and lived with their families. The Voyageurs were expected to cut all ties with their families. There

was no time off to visit relatives. Once you signed on, you were with the company for life.

It quickly became obvious that this was a kind of slavery. Which reminded me of Scott's and my trip to Mexico last year, when we visited the silver mines and learned how the Spaniards formerly used Native Mexican labor to mine for treasure. It turns out that the cost of a pulley and rope system was considered to be too expensive in comparison to the always-replaceable lives of Mexican women slaves who carried silver in baskets on their heads, out of the deep silver pits. To take silver out, the women had to climb 6-inch wide, dirt ledges, which were cut in spirals down into the often 120-foot deep silver pits. Women died on a weekly basis when the ledges crumbled. When the ledges got too dangerous, they might be repaired ... eventually ... but it wasn't a high priority since the women's lives were hardly considered important mine assets

I think whenever and wherever there's great wealth, that wealth is always supported by some form of slavery. We don't always use the word slavery for what is going on. But when "some" human lives are considered less important than the wealth their labor provides for a small minority, and when those workers no longer are allowed the freedom (or access) to choose different forms of livelihood, it is slavery, no matter what it is called. It's possible to find this mechanism — extreme wealth, supported by a class of people considered nonhuman, unworthy, too stupid, or simply vulnerable — in every culture in which there are extreme differences between the wealthy and the poor. And it seems to me that the social mechanisms that you are studying, Barb, are ones that enforce the seeming inevitability and value of class barriers. The Spaniards convinced themselves that they were actually "saving" the souls of heathen natives. The Scottish owners of the Northwest Company would have argued that the young men who labored for them were capable of nothing more than the work they were given.

Today, our "slaves" are third-world sweatshop workers and U.S. prisoners who are more and more frequently utilized by corporations to provide essentially free and literally coerced labor. But those trapped in minimum wage jobs and low class identities are also victims of the current hierarchy. The cultural assumptions, language and customs which allows wealth to be built upon the backs of people who are considered too inferior to benefit from their own labor, is the source, I think, the cultural mechanisms that divides people into classes which supposedly "deserve" more or less of the economic pie. It seems to me that the cues of language and custom that you study are the tip of the iceberg. I assume that every country, every culture has

it's own set of mechanisms for enforcing hierarchy and enable a powerful minority to profit from the labor of its underclass.

Well, I've gone on entirely too long about this. I meant to say something about Susan Faludi's book, too, and to make some comments on the interesting class clashes in the mega-TV-hit, *Survivor*, between Sue and Richard. Well, maybe I'll still say a few things about that.... (Did you watch *Survivor*? If not, ignore the rest of this paragraph.) Sue's behavior really reminded me of your description of the working class union identity vs. Richard's middle-upper class values of individual achievement and competition. Sue, in fact, seemed to deliberately sacrifice potential advantage with her outrage at being betrayed by Kelly, a member of the "union." Rather than acknowledge that all members of the alliance would eventually have to betray the others in order to win, Sue obviously decided it was more important to show her outrage against the first defector.

[SC] I read a copy of **Barb Jensen's** class paper after *Potlatch* earlier this year, but I need to read it over again before commenting on it and I am out of time this month.

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### © Calvin Powers

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[JG] A lot more historical detail was cut from the film, *The Patriot*, than merely Washington's character. It was a pretty irritating movie for anyone who knew even a bare minimum of American history. The complete absence of slave auctions or slave laborers on the Charleston wharf was an eerie but illuminating example of how completely the filmmakers warped historical reality in order to make their so-called hero seem more heroic to movie-going Americans. The British are rightfully pissed about the movie's glossing over the economic roots of the American Revolution in favor of the less boring theory that mad, serial murdering, bloodthirsty British officers simply pushed pacifist Americans over the line.

"At what point," you ask, "do we have to consider the political environment we're returning a child to in cases like [the Elian case]?" I think those of us who were appalled by the U.S. government's initial sympathy toward the Florida Cuban community's position are asking a similar question. At what point do we consider the impact of what we do internationally in the light of what *our* reaction would be if other nations acted as we did? How many parents might lose custody of their children if foreign governments based their custody decisions on their opinions of the moral and political environment in the U.S. for the child in question?

I wish people would consider the impact of their energy choices across considerably more than 5-7 years. The least we should expect of people, I think, is that we consider the impact of current pollution and energy usage on the next generation.

