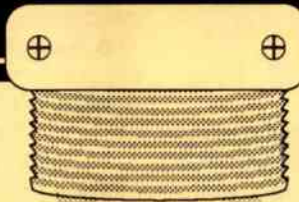


Union St

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It's Early!

(JG) We're starting this issue of *Union Street* amazingly early though of course, it will remain to be seen whether we actually finish the job in equally amazing time. As I type, it's barely four days since we smelled and respectfully declined the moldy—though very original—cover **Kim Nash** offered us and escaped the Brat 'n' Brau with a hygienic photocopied version covering our copy of *Turboapa* #50. (Well nobody can say that **Steve Swartz** didn't create a real "slice-of-life" piece of art. Not me. Certainly not the cats at Dickshaus. Next time look into shrink-wrapping, Steve. Phew!)

The reason for this unreasonable haste is the vacation Scott and I will be off on in a week and a half. We're traveling AMTRAK (using their very economical "All Aboard America," 3-stop, round-trip fare), and will be visiting my brother, sister-in-law, niece and nephew in Pittsburgh. We'll do a little gossiping, a little babysitting. Then we'll check into a plush hotel in mid-town Manhattan and live decadently for a few days. We've got house tickets to *Les Miserables*. It will be my birthday on the day we arrive in New York and that should be fun. After we've bankrupted ourselves living beyond our means for three days, we'll go mooch off my good friend Anne Steel in Princeton (near Philadelphia). Since we'll be getting back to Madison only a few days before the next apa deadline, we figure we'd better do whatever it is we're going to submit to #51 before we leave town. That's why.

I hope you will have all heard already that Stu Shiffman won a Hugo. If you didn't: STU SHIFFMAN WON A HUGO FOR BEST FAN ARTIST!

Now to business...

KIM NASH

(JG) I'm sorry, I can't help it, Kim. Your sentence, "I had to take a suck day," lingers in my mind. I want to know what the proper code for that is on your time sheet. If I had some time here I might draw some of the images that force themselves into my mind when I think about the meaning of a "suck day." You're sick of hearing about it, I'm sure. I should stop snickering. After all it's "not out fault."

(SC) Bureau director? I can remember when you wouldn't consider taking a supervisory position. You seem to have taken to it lately like a fish to water. I always figured you were

underestimating your temperament for supervisory responsibility, but I also think you've found an unusually good department to work for. Good luck.

PAT HARIO

(JG) I liked *The Vampire Lestat* better than the first of Anne Rice's trilogy too. But then I also enjoyed the third book (*The Queen of the Damned*), I guess because I followed it in short order with the beginning of another series of books by Rice, (*The Mummy*), and got rather excited with what it looks like she's doing. This is my theory (which I publish here for all to see, so that I can come back—I hope—and later point to it and say, "see I told you so!"):

I think the two fantastic beings, the vampires and the mummies are going to meet in some future volume and confront one another. Humanity is no match for either the vampires or the mummies, but Rice provides rather complimentary powers for each of her supernatural races (for instance: one sleeps while the other wakes; sunlight is death to one but is life for the other.) Also, the origins of both species are remarkably similar. Anyway, I enjoyed speculating about how Rice was going to tie the two sagas together.

This is a sort of dangerous proclivity of mine, speculating on the up-coming plot of a book or a film. I've always enjoyed doing it, but sometimes what happens is that I'm so pleased by the plot I've projected, that by the time I read or view the creator's manner of finishing up the story, I am disappointed.

That happened this summer with the third part of *Back to the Future*. A year earlier, my brother Dan had come out for a visit and Scott, Dan and I had gone to part 2. After the show we had talked for a long time about how the story might be tied up in true time-paradox fashion in part 3. And we devised a really fiendishly clever ending (if I do say so myself, though it was mostly Dan's brainstorm). We thought we'd discovered clues in the second film to indicate that the #3 would have to take part in all the times to which Marty McFly had previously traveled. Not only did the film disappoint us with the limited amount of time traveling done, but in the fact that the writers ignored Doc's own advice to remember that time makes reality relative. Anyway, there were several big holes in the plot of #3, and we left rather disgusted with the whole thing.