Hope you found *The Nation* article on lead in gasoline interesting.

[SC] Thanks for the DragonCon report. I enjoyed it. By the way, how big was it? Who were the guests of honor? Do you go to DragonCon because it is close to you or because of who they invite or just because you like big honkin' SF cons? Last question, did you get the feeling as you went through the weekend that you could do a better job of organizing this or setting up that? If so, that's a real bad sign.

It was fun finally meeting you at Worldcon in Chicago. I am glad you made it to our party. What did you think of Chicon?

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### © Lisa Freitag

[SC] I laughed at the story about William falling down and telling you he sees dead people.

I guess some sort of congratulations are in order with respect to your job. I think. Are you happy that they need you enough to work you full time all summer, or would you just as soon be part-time? They must like what you are doing or they wouldn't want you handling their patients all summer, right? Anyway, do you anticipate them asking you to stay on with them if someone leaves and a position becomes available? Would you want that?

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### © Tom Havighurst

[JG] I agree with you that the most valuable part of doing a party at a convention is for the good will and positive image generated. Good attitude. That's the reason we decided to do a Tiptree auction and throw a Tiptree party at worldcon. I think we'll continue to do this when possible.

[SC] I agree with you about the value of room parties to promote conventions. It is nice to get some memberships, but it is also good to just get the word out about your convention and give folks a chance to meet the organizers. I think it is especially valuable for cons to do room parties at other cons that are physically close. It doesn't make much sense to me, for example, to do a room party for Odd Con at someplace like DragonCon or ArmadilloCon where you are not likely to draw many attendees. But going to Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Chicago and Iowa conventions makes a lot of sense because you can draw attendees and maybe even volunteers.

I have long felt that WisCon could profit from some room parties to help battle its reputation as a women-only sercon. But I haven't been too successful pushing that because I don't go to many local cons myself and the committee hasn't had the energy to do a lot of outreach. WisCon doesn't really need attendees so much as volunteers anyway, and parties aren't the most efficient way to recruit workers.

You may be a bastard Tom, but your zine has fine color graphics.

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### © Georgie Schnobrich

[JG] Several modes of communication through history have made it possible for human beings to converse with people far away both in terms of geography and culture. The fact that we can do it faster, now, almost instantly, doesn't mean that we've created a virtual world city. Not to me, anyway. True urban experience has to include more than one level of communication; it includes a sort of independence defined by actual, physical proximity. I like your concise phrase, "a joint physical experience."

On the other hand, science fiction has been rather good at exploring the metaphor of city, or the city as idea. James Blish's idea of "Spindizzies," cities + antigravity, continues to fascinate me, even years after I read the flying cities stories and can remember little of their plots. Recently I was thinking how urban mayors might enjoy the ability to simply take their cities and *leave* rings of parasitic suburban sprawl behind them. And in spite of the fact that I think physical proximity is essential, I like to think about how aspects we think of as being typically urban may no longer be tied to physical proximity in the future.

Interesting comment about the Buster Keaton homage in Jackie Chan's *Shanghai Noon*. I may have to check that movie out. I'm definitely a Keaton fan.

Yeah, there are certain times when being called a "bad influence" can seem like a compliment. My mom used to shake her head at me and sternly say, "You're just like your Aunt Charlotte." She didn't mean it as a compliment, but I secretly took it as one anyway, because I thought my independent, artist aunt was a pretty cool person.

You seem to be right about the fact that few SF fans have been watching *Survivor*, though Scott and I found a lot more at worldcon than we do here in Madison (or *Turbo*). Scott and I became hooked on the show early on and really enjoyed watching each week. We'd have long conversations afterward, and in fact, during the week, the subject would pop up over and

over again as we speculated on the dynamics of the game/drama.

If the real reason for fans ignoring *Survivor* is that it would involve a painful revisiting their own exclusion from teen society, some of them might have been surprised to see that the ones kicked off the island were more like members of the "in-crowd" than they were like the unpopular nerds that many SF fans might imagine.

I played a game with my classmates in my junior year of high school, in history class. One day our teacher presented each of us with copies of a map of a continent and a large island. The continent was divided into 5 countries and the island was a country to itself. We were also given data about the resources within each of the countries, including weapons and soldiers. We divided up into six groups, elected a leader, decided upon a form of government, and appointed ambassadors. Ambassadors were the only persons who could speak to representatives of other countries. We went to war with one another by about day three and declared a "winner" on the last day of the week. At that point, our teacher, Mr. Nugent, stood up and reminded us that he hadn't given us any rules for our game and had certainly never hinted that the goal of the game was to win a war. We could have attempted to create a utopia, he said, and the class was very quiet as that sunk in. That was the introduction to a unit on international relations and he sternly warned us that he didn't want to hear any of us complaining about the stupidity of wars. We had just demonstrated our own inclinations in the game.

The memory of that game and the blind assumptions we made taught me a lesson I will never forget. I wish I knew whether any of Mr. Nugent's other classes chose other goals. Or whether my class might not have made the instant assumption that winning a war was the goal if the lists of weapons and soldiers had not been so prominent on our resource lists.

I thought again about how people make assumptions about rules when Scott and I watched *Survivor*. It was really interesting to see how each of the players made their own assumptions about the point of the game. Some took the word "survivor" literally, in the sense of mythical Robinson Crusoe, Swiss Family Robinson, and Gilligan's Island survivors. These folks assumed that the person best able to utilize their strength, intelligence and available resources would (or should) win. Other players recognized that CBS wasn't going to let anyone actually starve, drown or die of snake bite. Some of these folks assumed that the best leader, hardest worker, or the most popular, most entertaining, or least abrasive person would (or should)

win. Others focused on the competitions and assumed that those most successful in helping their team win these would or should win the overall game. It was pretty obvious that the network had also been making assumptions about how the game would be played; they expected a lot of sex to happen among the players and made several blatant attempts to encourage romance. The show was a blockbuster success, but I'd be willing to bet not for the reasons CBS expected.

Only a few of the players recognized the value of forming alliances as the most effective strategy to get the fewest votes off the island and eliminating the most formidable competitors. Only one player went into the game with this strategy and he was the final winner. Some players specifically refused the opportunity to join alliances, reasoning that this would be cheating or immoral. Of course, there was no rule against forming an alliance. But those who refused had formed assumptions about the nature of the game and either expected the others to share their assumptions or, in some cases, showed themselves willing to lose the game rather than utilize this obviously effective strategy. The only thing the players were told by the network at the start was that the single survivor would receive one million dollars, but it was pretty obvious that those who thought that alliances were inherently unfair, heard (or assumed) a second part to that sentence.

It was ironic, I thought, that if the situation had been a *real* test of survival on a desert island, individual survival might have been dependant upon the same sort of cooperation that nurtured the alliance. In a real test of survival, everyone's skills and strengths are needed. The strongest person, the most congenial person, the most skilled person needs the rest of the group in order to survive. At times I wondered if the American public would have criticized the alliance if it had been made up of players who "deserved" to win according to other criteria ("the best leader, hardest worker, or the most popular, most entertaining, or least abrasive person"). In fact, the game rewarded those who figured out the most efficient way to win the game, which made the show a most entertaining spectacle, to see players discover (or ignore) the meta-game rules.

You ask why the show was popular—because it parodies or improves upon real life? I've got several theories about the show's popularity, and certainly part of its appeal is the way and extent to which it mirrors real life. All of us search for and attempt to define the purpose of our own lives. It's not nearly as simple as it is in *Survivor*, i.e., we're not all attempting to become rich as our final goal. And so, in life, there isn't just one winner. One person's ultimate accomplishment might

not even be found on another person's list of priorities. But *Survivor* does mirror the real-life tendency for some people to make the wrong assumptions about what the goal of their life *should* be. All of us have to struggle against what our culture says we should be striving for when those culturally defined goals won't actually make us personally happy or fulfilled. If we make blind assumptions at the start we might find ourselves winners of a prize we don't want at the end of our life game. And if we make good decisions about our life's purpose, it's still necessary to develop an effective strategy for getting there. I mean, let's say we recognize that our true happiness will come only after we achieve spiritual understanding of ourselves and the universe. Blindly adopting life strategies taught in American culture (go to school, get married, get a career, raise kids) might turn out to distract us from our basic goal. It's necessary to think about what we personally need to do in life in order to achieve our goal.

So I guess I think the game does reflect real life, in a fun-house mirror sort of way but not, I think, in the direct way some people have suggested. (*Survivor* reflects the greed of American society.)