It's amazing that you made a trip to Nebraska, of all places, sound fun. Thanks for the report.

(SC) What an excellent travel story! You should feel free to trash Nebraska at length as far as I'm concerned. Iowa, on the other hand, has charm and character. Nebraska has...well...lots of space. I was particularly impressed with your modest choice of amusements. Scrabble? Yucking it up in the supermarket? Embarrassing bartenders? Just goes to show that some people can have a good time practically anywhere (even Nebraska.)

MIKE DUCHARME

(JG) Well if I'm not rail-lagged when we get back to Wisconsin, I'll try to make it for the book discussion. I've actually read *Imago*, by Octavia Butler, and really really liked it. Especially the first part. It includes the most horrifying concept of alien rape, and easily one of the most horrifying versions of slavery of Butler's that I have ever read. As with everything by Butler, it cuts to the core.

(SC) We rented *Chinatown* and went to see *The Two Jakes* the very next night. It would have been very tough to follow the sequel without seeing *Chinatown* again. An amazing amount of detail was carried over. Seeing them back-to-back brought out in stark contrast how superior the original was to the sequel. *Two Jakes* had a few good moments, but in general, it was a disappointment for us.

LUCY NASH

(JG) I liked *Ghosts* too. Being an ex-potter, I really liked the fact that the female lead was shown throwing a pot on the wheel. It was a bit funny though. Someone else had obviously set up the clay before she got her hands on the clay. You can tell, because as soon as she touched the clay, the pot started wobbling and getting off center and would—or actually did—collapse in seconds. I had to laugh thinking about the poor artist who must have thrown hundreds of pots for the actress during the filming of this movie, each time getting up so that she could sit down and destroy the pot with one touch.

And as I mentioned to **Bill Dyer** last time, I thought the sex-on-the-potters-wheel scene was incredibly sexy and very funny. Yeah, and Swayze wasn't too bad.

(SC) I could not help comparing your description of the divorce trial with **Kim N.'s**. He sounded upbeat, relieved, satisfied and even celebratory. You sounded resigned, uncertain, perhaps a bit drained and sad. Obviously you are each seeing this development from very different perspectives. I sense that you have a lot of stuff to work through. I hope you will continue to reach out to your friends if things get tough.

DON HELLEY

(JG) We'll miss you, Don.

(SC) Two of the most prominent features of your zine that will be sorely missed around here are your determination to inject some radical political ideas into the APA and the unique look of your zine, which functions as sort of a dissent against all the computer slickness nearly everyone else wallows in (and that slur most definitely includes us.) You have been bold and adventurous. You have frequently put a lot of effort into your zine. All things I'm gonna miss. Hurry back, Don.

KATHI SCHELLER

(JG) Am I the person you expect might taunt you with the "It's easy..." exclamation? I wouldn't say that. But if you'd like me to show you how to do your zine with Pagemaker, you might end up saying it. I know I've said I will come over and see you and help you at work and that I still haven't done it. I mean to do it, really. It's just that I get caught up with emergencies as soon as I get to work and everything's a blur until it's time to go home. Rather like drifting into Faerie Land, in which Time Means Something Other Than We Know It. I wouldn't be at all unhappy if you called me up some morning when you have some free time and suggested a spontaneous training session. If I can get away, I'll run right over to your office.

You have your zine printed at Paradise Printers? I've got some rather horrific memories of that place. My sister Julie worked there for a few months and the woman who owns it treated her like scum. She didn't allow any personal phone calls; they had to punch out and walk across the street to the bank. She belittled all the people who worked there. But the final straw that caused Julie to resign was when she refused to allow one of the printers to leave early from work when he found out that his brother had just died. He finally had to quit in order to leave that afternoon, and Julie walked with him.