Another reason I think it was so successful is that it was so *different* from other TV shows. CBS expected things to go much differently, I think, but there was no roomful of script writers engineering pat plot turns and insuring that the most "deserving" contestant win. I think a lot of people found most of the events unexpected in a very refreshing way.

[SC] I laughed at the *Wizard of Oz* via Dark Side of the Moon, that sounds like a perfect stoner evening. I think I will take your suggestion up sometime.

Regarding your comment to **Tracy**, we saw *A Winter's Tale* at APT last weekend and enjoyed it, though I agree with you that it is a rather odd story.

[JG] ...Odd in more ways than one. I realized partway through the play that I was entirely unfamiliar with it, and for the first time in a very long time, I didn't know how a Shakespeare play was going to end, and so I really enjoyed the surprise ending!

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### © Jim Nichols

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[JG] Our neighborhood yard sale was very successful, and we made more than enough to get Gerald his required donations.

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### © Jerome Van Epps

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[JG] Sorry we didn't make your party. We were camping on the North Shore of Lake Superior while you were all whooping it up.

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### © Ruth Merrill

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[JG] Land of the Ripe Tomatoes is OK with me. The tomatoes, especially the tiny ones have been spectacularly sweet and tasty this year.

Thanks for the compliment about my speech. And thanks for letting me join you in the opening ceremonies skit. It was a wonderful entertainment and lots of fun (and no rehearsals at all!) to join.

[SC] I enjoyed your zine very much this month. Regarding your comment to me on a ride to work, I would have accepted the offer of a ride, but in general I enjoy taking the bus because it is nearly the only certain reading time I ever seem to get these days.

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### © Pat Hario

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[JG] The color copy we used for *Turbo 168* is the new Hewlett Packard 8500 at my office. We named the 600 dpi Apple LaserWriter "Nekoosa Gal" (which is a name I actually borrowed from a laser printer in my sister Julie's Go Media Austin office). So it seemed only reasonable that we name this new, giant, 4-foot-tall printer "Nekoozilla." It prints full color, two sided, on sheets up to 11"x17" in size. I did the *Turbo* cover 2-up on 15 tabloid sheets and cut them in half. Glad you liked it.

[SC] "By the way, you rock." I have always thought so too.

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### Jim Frenkel

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[JG] Thanks for the story of Josh's trip and the airline problems. And congratulations to Josh for his perfect, straight-A average!

[SC] Pretty wild story about poor Josh's trip to Britain. I hope the actual trip turned out to be worth it. This has been the summer of airline complaints. I have never seen so many stories in the media about how awful flying has been. I hold out little hope for improvement in the future, but I am looking forward to Midwest Express' new terminal in Kansas City that I hope will open more destinations for them. They are the only airline I have ever actually enjoyed flying.

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 © Diane Martin
 

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[SC] "It's just a job. I can get another one." That's the spirit. Congratulations on choosing Guild.com.

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 © Hope and Karl
 

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[SC] On the subject of paying for the business pages, you are essentially correct. As much as possible when I was OE, we produced them here at home at our expense. It was cheaper than Kinko's. But I also was the beneficiary of some funds that members donated to Turbo after they dropped out so I was never really hurting for money. You are right that I never cared much for asking for annual contributions from all the members, but I certainly think **Jae** should rather than spend her own money.

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 Comments on Turbo 170
 

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 © Business
 

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[SC] I second the nomination **July Zachman's** friend Sarah Burton.

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 © Lisa Freitag
 

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[JG] I loved the story about the two Sams. Very beautifully written. I think you should submit it to Salon on the web. I bet they would publish it.

I'm glad you were angry at your dad's statement that he couldn't enjoy doing something once one of his kids got better than him at it. What an awful lesson to teach (by example) to his kids! And what a waste for him personally. There's ALWAYS someone who can do anything better! In spite of that, I've seen and participated in the process myself. When my brothers and sister and I lived at home, there seemed to be an unspoken "rule" that each of us won ownership of a field we were particularly good at. While we were young, I "owned" literature and art. Rick "owned" science and math. Steve "owned" athletics. Julie "owned" music. By the time Danny was old enough to claim a field, Julie was the only one of his siblings who still lived at home. The rest of us had already started exploring each other's fields now that the invisible constraints imposed by sharing the same house magically disappeared. Rick took up pottery and wood-working. I got really enthusiastic about weight-lifting and swimming for quite a few years; I even called myself a "jock" for a while. Steve studied engineering in college and Julie branched out in all directions. Nevertheless we all speculated for a while about what Danny's territory would be. But I sure am glad we

discarded those rules so easily after we moved away.