The rocks are waiting for you.

BILL HOFFMAN

(JG) Another delightful zine, Bill. The northwest is an area of the country that Scott and I want to see more of than we saw through the train windows between San Francisco and Seattle a couple years back. It would be nice to travel a bit with you, or at least get some travel tips from you, if we get out that way again.

You know, I've gotten to expect that same weird part at the end of Greg Bear's stuff. I don't think I've actually used that phrase ("bad endings," is what I usually say), but as I get to the end of one of his novels I start to brace myself for it. There's such a strange contrast between the hard, palpable plotline of the first parts in which the science is clear, the speculation clean, and the conclusions which seem to zoom off into fantasy and nightmare.

Was "Crater Lake" your retelling of a real myth, or did you create it? Whatever, it was lovely, beautifully written.

(SC) Your cousin was very fortunate to have such a knowledgeable guide. I particularly liked the details on town names ("Stumptown?") and the inside scoop and speculations on Breitenbush. I enjoy taking friends and visiting relatives around Madison, but I don't have the command of colorful details you seem to have of Oregon. Yet, if you like where you live, you should know something about the history and origins of things. I think I will try to follow your example.

I have never read anything by Greg Bear, but if retribution and punishment are frequent themes of his, I might be interested in checking him out.

I second Jeanne's opinion of "Crater Lake." I assume it was original. This APA has enthusiastically embraced good fiction submissions, so you can count on loyal audience.

ANDY HOOPER

(JG) Well, I can accept that any piece of writing can teach the reader *something*, even if it is how *not* to write. But I have a very low threshold that gets lower with every birthday, for using time up on things that I dislike. You've heard me deride **Dick Russell's** penchant for going to see all SF/Fantasy films, the bad along with the good, and you've read my theory of criticism, which comes down decisively against putting more effort into reading or reviewing a work than the writer bothered to put into it in the first place (both in *Whimsey*). It's true there are certainly value judgements involved in my argument. So yes, when one has plenty of warning in the form of reviews or the first chapter, or the first sentence, that the thing isn't going to be a worthwhile experience (by whatever criteria the reader uses), I *do* think that continuing the effort can be a waste of time. There is so little of it; I'm quite jealous of it.

Thank you very much for your kind words about the "Open Letter." I'm proud of having written it; the ideas still touch an important part of the way I see the world, and it pleases me no end that it touches others in similar ways.

Scott and I saw *The Two Jakes* last week and were rather disappointed. We prepared the night before by renting *China Town*, but even so were fumbling for names like this was some Russian novel and if you didn't immediately memorize all the first, last and nicknames, you are lost by the time you've gotten only a third of the way through the film. *The Two Jakes* lacked the elegant complexity of *China Town*, and as you said the palpable sense of evil of the first film. It was pretty, though. And after having seen Jack Nicholson exploding up at us in this film, Bruce Willis explode up at us in *Die Harder*, the *Dark Man* explode out at us from his laboratory, and the person falling in the previews of the upcoming *Godfather, part 3*, I wonder if there is some new follow-the-exploding-person-camera that has captivated directors lately. A new toy?

(SC) I agree with Jeanne that there is writing that is a waste of time to read. Your vision of writers as "disembodied spirits..."etc. is a sympathetic image of writers as artists, but at the same time there are a great many writers, called hacks, who have come up with a system of making living that has nothing to do with art. They have largely perfected a formula for selling books that works over and over. Sometimes it is hard to tell beforehand what is worthwhile and what is drek. Particularly hard when a good writer/artist turns into a hack after a promising start. Like Jeanne, my time is too valuable to sift through a lot of crap for a few bits of gold. Better to just go for the gold.

(JG) I wouldn't go so far as to say that so-called "hack" writing has nothing to do with art, Scott. I've always resisted the tendency to label things "art" or "not art" based on quality judgements. I just think that judgements such as "good art" and "bad art" are valid (and those judgements vary from person to person, of course), and I'd rather avoid the bad stuff.

(SC) Yct. **Peacock**. If any comments directed to **Peacock** were "rude and confused," I submit they were only responding to him in kind.

KAREN BABICH

(SC) Pretty impressive "minac." I especially liked your comments to **Steve Swartz** and **Vijay**.

NEVENAH SMITH

(SC) If it is any consolation, you were not the only one inconvenienced by rain on Sunday, Aug. 19. Early in the summer, Jeanne and I signed up for tickets to *Macbeth* at American Players Theater for the Wed. Aug. 22 show, based on my scheduled days off. A couple weeks before showtime, my supervisor announced he was changing my days off to Sun. and Tues. from Tues. and Wed. that week due to a shortage of staff on Wed. We scrambled around and managed to get our tickets exchanged for Sun. the 19th. Since Sundays are Rib Feast nights at APT, we signed up for dinner as well. Well, as you know, it rained very hard. We went out to Spring Green anyway (APT is an outdoor theater, for you out-of-towners). We ate the dinner since that was served in a tent (Smokey Jon's #1 Barbecue on Northport Dr. was catering and I strongly recommend it). We had to wait patiently until forty-five minutes after showtime before they would cancel, and that was a waste of time because they closed the box office and you had to call them the next day for new reservations. We are slated to try again Sunday the 2nd. A chance of rain is in the forecast. Our fingers are crossed.

(JG) All turned out well, the weather cooperated beautifully, and we enjoyed the play immensely, especially the fantastically realistic broadsword fights performed by the cast.

TRACY SHANNON

(JG) I sympathize with the attitude you're having to cope with: e.g., that people categorize you as a mathematics person and assume that you can't write or are flabbergasted that you can. I frequently get it the other way: as an artist, I meet a lot of people who basically figure I must be illiterate. The fact that I do have problems with numbers (even the basic stuff like remembering any given group of them), feeds into that prejudice. On the other hand, I think there are some characteristics that are not based on prejudice but possibly real differences in the way brains work. Geometry was easy to me: I could "see" the whole problem in my mind. The correct proof came to me in one flash, with the parts lit up in a sort of neon glow in my mind's image of the diagram. But I hit some sort of brick wall when it came to longer problems in Algebra. When I stopped being able to see then end of the problem from the beginning, and had to sort of dive in, trusting that I'd be able to swim by the rules and would get to the other side, I panicked and drowned. At least that's how it felt.

But as long as I can see the problem with pictures in my mind, the creative part of my mind, the processing part, is quite happy. So Macintosh computers make me happy. Logic classes in college fascinated me. If I have a map when I travel, I'm never insecure. The thing is, I know people exactly opposite me in those things. Suzette Haden Elgin describes a similar brick wall when she is forced to learn with visual tags rather than numerical/verbal tags. I can't really imagine what that's like, but I accept it. And I really do think that there are two or three and probably more basic differences in the way groups of people think. And that may explain why we all meet these

assumptions from people; the differences have become stereotyped and simplified to the point where they don't really work descriptively anymore.

Now when I go grocery shopping, I never say, "Wow, this is much more expensive than it was when we were last shopping!" And perhaps it's just as well that I don't; I probably have a more pleasant time shopping than the people who are constantly being reminded how much more money they're going to be spending at the checkout counter.

(SC) Welcome. Your rant about the state of mathematics literacy in this country is on target. I strongly agree with your complaint about parents who saddle their kids with the assumption that math has to be hard. I have seen people talk to their kids almost exactly as you described. I gained great respect for math from my father who was a small businessman for many years. He never went to college, but he has a great head for arithmetic and practical math. I learned early how such knowledge gave him power when it came to dealing with people over financial matters that they rarely understood as well as he did. Had it not been for his example, I probably would have gone through school "hating" math as much as nearly everyone else.

A love of puns is regarded as a flaw from my perspective. But you might win points with me for submitting fiction.