[SC] I thought your piece about Sammy, the kid with the wooden leg, was wonderful.

I liked your comment to **Georgie** on things worth doing are worth doing badly. It is a phrase I run through my head every time I sit down to write. I know that writing well takes practice and I never give myself nearly enough practice. But I keep plugging away, on this apa at least, anyway.

Regarding church quotes, while we were vacationing along the North Shore of Lake Superior last month, we ran into a lot of those billboards quoting God. You know the ones with white letters on a black background with a single phrase like "We have to talk." Signed, "God." I found them very annoying because I couldn't help but read each one we saw, then cuss myself for being sucked in again. Something about the stark design that always grabbed me long enough to get me to read it.

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 © Michael Shannon
 

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[JG] Very cut photos of Tegan!

[SC] Thanks for the convention report, though it was more about what you value and enjoy about the cons you choose than about the cons themselves, which was fine. I would say that Jeanne and I have a similar approach to conventions in that we tend to seek out our friends to hang out with, maybe picking up a few new acquaintances along the way. We like to go to small cons where we know most of the people attending, but even when we go to large cons, like Worldcon last month in Chicago, we tend to seek out our own "convention within a convention."

Nice pictures.

I am looking forward to seeing you all at WisCon, I hope.

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 © Marijean Trew
 

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[SC] "All I need to do is take the time for what really matters." Sounds so simple doesn't it? I think it is hard as hell to actually do. I am 44 and I haven't had a "mid-life crisis" yet, but I am thinking of scheduling one in 5 1/2 short years when I turn 50. I am planning a total breakdown.

It has gotta be real tough to spend time with all the people you want to spend time with when you have to take time out for ten day business trips. Good luck getting your co-workers to help with the travel burden.

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## © Kim and Kathi Nash

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[JG] Kathi, you mention that you may be looking for a carpool opportunity when it gets cold. Why don't you just take the bus home when it gets cold? There are several buses that stop just a couple blocks from your house and would pick you up right outside Gef 3.

[SC] Coffee is my second favorite beverage next to beer. In general, I would choose even a bad cup of coffee over pop or other soft drinks. Unfortunately, like Kim, I had to mostly give up real coffee. I drink decaf about 95% of the time now. I only resort to real coffee when I really need to perk up (and since I cut down on regular, it really works when I have some!) There are some good decafs out there, though nowhere near the variety you have in regular coffee. Variety is what I miss most about regular coffee. Sorry Kathi, I can't apply for the position of replacement coffee partner. I'm a decaf wimp after all, but good luck on your search.

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## © Clay Colwell

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[SC] What a nice tribute to C. J. Cherryh. I have never read anything by her. If you had to pick a title or two to recommend to someone like me, what would they be?

You haven't been to a con since WisCon 20? Why don't you make your next one WisCon 25 next May? We'd love to see you.

Good comment to **Sheila** about writing for *Turbo*. Comments as a conversation at a cocktail party is largely how I approach doing them too.

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## © Maureen Kincaid Speller

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[JG] With regards to your comment to **Tracy** about house-guest experiences, let me assure you that you were a delightful guest and that Scott and I would love to have you back again any time!

I wonder... did the tradition of getting a "known fan" to sign off on possibly unknown fans' TAFF ballots get its start with the similar British passport rule? There's nothing very similar to it in the U.S. Here, if a signature needs to be validated, it must be countersigned by a notary republic who must train for and purchase a license.

The fact that some local fans seem both jealous of your obvious enjoyment of your TAFF trip and unhappy that you attend fewer local meetings and conventions seems to suggest that perhaps they had gotten used to receiving the majority of your fannish attention. Perhaps they resent the fact that your attention has widened to a larger community and that faraway fans are giving you enthusiastic feedback and

support — because that means the amount of energy you can give to them is permanently reduced. Have you been viewed as a sort of "mom" by local fans who resent the reduction in attention they get from you?

Was the Corflu pyramid organized by Spike Parsons? I bet it was. Most of the human pyramids of the past 10 years or so, or at least those that are done at SF cons, can be blamed on Spike. It all started many years ago at Minicon, which held a "Twinkie Toss" contest, which was very entertaining. The Madison team (made up of Spike, Andy Hooper, Bill Bodden, me ... and others I've forgotten) got into the spirit. I organized a Harlem Globetrotters kind of warm-up before our turn to throw twinkies through the twinkie target. And as it turned out, we won. Spike organized the first human pyramid celebrating the great event and Andy Hooper led a salsa line, with all of us chanting, "salsa y ketchup" over and over again. It was strange but hilarious. Well, anyway, ever since then, Spike has organized human pyramids at significant fannish events. There was one at the Minneapolis Corflu when Stu Shiffman's was goh. And there was another one at the Madison Corflu, I think, though I forget the special inspiration. At WisCon this year, I joked (really!) to Spike that as GoH, I expected a human pyramid. Immediately after saying that, I realized that I was going to get what I asked for. And so I wasn't too surprised, after my speech, to see the pyramid being assembled. Luckily I had my camera with me and snapped a couple photos. The picture on the WisCon *Turbo* cover is actually a montage of two photos — one which showed the bottom three layers beautifully but was taken before Jane Hawkins mounted the top, fourth layer. I cropped Jane from a second photo which was too dark to show much detail in the bottom three layers.

Ian Haggeman's pancake eating procedure starts with cutting a hole in the middle of his stack of cakes, about three inches in diameter, which he then fills with syrup. He gradually cuts pieces from the inside perimeter of this whole, keeping the hole supplied with syrup so that each piece he cuts can be soaked in as much syrup as it can absorb. His method has an obsessive look to it, as if he'd developed and perfected it a long time ago and has been practicing it for years. He doesn't seem to register that anyone around him might find anything unusual about what he's doing. I had a hard time paying attention to my own meal and had to keep stopping myself from staring. It was certainly entertaining.

[SC] What a simply fabulous zine, Maureen! I loved it. At the same time I have to warn you that *Turbo* is not



immune to reactions of intimidation by readers when confronted with a 22-page zine. I hope that a lack of response is not your reward for producing such a fine piece of writing.

“Dangerous things, songs.” In your comment to **Lisa** for issue 165 you talked about people embracing songs when they haven’t really listened to the lyrics. The best example of this I remember was during one of Ronald Reagan’s presidential campaigns, they adopted Bruce Springsteen’s “Born in the USA” as one of their theme songs, obviously clueless that the song was not a flag-waving patriotic ditty. Being a Springsteen fan at the time, I didn’t know whether to laugh or cry.

On WisCon, yes you and Paul have to come. Sooner is better because I honestly don’t know how long this enterprise will continue.

I was especially moved by your concluding piece on pedophiles and mob rule. Our experience in America mirrors yours. I think a rather huge fear has contributed to the movement of people out of the cities and into the suburbs, coupled with the trend these days toward enrolling kids in activities that take up all their time. In the suburbs this means that parents must spend much of their lives driving their kids to all their activities. I don’t think anyone minds this life-style because it is perceived as safer than giving kids unstructured time where they are left to their own devices for amusement and become vulnerable to being whisked off the street by lurking pedophiles. Even though the crime rate in America has been declining for years, there remains this persistent

terror of monsters preying on kids. And, of course, when a rare abduction and murder does occur somewhere in the US, the response is similarly hysterical.

I have known some pedophiles in my former career in the forensic mental health business and I can tell you that they are not nice people. The problem of pedophiles requires careful thought because they do constitute a serious threat. But hysteria and the wholesale violation of our Constitutional rights is not the way to deal with it.



[JG] I’m writing these comments in Peoria, IL, in a hotel room, late at night on the second last day of the training program which is the reason I’m here in the first place. The training program is for the new Adobe program, InDesign. I’m sorry to say that I’m only a few zines short of actually being able to catch up on mailing comments for the last two zines (169 & 170), but that it looks like I won’t finish. Tomorrow, after class, I head back up to Madison, just in time (I hope) for the Nader rally. (**Yay! Vote for Ralph!!** I haven’t felt this enthusiastic about a candidate since McGovern. My guy might not win, but I’ll feel *cleaner* after this election than I have in a very long time.) And since the *Turbo’s* deadline is the next day, it looks like I won’t be writing anything more than this, not even a worldcon report (where we did a Tiptree auction) and won’t get to a more complete account of Scott’s and my trip up to the North Shore. Ah well.

—Jeanne Gomoll & Scott Custis  
20 September 2000