JOHN PEACOCK

(JG) This is the *same* rant!??? Last time you were taking a Darwinian stance about the death of a small animal, saying that having failed to survive we shouldn't try to save it. This time you're talking about the genocide of bears. So, let me get this straight: *size* is the important factor here, right?

In fact there are a whole lot of crazed blathering in this issue. You're a caring person but you think we care too much about individual rights—and yet you think Saddam Hussein is a monster... Individual rights is a superfluous value, but keeping our cheap gas prices is something for which we ought to go to war...?? Protecting our economy's health is reason to go to war, but "anytime that someone's paycheck is coming from a topic, that person's objectivity should be suspect."

You seem to be trying to take all sides in a berserk sort of freewheeling argument. Maybe you think that arguments make and attract the best mailing comments, but that doesn't work for me.

MICHAEL SHANNON

(SC) Welcome. Math, physics, computers, fencing, sf, music, languages? Another Renaissance Turbo-Apan. Been to Ireland yet? Jeanne and I were in Northern Ireland briefly a few years ago. Rugged and beautiful. Love to go back and see more. Someday.

STEVE JOHNSON

(JG) What a positively *great* reaction to the war hysteria blooming all around us. (And what an inspired pre-response to **John Peacock's** comments on the Middle East crisis.) Indeed, the crisis we're responding to in the Mideast has its source right here in our own country and we should deal with our own immoral, wastrel attitude

towards the world's resources instead of threatening warfare on a third world country that won't let us steal their's.

I also admired your careful, and well thought out response to **Hope Kiefer's** anger at **Kim Nash**. I agree with you that there are some large, private issues that she's probably dealing with when her anger erupts at **Kim** and **Lucy's** divorce. Not only do I think you made some excellent points, but I think you phrased them in a non-hurtful, helpful manner.

(SC) Well, I don't really agree with Jeanne about your article on Iraq. You mostly sounded angry and confused. On the one hand, the mainstream media has succeeded in stirring you up into a lather at Saddam Hussein's behavior, yet you suspect that maybe what is happening is partly our own fault. Saddam Hussein is not a significantly worse tyrant than many regimes we actively support in Central and South America (we supported Hussein himself until he acted against our interests). No one in the mainstream press has bothered to explain the difference between Hussein's invasion of Kuwait and our invasions and warmongering of Panama, Grenada and Nicaragua—all of which were condemned by the U.N. By protecting Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, we sure aren't protecting democracy—since these Arab countries are incredibly repressive and primitive monarchies which do not enjoy popular support in their own countries. We are protecting "our" oil, our oil companies and George Bush's ratings in the polls.

HOPE KIEFER

(JG) I'm looking forward to hearing about your (and **Diane Martin's** and **Dick Russell's** and **Laura Spless's**) trip to Amsterdam. I hope you had a great time.

KIM WINZ

(JG) I hate to tell you this, but **Pete** probably hasn't escaped allergy hell. Apparently, when you move to a different part of the world it's just a matter of time until your system reaches its threshold for whatever pollen exists in that area. And now that people plant lawns wherever they live in the USA, there is no longer any "safe" area. Even the Southwest which traditionally has been thought of as an allergy-free zone has its allergy seasons. Everyone can be allergic to anything, I read, but people with a lot of allergic problems are the ones with low thresholds; those of us who don't have problems simply have higher thresholds, which we may reach at any time. That's why someone who's never had any trouble can suddenly start developing allergies. Think of this as your allergy honeymoon.

(SC) GREAT cartoons, again.

So, what's **Pete** been up to? Are you working him around the clock or have you got him stuffed into a closet? Hey, **Pete**, do you realize what she's been saying about you in her zine? Oh I know the version she probably shows you, but you should read the version she actually sends!

Happy anniversary. Has it really been that long?

Very interesting stuff about the First Amendment and electronic communications. Your article is the first I've heard about it, but I will keep an eye out in *Nation* and other alternative press publications for more information. This is scary and anyone who has anything to do with a computer should pay attention. I'll share any info. I come across.